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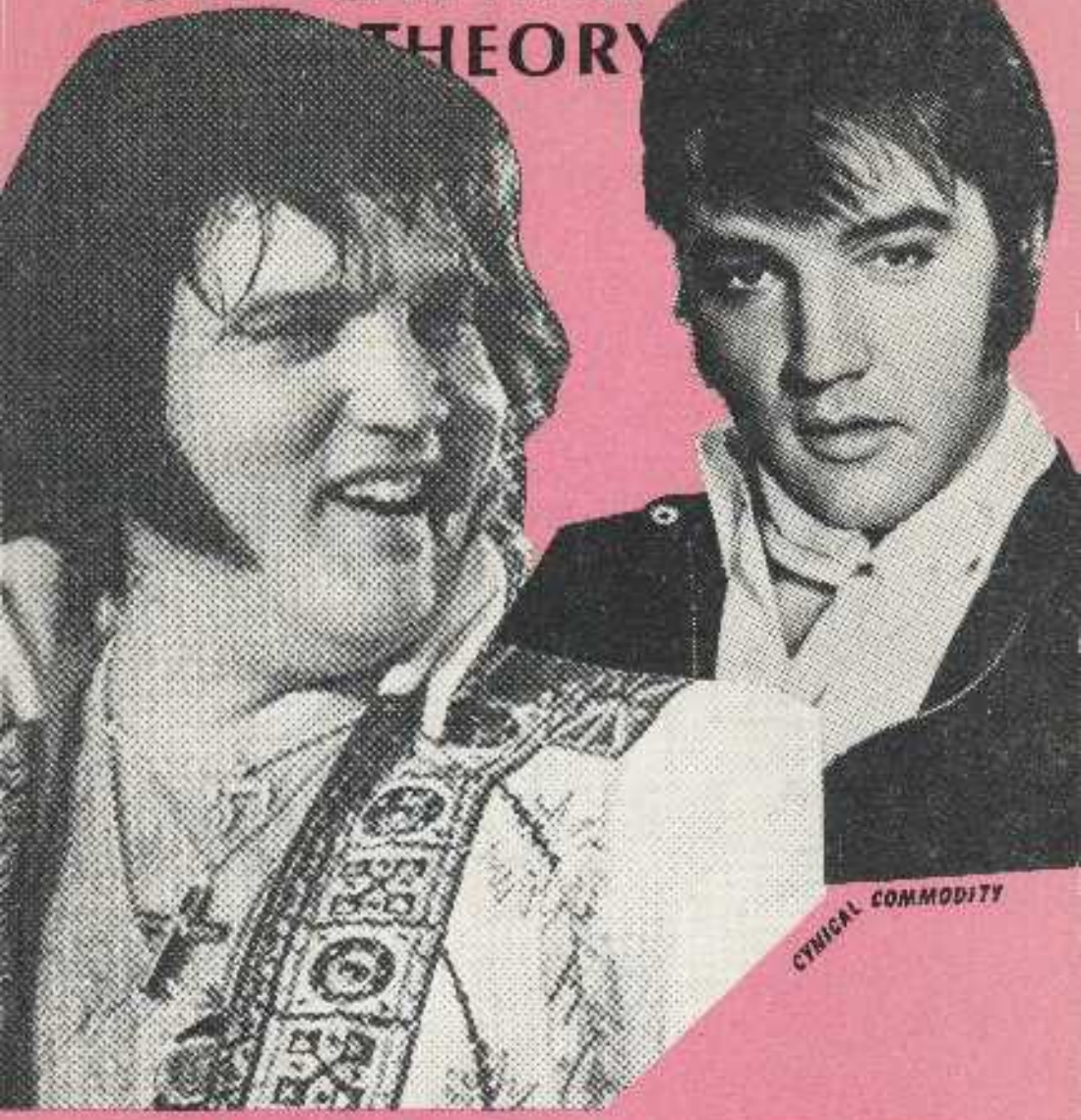

THIS TIME WE ARE IN A FULL UNIVERSE, A SPACE RADIATING WITH POWER BUT ALSO CRACKED, LIKE A SHATTERED WINDSHIELD STILL HOLDING TOGETHER.

JEAN BAUDRILLARD
OUBLIER FOUCAULT

Canadian Journal of Political And Social Theory
Revue canadienne de théorie politique et sociale

Review Editor

The editors wish to thank Professor David Cook for his excellent efforts as review editor of the CJPST. With this issue, Dr. Cook completes his term as review editor of the Journal, but will continue to serve on the editorial board. Professor Andrew Wernick assumes the position of review editor for a term of two years. In addition to serving as Principal of Peter Robinson College at Trent University, Peterborough, Ontario, Dr. Wernick also teaches in the areas of sociology and cultural studies.

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Special Issue
BAUDRILLARD'S CHALLENGE

Hiver/Printemps Volume VIII: Numbers 1-2

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BAUDRILLARD'S CHALLENGE

The whole chaotic constellation of the social revolves around that spongy referent, that opaque but equally translucent reality, that nothingness: the masses. A statistical crystal ball, the masses are "swirling with currents and flows", in the image of matter and the natural elements. So at least they are represented to us.

J. Baudrillard
In the Shadow of the Silent Majorities

C'est le vide qu'il y a derrière le pouvoir, ou au coeur même du pouvoir, au coeur de la production, c'est ce vide qui leur donne aujourd'hui une dernière lueur de réalité. Sans ce qui les réversibilise, les annule, les séduit, ils n'eussent même jamais pris force de réalité.

J. Baudrillard
Oublier Foucault

Talisman

The representative problem of modern French thought is the problem of representation. The whole movement of thought in France has been toward the specification of representational features not reducible to subject and object; and then the rediscovery of energy (desire), force (differance) and power within the terms of the language paradigm itself. But, as the articles to follow all suggest, the structuralist and post-structuralist programmatic attention to representations has achieved only ambiguous insights into the power of representations as such. A synoptic review of the structuralist tradition indicates that the founding premises were never outlived and indeed that they always acted as the gravitational centre for later ventures. It is almost as if structuralism and post-structuralism together form a kind of closed universe of discourse in which questions are interesting but like Hegel's night the answers are indistinguishable. Once entered, such a universe is difficult to escape; yet the postmodern project has achieved the coherence of a hermeneutical tradition with the ineluctiblity of a rite de passage. The journal has chosen the work of Jean Baudrillard as a talisman: a symptom, a sign, a charm, and above all, a password into the next universe.

New French Thought and the Metaphysics of Representation

The critique of the Metaphysics of Representation depends paradoxically on the assertion of the autonomy of representations. This peculiar turn of ideas takes us back nearly a century to Nietszche's pragmatism: all world views are arbitrary because they are all equally motivated. The same problem emerges in the modern controversy of the sign. Where in the chain signifier-signified-referent-reality does one find the determinate link that guarantees communicable reference? Is it "reality" — so that language is reduced to a collection of

tokens? Is it in the "signifier", reducing reality to a blurred hyle? Or is it somewhere in the middle, in the regions of the illusive concept or of naive realism? What gave Baudrillard his leverage in this debate was his awareness that the basic formalization of the meaning process (Saussure, Jacobson, Lévi-Strauss, Lacan, Althusser) was in fact a vicious circle of motivation-immotivation designed to exclude the act of reference while retaining the value of the referent. Post-structuralism saw this too, and proposed by way of solution the simple non-value of value and the non-meaning of meaning. Baudrillard's work was allied to this, but remained independent in certain crucial respects. He did not deny a certain necessity to the formal abstraction of the sign-logic, but he saw this as a historical concatenation (thematized in terms of the commodity), rather than as a universal condition of experience and language. From the vantage point of Baudrillard's critique of the political economy of the sign, he was able to argue that the heirs of structuralism, in their haste to expunge the vestiges of naturalism, had naturalized the arbitrary, the aleatory and the contingent, thereby creating a new ideology, an ideology without content — an ideologist's ideology.

In the nineteen-sixties, the various attempts to formalize the logic of representations in social anthropology, linguistics, poetics, marxism, and so on, conveyed a markedly positivist ethos. Yet, however rigidly defined they were, the language models heralded as the unifiers of all science actually discouraged a complete regression to nineteenth-century Positivism. Perhaps it was this narrow and continuing scrape with the Positivist temptation that generated the most fruitful tension within the structuralist movement as a whole. Structuralism never succeeded in establishing itself as a purely formal method; yet the original project has remained implicit in the unshakable assumption that an exclusive attention to the problem of representation can produce a new, non-metaphysical, thoroughly agnostic paradigm. The sheer resilience of this belief-system has obscured the fact that structuralism could only save itself from the internal threat of positivism by returning to metaphysics — this time in the form of an intimate (d)enunciation of it. What has remained constant throughout, concealed in the rigor of its attention to representation, is the metaphysical desire to determine the nature of the reality alluded to and falsified in the representational systems under structuralist scrutiny. The specific concern with semiotic, differential, textual, oppositional, decentred, rhizomatic and molecular models is designed from the outset to guarantee certain statements about the nature of the context within which representation happens. Each model attempts to preclude the question of its context on the grounds that such a question can only be answered with another model — and so each model builds within itself as its own predicate the model of its context and possibility of reference. The result is a theoretical trope which declares that reality is always going to be a model and that this model will try to foster the illusion that it is grounded in or tending toward something outside itself. The general picture is similar to what Michel Serres called (without intending to raise any problem) "an isomorphic relation between force and writing."

The critique of the Metaphysics of Representation is based on the assumption of a deductive (or structural) causality: the representer and the represented are always preceded as effects by their representations as cause. Thus, deconstruction, schizo-analysis and genealogy return us, in spite of their own warning, to the determinate linearity of the cause-effect sequence. Indeed, the more one looks at post-structuralist developments, the more one is impressed with the movement's failure to break with the past. Henri Lefebvre referred to structuralism as the "New Eleatism" because it resembled in its naive scientistic phase the classical idealization of the concept as pure generative form. Ricoeur called Lévi-Strauss' structuralism "Kantism without a subject." And if there was a repudiation of the phenomenological and Hegelian traditions at the beginning, these soon returned, like the repressed, in the form of all the neo-structuralist problematics of the body and desire in the work of Derrida, Foucault, Kristeva, Lacan, Deleuze and Barthes. This was not only a resurgence of dangerous materiality; it was felt that these issues could be accomodated within the generalized model of terminological combination and exchange. Everything fitted into a new Master Metaphor of production through marking or inscription (the body's action upon itself?). The Nietszchean revival opened a gap in social-philosophical discourse for the "return to Freud," and so Freud was quickly structuralized. The "seething cauldron" was turned from a 'content' into a 'form', from a drive into a signifier (which retained the force of a drive), and from something which is substituted into the principle of substitution itself. Yet in spite of the influential claims of the Lacanian language model, the post-structuralist version of Freud usually meant a recuperation of instinctual atomism and its attendant nineteenth century energy and engineering models. Those hoary representations of representation in general, tended to be exclusively epistemological efforts to discover the irreducible particles or "constituent elements" of Being. Lévi-Strauss's tabular cultural unconscious and Lacan's master-slave theory of desire were fused and generalized. Everything was seen in terms of the laws of combination and substitution. The microphysics of power, the primary polytextual perversity, and various speculative libidinal dynamics all participated in the original excitement of the Freudian scientific imaginary. The Deleuzian version is especially remarkable in that it presents a theatre of industrial strife in which the personalities of the actors are expressed as machine-like apparatuses whose experiences of others take the form of infantile part-object relations, breaks, flows, grafts, disjunctions and displacements. Any attempt to grasp the idea of another person out of all this is condemned as an Oedipal repression of the levelling flow of libido, whose ideal representation is the "rhizomatic" spread of grass. Like structuralism before it, the more recent French thought is a powerful agent of reduction. It tries to constitute a unified field in which all "effects" are in principle accounted for before they happen. There is something bureaucratic about this: indeed, the scribal models allude to the bureaucratic forms of power. Foucault's power is the omnipresent police state: Fascist, rigid, controlling. It appeals to social scientists. The Derridean model is more like a parliamentary democracy:

ambivalent, flaccid, and obfuscating. It appeals to the literati. One is infinitesimally efficacious, the other, indefinitely absorptive.

Structuralism absorbs difference by making everything different in the same way and for the same reason. The post-structuralist gesture extends and realigns the structural field, but in so doing, it only intensifies the procedures of reduction and abstraction. In Derrida's deconstruction of Lévi-Strauss (*Of Grammatology*), post-structuralism performs this operation directly on the body of its predecessor. The redoubling of the method emerges as an effort to expunge systematically any residues of informality still apparent in the structuralist analysis. Thus, what appears to us in Lévi-Strauss as schematic rationalism and a naive realism of the concept, strikes Derrida as "anarchism", "libertarian ideology", and "Anarchistic and Libertarian protestations against Law, the Powers, and the State in general . . . " (131, 132, 138). In Derrida's example (*Tristes Tropiques*), Lévi-Strauss is trying, rather clumsily, to think the otherness of the Nambikwara: he does this in terms of the oppositions non-writing/writing, Festival/State, community/bureaucracy, speech/coding, etc. Derrida points out that these oppositions have already been absorbed, that writing is (always already) everywhere, and that the Nambikwara are consequently the Same. Every suggestion of their difference is dissolved into the metaphysic of presence. Against the thesis of colonial violence, Derrida advances the arche writing — the immemorial "unity of violence and writing." (106) The whole operation is achieved by what Derrida himself calls the "aprioristic or transcendental regression." (135) The terms of every problem are reduced to an a priori structure of indifference: a field of formal features is delineated and prepared for "incission." Henceforth, any hints of difference in the text to be constituted can be redesigned as the effect of the play of signifiers, so that reference is centripetally trapped. It is a method of "mimesis and castration." (*Positions*, 84)

Given the power of these uniform fields of seamless interrelationality, it is less surprising that Baudrillard, with one eye on the social terrain, the other on successive waves of metatheory, has begun to conceive the only possibility of difference, otherness and the symbolic, in terms of a violent eruption. Baudrillard has been too often misunderstood on this point, for it is natural to assimilate this commotion (as opposed to theoretical "conjuncture") of his work to the Gallic theme of the epistemological break, transgression, reversal and rupture. But there is an important distinction, which follows on the Baudrillardian conception of difference and otherness in the Symbolic. It is in these terms that we may be able to perceive, through reflection on Baudrillard, the outline of a group of important questions which perhaps only structuralism could have raised, but which it has also suppressed in the sameness of its answers. If the continuity of structuralism has been to establish a General Isomorphology, which can only be achieved through progressive formalization, whether positivistic or metaphysical, then the Critique of Logocentrism and the Metaphysic of Representation would appear to have been undermined from the start. In fact, insofar as the whole antilogocentric project came to be tied to a

reflection on "ontological difference" (Heidegger), it was bound to fail, for difference and "alterity" are not likely to be secured ontologically, any more than they may be perceived or appreciated with the tools of formal epistemology alone. This problem arises in Lacan's work, where the symbolic is grasped through the ontic-ontological distinction of the Phallus, a kind of Ur-signifier which "inserts" the subject into the field of language by inaugurating a serial process of substitutions. Here Lévi-Strauss's idea of meaning as an instantaneously generated network serves to absorb the problem of the other (the symbolic) into the combinatory matrix (Patrix?). In contrast, the theme of difference for Baudrillard is neither epistemological nor ontological in the schematic structuralist sense, but social and psychological. In order to secure this domain beyond the purview of formalization-rationalization, Baudrillard defined the symbolic in opposition to the substitutive logic of the sign. The "critique of the political economy of the sign" thus emerged from the standpoint of an irreducible social symbolic excluded from formal fields of coded signification. The uniqueness of this approach was that it allowed Baudrillard to resituate the critique of representation (and logocentrism) in terms of the suppressed question of the relation of the model to reality. Seizing on the ontological ambiguity of the language paradigm, Baudrillard answered this question by developing the theme of operationalization in terms of structures of social signification. (*L'Échange symbolique et la mort*)

The most powerful metaphor in Baudrillard is precisely the loss of metaphor with the advent of a science of "meaning". The ultimate representation, the apotheosis of the subject-object dialectic, then appears as the imaginary deflation of all symbolic tension — a kind of materialization of rationalism through the actualization of the model. In the radical form of this thesis, however, the difference of the symbolic is dissolved in the sign's absorption of otherness, a development which entails nothing less than the "end of the social" and the expiry of measured critique (*In The Shadow of The Silent Majorities*) Baudrillard is forced to shift the burden of his symbolic stance onto the category of ambivalence. This allows him to recover the expressive dimension of symbolic exchange, but at the cost of having to view the latter as the immanent principle of self-destruction at work in all social forms. This explains Baudrillard's return to the mode of a skeptico-transcendental critique of worldly representational illusions: a sort of theory and practice of anamorphosis. *(Les stratégies fatales)*

Baudrillard's Double Refusal

Baudrillard is like Nietzsche to this extent. Each of his writings are works of art which seek to arraign the world before poetic consciousness. In Baudrillard's theorisations, there is a certain return to a tragic sense of history, and this because his imagination moves just along that trajectory where nihilism, in its devalorized form as a critique of abstract power, is both the antithesis of and condition of possibility for historical emancipation. Baudrillard's tragic sense

derives directly from his understanding of our imprisonment in the carceral of a cynical power, a power which works its effects symbolically; and which is, anyway, the disappearing locus of a society which has now passed over into its opposite: the cycle of devalorisation and desocialisation without limit.

But if Baudrillard can be so unsparing in his tragic vision of abstract power as the essence of modern society, then this is just because his theoretical agenda includes two great refusals of the logic of referential finalities: a devalorisation of the social; and a refusal of the autonomous historical subject.[1] More than, for example, Foucault's theoretical critique of a *juridical* conception of power which reaffirms, in the end, the privileged position of the social in modern culture, Baudrillard has taken structuralism to its limits. Baudrillard's thought seizes on the essential insight of structuralist discourse: the eclipse of Weber's theory of rationalization as an adequate basis for understanding modern society, and the emergence of McLuhan's concept of the exteriorization of the senses as the dynamic locus of the modern culture system.[2] Baudrillard's theorisation of the meaning of consumer society begins with a radical challenge to sociology as an already passé way of rethinking society as a big sign-system, and with a refusal of the priviliged position of the politics of historical emancipation. The ambivalence of Baudrillard is just this: his culture critique (*la société de consommation, De la séduction*) is the degree-zero between the historical naturalism of Marxist cultural studies (Baudrillard's structural law of value is the antithesis of Stuart Hall's ideology as the "return of the repressed") and the sociological realism of critical theory. Against Habermas, Baudrillard (*In the Shadow of the Silent Majorities*) reinvokes the sign of Nietzsche as the elemental memory of the tragic tradition in critical theory. Against Foucault, Baudrillard (*Oublier Foucault*) nominates a purely cynical power. And beyond Marxist cultural studies, Baudrillard breaks forever with a representational theory of ideological hegemony. Just like the bleak, grisly, and entirely semiological world of Giorgio de Chirico's *Landscape Painter*, Baudrillard's thought introduces a great scission in the received categories of western discourse. And it does so just because all of Baudrillard's cultural theory traces out the *implosion* of modern experience: the contraction and reversal of the big categories of the real into a dense, seductive, and entirely nihilistic society of signs.

1. The Devalorisation of the Social

> A speechless mass for every hollow spokesman without a past. Admirable conjunction, between those who have nothing to say, and the masses, who do not speak. Ominous emptiness of all discourse. No hysteria or potential fascism, but simulation by precipitation of every lost referential. Black box of every referential, of every uncaptured meaning, of impossible history, of untraceable systems of representation, the mass is what remains when the social has been completely removed.
>
> J. Baudrillard
> *In the Shadow of the Silent Majorities*

Baudrillard is explicit in his accusation concerning the death of the social, and of the loss of the "referent" of the sociological imagination. It's not so much that sociological discourse, the master paradigm of the contemporary century, has been superceded by competing ensembles of *normative* meaning, but, instead, that the privileged position of the social as a positive, and hence normative, referent has suddenly been eclipsed by its own "implosion" into the density of the mass.

> The social world is scattered with interstitial objects and crystalline objects which spin around and coalesce in a cerebral chiaroscuro. So is the mass, an *in vacuo* aggregation of individual particles, refuse of the social and of media impulses: an opaque nebuala whose growing density absorbs all the surrounding energy and light rays, to collapse finally under its own weight. A black hole which engulfs the social.[3]

Two, in particular, of Baudrillard's texts — *l'effet beaubourg* and *In the Shadow of the Silent Majorities* — trace out, in an almost desparate language of absence, that rupture in modern discourse represented by the reversal of the positive, normalizing and expanding cycle of the social into its opposite: an implosive and structural order of signs. This is just that break-point in the symbolic totality where the "norm" undergoes an inversion into a floating order of signs, where strategies of normalization are replaced by the "simulation of the masses",[4] and where the "hyperéalité de la culture" [5] indicates a great dissolution of the space of the social. Baudrillard's theorisation of the end of sociology as a reality-principle, or what is the same, the exhaustion of the social as a truth-effect of a *nominalistic* power, privileges a violent and implosive perspective on society. "Violence implosive qui résulte non plus de l'extension d'un système, mais de sa saturation et de sa rétraction, comme il en est des systèmes physiques stellaires".[6]

In the text, *In the Shadow of the Silent Majorities*, Baudrillard provides three strategic hypotheses (from minimal and maximal perspectives) about the existence of the social only as a murderous effect, whose "uninterrupted energy" over two centuries has come from "deterritorialisation and from concentration in ever more unified agencies".[7] The first hypothesis has it that the social may only refer to the space of a *delusion*: "The social has basically never existed. There has never been any "social relation". Nothing has ever functioned socially. On this inescapable basis of challenge, seduction, and death, there has never been anything but *simulation* of the social and the social relation". On the basis of this "delusional" hypthesis, the dream of a "hidden sociality", a "real" sociality, just "hypostatises a simulation". And if the social is a simulation, then the likely course of events is a "brutal de-simulation": "a de-simulation which itself captures the style of a challenge (the reverse of capital's challenge of the social and society): a challenge to the belief that capital and power exist according to their own logic — *they have none*, they vanish as

apparatuses as soon as the simulation of social space is done".[10] The second hypothesis is the reverse, but parallel, image of the delusional thesis: the social, not as the space of delusion undergoing a "brutal de-simulation", but the social as *residue,* "expanding throughout history as a 'rational' control of residues, and a rational *production* of residues". Baudrillard is explicit about the purely *excremental* function of the social, about the social as the "functional ventilation of remainders".[12] It's just the existence of the social as itself "remainder" which makes of the social machine "refuse processing"; a more subtle form of death, indeed the scene of a "piling up and exorbitant processing of death". "In this event, we are even deeper in the social, even deeper in pure excrement, in the fantastic congestion of dead labour, of dead and institutionalised relations within terrorist bureaucracies, of dead languages and grammars. Then of course it can no longer be said that the social is dying, since it is already the accumulation of death. In effect we are in a civilisation of the supersocial, and simultaneously in a civilisation of non-degradable, indestructible residue, piling up as the social spreads."[13] The third hypothesis speaks only of the end of the "perspective space of the social". "The social has not always been a delusion, as in the first hypothesis, nor remainder, as in the second. But precisely, it has only had an end in view, a meaning as power, as work, as capital, from the perspective space of an ideal convergence, which is also that of production — in short, in the narrow gap of second-order simulacra, and, absorbed into third-order simulacra, it is dying."[14] This, then, is the hypothesis of the "precession of simulacra", of a "ventilation of individuals as terminals of information", of, finally, the death of the social ("which exists only in perspective space") in the (hyperreal and hypersocial) "space of simulation".[15]

> End of the perspective space of the social. The rational sociality of the contract, dialectical sociality (that of the State and of civil society, of public and private, of the social and the individual) gives way to the sociality of contact, of the circuit and transistorised network of millions of molecules and particules maintained in a random gravitational field, magnetised by the constant circulation and the thousands of tactical combinations which electrify them.[16]

2. The Refusal of Historical Subjecthood

Baudrillard also has a hidden, and radical, political agenda. His political attitude is directed not against, the already obsolescent "perspective space of the social",[17] but in opposition to the ventilated and transistorised order of the simulacrum. In the now passé world of the social, political emancipation entailed the production of meaning, the control of individual and collective *perspective,* against a normalizing society which insisted on *excluding* its oppositions. This was the region of power/sacrifice: the site of a great conflict where the finalities of sex, truth, labour, and history, were dangerous just to the

extent that they represented the hitherto suppressed region of use-value, beyond and forever in opposition to a purely sacrificial politics. In the perspectival space of the historical, power could be threatened by speech, by the *agency* of the emancipatory subject who demanded a rightful inclusion in the contractual space of political economy. A politics of rights depended for its very existence on the valorisation of use-value as a privileged and universally accessible field of truth/ethics; and on the production of the emancipated historical subject as an object of desire.

With Baudrillard, it's just the opposite. His political theory begins with a refusal of the privileged position of the *historical subject,* and, what is more, with an immediate negation of the question of historical emancipation itself. Baudrillard's is not the *sociological* perspective of disciplinary power in a normalizing society (Foucault) nor the *hermeneutical* interpretation of technology and science as "glassy, background ideology"[18] (Habermas). In this theoretic, there is no purely perspectival space of the "panoptic" nor free zone of "universal pragmatics".[19] Baudrillard's political analysis represents a radical departure from both the sociology of knowledge and theorisations of power/norm just because his thought explores the brutal processes of dehistoricisation and desocialisation which structure the new communicative order of power/sign. In the new continent of power/sign (where power is radically semiurgical): the relevant political collectivity is the "mass media as simulacra"; the exchange-principle involves purely abstract and hyper-symbolic diffusions of information; and what is at stake is the "maximal production of meaning" and the "maximal production of words" for constituted historical subjects who are both condition and effect of the order of simulacra.[20] It's just this insistence on responding to the challenge of history which draws us on, trapping us finally, within the interstices of a vast social simulation: a simulation which make its *autonomous subjects* only the strategic counterparts of the system's desparate need, given its previous disfiguration of the *social* and of the *real,* for the surplus-production of meaning and of words.

Now, Baudrillard's world is that of the electronic mass media, and specifically, of television. His nomination of television as a privileged simulacrum is strategic: television has the unreal existence of an imagic sign-system in which may be read the inverted and implosive logic of the social machine. The "nebulous hyperreality" of the masses; "staged communications" as the modus vivendi of the power-system; the "explosion of information" and the "implosion of meaning" as the keynote of the new communications order; a massive circularity of all poles in which "sender is receiver" (the medium is the massage: McLuhan's formula of the end of panoptic and perspectival space as the "alpha and omega of *our* modernity"); an "irreversible medium of communication *without response*": such are the strategic consequences of the processing of (our) history and (our) autonomous subjectivity through the simulacra of the mass media, and explicitly, through television. In a brilliant essay, "The Implosion of Meaning in the Media",[22] Baudrillard had this to say of the *intracation of the mass media in the social* or, more specifically, the "implosion of the media in the masses":[23]

> Are the mass media on the side of power in the manipulation of the masses, or are they on the side of the masses in the liquidation of meaning, in the violence done to meaning, and in the fascination which results? Is it the media which induce fascination in the masses, or is it the masses which divert the media into spectacles? Mogadishu Stammheim: the media are made the vehicle of the moral condemnation of terrorism and of the exploitation of fear for political ends, but, simultaneously, in the most total ambiguity, they propogate the brutal fascination of the terrorist act. They are themselves terrorists, to the extent to which they work through fascination... The media carry meaning and non-sense; they manipulate in every sense simultaneously. The process cannot be controlled, for the media convey the simulation internal to the system and the simulation destructive of the system according to a logic that is absolutely Moebian and circular — and this is exactly what it is like. There is no alternative to it, no logical resolution. Only a logical *exacerbation* and a catastrophic resolution.[24]

Baudrillard's refusal of the "reality" of processed history is based on this hypothesis: the new information of the electronic mass media is "directly destructive of meaning and signification, or neutralizes it." [25] Information, far from producing an "accelerated circulation of meaning, a plus-value of meaning homologous to the economic plus-value which results from the accelerated rotation of capital",[26] dissolves the possibility of *any* coherent meaning-system. Confronted with this situation of the "doublebind" in which the *medium is the real and the real is the nihilism of the information society*, our political alternatives are twofold. First, there is "resistance-as-subject", the response of the autonomous historical subject who assumes the "unilaterally valorized" and "positive" line of resistance of "liberation, emancipation, expression, and constitution . . . (as somehow) valuable and subversive".[27] But Baudrillard is entirely realistic concerning how the "liberating claims of subjecthood" respond to the nihilistic demands of the information order of mass media.

> To a system whose argument is oppression and repression, the strategic resistance is the liberating claim of subjecthood. But this reflects the system's previous phase, and even if we are still confronted with it, it is no longer the strategic terrain: the system's current argument is the maximization of the word and the maximal production of meaning. Thus the strategic resistance is that of a refusal of meaning and a refusal of the word — or of the hyperconformist simulation of the very mechanisms of the system, which is a form of refusal and of non-reception.[28]

Against the emancipatory claims of historical subjecthood, Baudrillard proposes the more radical alternative of "resistance-as-object" [29] as the line of political resistance most appropriate to the simulacrum. To a system which represents a great convergence of *power and seduction*, and which is entirely cynical in its devalorisation of meaning, the relevant and perhaps only political response is that of *ironic detachment.*

> This is the resistance of the masses: it is equivalent to sending back to the system its own logic by doubling it, to reflecting, like a mirror, meaning without absorbing it. This strategy (if one can still speak of strategy) prevails today because it was ushered in by that phase of the system.[30]

Baudrillard thus valorizes the position of the "punk generation": this new generation of rebels which signals its knowledge of its certain doom by a *hyperconformist simulation* (in fashion, language, and lifestyle) which represents just that moment of refraction where the simulational logic of the system is turned, ironically and neutrally, back against the system. Baudrillard is a *new wave* political theorist just because he, more than most, has understood that in a system "whose imperative is the over-production and regeneration of meaning and speech",[31] all the social movements which "bet on liberation, emancipation, the resurrection of the subject of history, of the group, of speech as a raising of consciousness, indeed of a 'seizure of the unconscious' of subjects and of the masses" [32] *are acting fully in accordance with the political logic of the system.*

Charles Levin
Arthur Kroker

Notes

1. Baudrillard's theoretical agenda in relationship to French post-structuralism and critical theory is further developed in A. Kroker's "Baudrillard's Marx", mimeo.

2. Michael Weinstein in a private communication to one of the authors has suggested this important insight into "exteriorisation of the mind" as the structuralist successor to Weber's theory of rationalisation.

3. J. Baudrillard, *In the Shadow of the Silent Majorities*, New York: Jean Baudrillard and Semiotext(e), 1983, pp. 3-4.

4. *Ibid*; p. 6.

5. For Baudrillard's most explicit discussion of the simulacrum, see "L'hyperréalisme de la simulation", *L'échange symbolique et la mort*, pp. 110-117.

6. "C'est l'euphorie même de la simulation qui se veut abolition de la cause et de l'effet, de l'origine et de la fin, à quoi elle substitue le redoublement". *L'échange symbolique et la mort*, Paris: Éditions Gallimard, 1976, pp. 114-115.

7. J. Baudrillard, *In the Shadow of the Silent Majorities*, p. 68.

8. *Ibid*; pp. 70-71.

9. *Ibid*; p. 71.

10. *Ibid.*

11. Ibid; p. 73.

12. *Ibid*; p. 77.

13. *Ibid*; pp. 72-73.

14. *Ibid*; pp. 82-83.

15. *Ibid.*

16. *Ibid; p. 83.*

17. *Ibid.*

18. Baudrillard's refusal of the "perspectival space of the social" is aimed directly at Foucault's theorisation of the closed space of the "panoptic". Baudrillard's closing of the ring of signifier/signified or, what is the same, his theorisation of simulacra in conjunction with the structural law of value breaks directly with Habermas' hermeneutical interpretation of ideology.

19. Against Habermas *and* Foucault, Baudrillard theorizes a non-representational and non-figurative *spatialized* universe.

20. J. Baudrillard, "The Implosion of Meaning in the Media", as translated in *In the Shadow of the Silent Majorities*, pp. 95-110.

21. See particularly, "Requiem for the Media", *For a Critique of the Political Economy of the Sign*, pp. 165-184; and "The Implosion of Meaning in the Media". p. 101.

22. *Ibid.*

23. *Ibid*; p. 103.

24. *Ibid*; pp. 105-106.

25. *Ibid*; p. 96.

26. *Ibid*; p. 97.

27. *Ibid*; p. 107.

28. *Ibid*; p. 108.

29. *Ibid.*

30. *Ibid*; pp. 108-109.

31. *Ibid.*

32. *Ibid*; p. 109.

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SIGN AND COMMODITY: ASPECTS OF THE CULTURAL DYNAMIC OF ADVANCED CAPITALISM

Andrew Wernick

It is no accident that Marx should have begun with an analysis of commodities when, in the two great works of his mature period, he set out to portray capitalist society in its totality and to lay bare its fundamental nature. For at this stage in the history of mankind there is no problem that does not ultimately lead back to that question and there is no solution that could not be found in the solution to the riddle of the commodity-structure.

G. Lukacs
History and Class Consciousness

Ideology can no longer be understood as an infra-superstructural relation between a material production (system and relations of production) and a production of signs (culture, etc.) which expresses and marks the contradictions at the "base". Henceforth, all of this comprises, with the same degree of objectivity, a general political economy (its critique), which is traversed throughout by the same form and administered by the same logic.

Jean Baudrillard
For A Critique of the Political Economy of the Sign

I

Baudrillard and Frankfurt

In the affluent conformism of the post-war boom, and now again in the post-60s disillusionment of our own mean-spirited and re-disciplined times, critical social thought has revived the Frankfurt School's spectre of a capitalism that has finally mastered its own historicity and so liquidated any endogenous capacity it may once have had for redemptive self-transformation.

It is perhaps noteworthy that the latest avatars of this gloomy entelechy have emerged not from Germany, the land of its birth, but from France; and, at that, from among an intellectual generation that cut its teeth on a polemic against humanized Hegel and dedicated itself thereafter to the philosophical dismantling of all the other crumbling remnants of Western logocentrism.[1] The reasons for this strange paradigmatic cross-over are partly political. In post-Hitler Germany, the neo-Kantian and anti-Romantic turn taken by critical theory under Habermas and his followers was predicated on the recovery of evolutionary optimism. That (West) German thought since then has been able to sustain this liberal mood is in some measure due to the relative persistence in that country of the extra-Parliamentary activism initiated during the 60s. In France to the contrary, May 68 was a bolt from the stars, as deliriously festive and

total as it was ephemeral: hard even to recall in the business-as-usual normality which so rapidly and depressingly followed. Faced afterwards with a choice between the PCF (and *Union des Gauches*) and Gaullism, it is not surprising that radical French theory should begin to display signs of ultimatism and despair.

But besides these matters of context, French thought in its moment of deconstruction has also come to display profound conceptual parallels with the earlier enterprise of negative dialectics. Both reflect the outcome of a would-be synthetic meditation on Marx, Nietzche and Freud; both share a mortal fear of the social world's ideological self-enclosure; and both exhibit a modernist determination to demolish systematicity, even at the level of critique itself. For that reason, and despite their otherwise irreconcilable epistemic differences, post-structuralism today enjoys an almost privileged access to the previously inadmissible (because Hegelian and anti-objectivist) terrain of Horkheimer, Adorno and Marcuse, and thus also to those thinkers' tragic reading of modern history as the story of Enlightenment's ineluctable progress towards total unfreedom.

Perhaps the clearest and certainly the most sociologically explicit instance of what one might call neo-Marcusian reasoning in contemporary French thought is the work of Jean Baudrillard.[2]

There is admittedly a world (i.e. an ontology) of difference between Marcuse's one-dimensional society and Baudrillard's code-dominated order of generalized exchange. In the praxis-based categories of the former it is instrumental reason which is identified as the glacially reifying agent; whereas in the latter, founded on a neo-Durkheimian anthropology of moral reciprocity, the culprit is commodity semiosis and the universalized commutability of values. But at a deeper level these critical visions converge in their common projection of advanced capitalist society as a model whose fixed determinations propel the collectivity towards a kind of slow but painless spiritual death. Baudrillard, like Marcuse, has also tried to provide psychoanalytic ground for this dystopian teleology by demonstrating its consonance with the morbid promptings of a systematically repressed desire.[3] Likewise, Baudrillard's sociological investigations into mass-mediatized consumerism, the main substance of his *oeuvre*, essentially pursue lines of enquiry previously opened up by the Frankfurt School. The guiding assumptions are identical: that the mass cultural instance has become crucial to social reproduction, that it represents indeed a strategic built-in mechanism for ensuring the social order's real statis through all the incipient upheavals it continues to induce, and that this is why the Revolution (if the term retains any meaning) has perhaps permanently missed the historical boat.

There is no doubt that Baudrillard's exploration of these themes is path-breaking. His problematization of what one might call commodity semiosis in the age of televised repetition represents in many respects a significant advance over Benjamin, and certainly over the North American mass society critics he also appropriates. More than any other contemporary thinker he has succeeded in placing the changed articulation of culture and economy in advanced

capitalist society firmly on the theoretical agenda. But ultimately, I would argue, the theoretical power of his analysis is restricted by the same quasi-fatalistic circularity that vitiated the Frankfurt School's original civilizational lament. In Derridian terms: however decentred and indeterminate, the code that has allegedly triumphed is nevertheless a logos, particularly when identified with death; and such an ascription must itself fall prey to the suspicion of logocentrism. Otherwise put: we do not escape the identity principle simply by identifying the *weltgeist* as a corpse.

More pragmatically, any representation of social reality as culturally (and therefore politically) enclosed in the unidimensionality of a singular psychic space — with Baudrillard this is structural, abstract and at the second degree — is vulnerable to the counterfactual experience of 'actual' history. Theory must be adequate to explain and account for global disturbances like those of the 60s which shake the system of hegemony to its foundations. It is also important to explicate the normal play of cultural and moral politics — struggles over sexual, familial, aesthetic, religious, etc., modes and symbols — which continually mediate, sometimes explosively, the hierarchical force-field of competing material self-interests.

On this score, perhaps, it might be claimed that Baudrillard is in fact somewhat less undialectical than some of his Frankfurt forebears. Whereas in *The Dialectic of Enlightenment* it is critical theory itself which must bear the full weight of opposition,[4] his own anthropological ontology of symbolic exchange comes close to endowing even the wholly reified world of *la société de consommation* with a principle of *internal* contradiction. Symbolic exchange, in the primordial forms of gift, festival, and sacrifice, can no more be repressed than language; and so the more the 'structural law of value' dessicates social space, the more its unsatisfied reciprocities, invested with repressed libidinal energy, come to haunt all the corners of social life, threatening constantly to disrupt the repetitive dumb-show that has come to monopolize the stage. Hence, for Baudrillard, the Days of May. And also, the profound significance of even such trivial occurrences as the great New York graffiti outbreak in 1972,[5] and (in a darker vein) of that more permanent round of media-attuned symbolic-come-actual political violence to which the Western world has become accustomed over the past two decades:

> In the face of purely symbolic blackmail (the barricades of 68, hostage-taking) power falls apart: since it lives off my slow death, I oppose it with my violent death. And it is because we live off a slow death that we dream of a violent one. This very dream is intolerable to power.[6]

But if Baudrillard's social topology does provide a space for otherness and by the same token for crisis it nevertheless takes for granted that the prospect of class upheaval has passed and that capitalism's contradictoriness has come to be confined to the plane of its cultural determinations. Occluding the play of

interests and *contra* Marx, transformation is only imaginable in this perspective as the quasi-magical irruption of *symbolic politics* so that we are left wondering whether Baudrillard has abandoned all hope of there being any actual exit from capitalism at all. Moreover, the antagonism he posits between symbolic and semiotic exchange[7] is pitched at so abstract indeed metaphysical a level that the whole theoretical construct, despite itself, effectively replicates the historical closure that forms the 'real' object of its critique. In this sense, however self-critically, Baudrillard's sociology remains trapped within the order of the simulacrum. Far from having smashed that mirror, his deconstruction of political economy serves ultimately only to shift its angle; so that where it once reflected the code of production it now reflects the code of the Code in a metapsychological simulation of the fourth degree.[8] Correlatively, and beyond a certain level of increasingly poetic abstraction, Baudrillard's formulations leave the mediated and conflictual institution of commodified culture in real history, and the actual politics to which that process gives rise, deeply in the theoretical shade.

Now what is noteworthy about the Baudrillardian circle, beyond the profundity of the pessimism which motivates it, is that it derives from a conceptual reduction at the centre of what is at the same time its most incisive socio-historical insight: namely, that in late capitalism sign and commodity have fused, giving rise to a new form of object (the sign-commodity) and a new order of domination (the ensemble of institutions and discourses which make up consumer culture) neither of which operate any longer according to the dictates of a strictly capitalist (i.e. economic) logic.

The problem is that in thematizing this development Baudrillard has conflated two quite different aspects of the process: the transformation of signs into commodities, ultimately represented by the rise of the culture industry, and the transformation, *via* mass marketing, fashion and status competition, of commodities into signs. It is the latter which interests him, providing as it does a framework for analyzing how the sacred and socially essential realm of symbolic value has been effectively evacuated by public discourse. But the other moment, the penetration of culture by the commodity form, which to be sure also has far-reaching consequences for systemic integration, needs to be separately considered. Not only does Baudrillard fail to do this, but by palming the commercial dimension of post-industrial cultural formation under the sign of the Sign, his attention is deflected from any direct consideration of the cultural dynamics associated with the broader and always ongoing process of commodification as such.

If, then, the Baudrillardian problematic is to be potentiated as the starting-point for a fresh round of enquiries and reflections on our historical situation, its crucial elisions must be addressed, and the totalism of the model correspondingly deconstructed in the light of the complexities which that would introduce. It is in that spirit, and with the admitted risk of falling back into the swamp of second-order, i.e. political economic simulation, that the following very preliminary considerations are put forward. Above all, their main aim is to

open up the question of how, besides providing the basis for a new (post-class?) mode of hegemony, cultural commodification and the impact of commodification on culture can create the space for a kind of politics.

II

Commodification as cultural provocateur

The expansionist principle built into the accumulation process, wherein market survival necessitates growth, has created a form of society whose development to an unprecedented degree has followed a path of constant upheaval and self-overhaul. Evidently, and here too capitalism has changed, the material contradictions of class and economy analyzed at length by Marx by no means exhaust the list of pertinent effects. For besides generating an ever more elaborate, differentiated and at the same time internationalized play of interest antagonisms, and mediating it throughout, capital has also tended to make socio-cultural waves as its imperatives and modalities have steadily imposed themselves and their restless dynamic over the entire surface and depth of social life.

The waves that have emanated from capitalist dynamism at the point of production are perhaps the most familiar aspects of this process. Since the dawning of industry it has been clear that the technological revolution ushered in by the Renaissance and installed by market society at the permanent centre of its production process was bound to transform not only the physical and social environments but the character of experience and the nature of ideology as well. The meditations of classical sociology on industrialism, bureaucracy and secularization were fixed precisely on that point; and critical theory's own rich discourse on technocracy, scientism, and instrumentality has in turn radicalized the analysis and incorporated it into the conventional weaponry of anti-capitalist critique. More recently, the rise of linguistic interests and the incipient obsolescence of print have led a non-Marxist current of thinkers culminating in Innis and McLuhan to push the question to a still deeper level by considering the cultural impact of ever-advancing technology within the communication process itself.

However, much less attention, and certainly less than deserved, has been given to the equally profound effects of capitalism's parallel but distinct tendency to extend the range of the price-system and the commodity form *per se* as a universal model for social relations. Even when posed moreover this issue has proved difficult to disentangle from the former, cross-cutting, problematic of technique. Thus, Lukacs' pathbreaking theory of reification effectively assimilated Marx's category of commodity fetishism to Weber's category of instrumental rationalization; and Benjamin's formative theses on the crisis of art similarly devolve, in the end, on a purely technological point. For all his semiological conflations, Baudrillard's singular achievement in developing and updating this line of thought has been finally to confront the cultural impact of

commodification on something like its own, economically concatenated, ground: in terms, that is, of how an expanding circulation process has transformed the nature of social exchange.

But if Baudrillard has thereby helped emancipate the critical theory of culture from its one-sided pre-occupation with *techne* he has maintained its one-sidedness in another respect by thematizing the cultural dynamics of commodification (which he disdains to examine in any but its most contemporary forms) exclusively from the perspective of that process's conservative moment. Behind the problematic of contained consciousness to which his figuration of the sign-economy responds lies an archaic and paradoxically economistic formula according to which systemically derived ideology functions solely to pacify contradictions that emanate just as solely from interest antagonisms at the base. In Baudrillard's case, adhesion to this schema is contradicted by his explicit rejection of the orthodox class paradigm, and so here the occlusion of commodification's disruptive cultural moment actually leaves a logical gap.

To be intelligible, any system of hegemony must be understood in terms of what threatens it. But what threatens the social order guaranteed ideologically by the Code? Not, apparently, class conflict; and the *revanche* of symbolic exchange is itself a contingency beyond the scope of all control. We are left then with the mere tautology of a structural law of value for which self-replication — *la répétition* — is simply a mode of being. Missing from Baudrillard's account, in short, is an appreciation of how the whole normative apparatus of the sign-commodity, publicity and consumer culture is mobilized, at least in part, to manage the cultural tensions provoked by that same extension of the commodity-form which produced the one-dimensional world of consumerism itself. An analysis of the latter ought properly to begin therefore by considering in what these former might consist. In the first instance, let me suggest, the cultural tensions of commodification take the form of conflicts and struggles over mundane ideological values; and they are provoked all along the seam of economy and and culture where the market's lust for expansion rubs up against pre-existing forms of normativity and moral value.

It would be misleading to represent this dialectic, as both conservative and radical opponents of the advancing market have been prone to do, in terms of a simple opposition between an amoral force and a moral object. For the freedom of commodities to circulate and the freedom of buyers and sellers to exchange what they will without external interference acquires the force of a moral argument; one whose central principle, the autonomized individual, rests its appeal on a whole ideological tradition, stretching from Reformed Christianity to contemporary libertarianism. This is not to deny that "personal freedom," like all ideologies, can be championed in stunningly obtuse or cynical bad faith. There are, rather, two points:

First, the social relations of commodity production — which in their immediate operation always centre on the nexus of exchange — are thoroughly saturated in the medium of normativity, without which they could not function. The market, as Durkheim would say,[9] rests on a moral basis. His argument can be

extended. Established commerce requires not only that the *terms* of trade be contractually agreed upon, but also that there be a social consensus over *what* is for trade and over the *conditions* under which (if at all) that trade is allowed to take place.

Correlatively, and this is the second point, the constant advance of the market into symbolically loaded sectors of social life precipitates at the ideological level in each significant new instance a binary counterposition of pro-market liberalism and anti-market conservatism, communalism, nationalism, familism, etc., whose respective supporters fight like football teams to establish a succession of symbolic lines beyond which (temporarily at least) neither the market nor its enemies are allowed to encroach. Outcomes, whether in the form of truce, compromise or complete rout by one side or the other, are periodically arbitrated by the state on the terrain of law.

The perennial Canadian contest between partisans of free trade and protectionism provides a kind of paradigm case. Symbolically at stake in continental economic integration is the reduction, break-up and de-auratisation of a so-to-speak nationally sacralized signifier. Mainstream policy debate has been conducted in that context as a pragmatic but ideologized negotiation between nationalists and liberals over the extent to which the boundary of the border should be emphasized or de-emphasized in the face of a mounting circulation of goods, capital and information which constantly threaten to erode it. The point is not just that economic politics are lived out as ideology, but that the economic process has ideological ramifications which create the basis in itself for a form of politics.

From the very beginnings of capitalist development the sphere of consumption, originally and without irony conceived as private and public leisure,[10] has been especially subject to the eruption of such conflicts; and the more so the more an expanding productive complex has been able to extend and cultivate the range of enjoyments from orgasm to esteem that money there can buy. The court-imposed sumptuary laws of late Medieval absolutism and the seventeenth century puritan ban on theatre provide early as it were Thermidorean examples. More latterly, the growing sex and drug industries, each inconsistently and fuzzily divided into licit and illicit zones, have provided advanced capitalist society with its own nodal points of cultural tension.

Whether and in what degree to permit the commercial circulation of (addictive) stimulants and (degrading) sexual services in fact touches modern culture on a particularly sore nerve: our chronically inconsistent attitude towards the gratification and control of somatic impulse. Daniel Bell has even argued that this motivational ambivalence, which he attributes to a deepening antagonism between the emergent norms of leisure and work, represents capitalism's primary cultural contradiction.[11] His model of the problem is simplistic and ignores the role of consumerized commodification in its genesis. Nevertheless it remains true that particular issues of permissible consumption (today, par excellence, those pertaining to pornography and censorship) can resonate deeply with broader issues of social reproduction.

It is precisely for this reason that the market, and still more the volatile liberal individualism that is its ideological shadow and harbinger, have such a dangerous edge. The normative limits, in some cases taboos, against which they press are not merely (in fact decreasingly) traditional survivals but symbolic markers of operant mechanisms of control. For the same reason, the moral issues of circulation tend to get linked up, and at the limit generalize on the plane of an ongoing social contest which draws in all the major ideological institutions and players over how the axial principles governing instituted normativity as a whole are to be defined.

Market pressure to shift the moral boundaries, to some degree a necessarily discontinuous process, always runs the risk of opening up a radical cultural space. But such openings, when order is finally restored, can themselves prove merely to have facilitated the passage from one matrix of market-regulating obediency to another. Such indeed has so far been the main axiological drama of post-war North America: first, the establishment of a surplus-repressive cultural hegemony; then its ultra-liberal dissolutions; and then, with suitable adjustments and continuing instabilities, "the return of traditional values" (to quote a 1976 liquor ad) and normalization.

If in late capitalism market penetration at the point of consumption (i.e. of private life) has become the main axis of what we can call circulation politics this is because the development of consumption as a productive force has replaced the geographical extension of the industrial system as the central motif of economic growth. Nevertheless it should be emphasized that analogous modalities of conflict continue to be generated at the point of production also. (A rigorous distinction needs to be made here between the properly cultural contradictions that attend the displacement of natural by exchange economy and the political-economic ones that flow from the economic inequality and exploitation which the market organization of production comes to install. We may think of the former contradictions as processual, the latter as structural, except that, just as in the case of the commodification process at work in the sphere of consumption, the normative inertia against which the spread of commodified production must contend has synchronic significance in the wider process of social reproduction as a whole).

The cultural dynamic associated with the initial establishment of capitalist production is of course largely played out. Artisanal ideals, local particularisms and traditional kin structures have lost their vitality in the industrialized heartlands and only resist the expanding system at its Third and Fourth World margins. However, even on mature capitalism's internal frontier, there are still two respects in which the market penetration of production is incomplete and continues to generate major cultural perturbations.

The first concerns the spread of economic exchange relations into such relatively (or ambivalently) non-commodified sectors of social activity as religion, the family, higher learning and the arts. In none of these diverse instances is the persistence of a pre-capitalist mode of association and work a mere case of culture-lag, for that mode is vital to their functioning as well as to

the authenticity on which the credibility of their various products depends. Under the circumstances the market, whether through example, through the emergence of fully commercialized rivals, or through the actual mobilization of material interests, can only advance slowly. As it does so what comes to be established on each institutional site is a semi-permanent force-field of conflicting pressures internalized by the actors themselves (clergy, housewives, students, artists, etc.) as role-conflict and externalized as tendency struggles between competing moral/ideological currents and movements over the relative virtues of liberal accommodation and traditionalist hostility to the forces of progress.

These frictions are hard to regulate from above. Indeed they are exacerbated by the ambivalence with which they must be officially regarded. On the one hand, the charter values of Truth, Knowledge, Love, Beauty, etc., ceaselessly activated in value-transmitting institutions by the irritant of creeping commercialism, play an important rhetorical role in capitalism's traditional legitimation as a civilizing force; but when roused they can also function as genuine transcendentals that provide troublesome reminders of loss, supercession and difference. Thus, for the churches of the West, where Christianity was thought to have been tamed, the rise of TV evangelism and other quintessentially business enterprise forms of priestcraft represents not merely an economic threat in the competition for congregations[12] but a repulsive counter-pole of 'bad religion' against which countervailing currents of increasingly radical transformism have been driven to define themselves. As one important corollary the previously cosy relation between organized religion and the capitalist state has begun to be radically upset.

Another, and perhaps more primordial, level at which structural resistance to the market penetration of production relations provides ongoing cultural conflict concerns the pressing into circulation of that strangest commodity of them all: labour-power. Quite apart from the shattering of traditional ties and attendant socio-cultural explosions that greeted the initial establishment of a mass-market for 'free labour', conflicts have continued to arise thereafter by virtue of that dynamic propensity of the market to redefine all work-functional energy as commercially available, regardless of the instituted status of its alienable owners. The resultant ideological dialectic is analogous with the one already described in the case of commodification at the point of consumption, except that here the codings at issue mark human agents, and indeed at the very juncture of their literal inscription within the differential orders of wealth and power.

Also, the process can cut more than one way. Where the change in status implied by the commodification of labour-power represents real demotion or loss of autonomy (one thinks here of small family farms and independent professionals) it will naturally be opposed by those affected in the romantically conservative name of the symbolic order thereby displaced. But the reverse can occur when labour market participation provides the basis for rescuing ascribed social categories (women, Catholics, blacks, etc.) from the even more subordinate

status, outside the real world of exchange-economy, to which they would otherwise be culturally relegated. Here resistance to the expanding labour market comes from those already in it, while its newest recruits appeal to exchangist ideology against the continued application to themselves of the old, discriminatory norms.

Within the labour market itself, these latter, reflecting pre- (or trans-) capitalist hierarchies of race, age and gender, crystallize out as so many mechanisms of dominant group protectionism; which function to ensure that insofar as inferiorized categories are not excluded from paid employment altogether, they enter its equivalence system on markedly non-eqquivalent terms. The point here, as with the contradictions of commodification in general, is that over and above the material conflicts they provoke, such instances of unequal exchange are shot through with ideological contradictions which can become active in their own right. 'Minority' movements for equal opportunity that get blocked tend to radicalize by transvaluing that which has set the collectivity they represent stigmatically or condescendingly apart. Conversely, cultivation of cultural identity among the oppressed can trigger struggles for justice.

The ideological contradictions attending the application of equivalency norms to women in the face of patriarchal gender ascriptions have been particularly dense and slow to resolve. As early as the 1780's, Mary Woolstencraft showed how the abstract egalitarianism of possessive individualism could provide the basis for a critique of patriarchal restrictions on legal rights; and since then successive waves of feminist agitation, bolstered both by the gradual delegitimation of explicit male supremacism and by the increasing *de facto* normality of extra-domestic female employment have extended the battleground to every sphere of life. However, even more than in the case of racism, which frequently articulates with deeply rooted imperial/national legitimations of the state, the freedom of women to circulate on the same economic and social terms as men has also been resisted not just because it challenges an entrenched system of power and privilege, but because the patriarchal ideology that justifies that resistance (always circling around the claim that women are somehow "different") has continued, through all the vicissitudes of cultural liberalization, to play a crucial role in the maintenance and motivation of capitalist order. At this level, the need to sustain effective social mechanisms of biological reproduction has functioned largely as an alibi not only for the continued valorization of an asymmetrical gender code but also for the maintenance of the hierarchical family/class system which that code underwrites.

In the biblically resuscitated imaginary of early industrialism, the cultural identification of wage-labour with the 'masculine' roles of breadwinner and household head played a crucial pacifying role — over and above its various economic advantages to capital — by securing for the subordinated male worker a kind of compensatory, Adamic self-respect. At first, lacking the cumulated cultural force to wage a direct attack on the triadic fortress of family/church/school erected to protect this productivist nexus, the women's

movement and the equivalency principle it championed gnawed away instead at juridicial inequalities in the fields of family law, civil rights and the franchise. Later, as the fortress began to collapse under the weight of more technically and socially developed conditions, it became possible for second wave feminism to crash over the sacred boundaries of hearth and home and finally confront the eternal verities of constructed gender difference at their intimate institutional source.

Here as elsewhere, however, capitalist modernization brings no guarantees of fundamental progress. For the displacement of work-centred religio-morality by and within the theatre of consumerism merely shifted the register of genderic contradictions without ceasing to engage intractable issues of global integration and control. In this respect, it is of more than token significance that the book by Friedan[13] which did so much to popularize the modern women's movement in North America was based on an insider's critique of fashion magazines. Above all, it was the entry of signs, particularly iconic ones, into mass commercial circulation which gave patriarchal ideology a new lease on life by facilitating the spectacular passage of ideal femininity, as abstract signifier of status and desire, from the esoteric world of art to the ubiquitous iconography of mass culture and publicity. In that realm, the mythological female has come to embody not just the reward and condition for work but the promised happiness of consumption as well. Thus we see how a ruse of commodification has evolved a new obstacle to the process wherein the egalitarianism implicit in universalized market exchange strives, ever more powerfully, for independent realization.

The dialectic of course does not simply terminate in the victory of the *Playboy* syndrome; and a quarter century of feminist and market pressure, the latter operating by way of a pseudo-equalizing extension of sexual objectificatin to the male, has begun to seriousy undermine consumerism's heavy masculinist ethos. Sexual bias will only finally be eliminated from consumer culture when the commodity's pleasure principle has become (dysfunctionally) polymorphuous. So, even on the second-order plane of media imagery, the structural character of the contradiction is likely to persist.

III

The sign-commodity and hegemonic regulation

The cultural provocations of commodification and the politics of normativity to which they give rise do not unfold in a vacuum but in a field already indexed to issues of hegemonic regulation and already occupied by that whole range of institutions from political parties and churches to showbiz and schools which are engaged in the collective formulation and dissemination of values.

There is no absolute sense in which any of these ideological apparatus can be considered structurally dominant[14] since their forms of influence are incommensurate and there is always a degree of free play between them in

which the relations of inter-institutional force can radically and conjuncturally alter. Nevertheless there is one institutional complex within the superstructural configuration of advanced capitalism which can claim some kind of significative priority in that it is through the omnipresent refractions of its lens (in every sense a screening) that the whole process of cultural formation is continuously and publicly represented; and this is the one comprised by the (for the most part) commercially operated organs of mass communication along with all the related industries for the production of news, publicity and entertainment. In addition to its importance within the game of capitalist self-maintenance this sector is also significant systemically as the very incarnation of the commodity-form's seductive penetration of culture. And so it is precisely here, in the repressive desublimations and codifying biases of the culture/consciousness/sign industry that we confront the puzzle of commodification's other, i.e. conservative, integrative, dimension; and with that puzzle, as I have suggested, the broader mystery of how the universalizing commodity in its articulation with the cultural process establishes automatic mechanisms to regulate the normative disorder it simultaneously helps to provoke.

The automatic character of mass consumer culture's ideological operation needs to be stressed for it is the very hallmark of its work, an unprecedented indication that here at last is a consciousness-shaping institution which by its very nature functions functionally and can never get wholly out of hand. Explanations of this functionality in terms of class political manipulation — evocative phrases like Ewen's 'captains of consciousness' spring to mind — miss the point entirely. The rise of Madison Avenue, Disneyland, Tin Pan Alley and the whole corporate capitalist dream machine marks a decisive shift away from personalized ideological powers and the emergence, to the contrary, of a fully programmed cultural sphere wherein, to use Laingian terms, 'praxis' on both sides of the production/consumption divide has been effectively superceded by 'process.'[15] In effect, the powerful ideological inflection of commercial mass culture, whether in the direct form of culture-for-sale or at the second degree as selling-by-culture, is no more than a by-product of the accelerated circulation and increased surplus it makes possible. That inflection has therefore to be accounted for in the same way: in terms of the culture industry's inner economic determinations and the effect of these on its manner of processing and representing potentially hot cultural materials.

Baudrillard's crucial refinement of this thesis is that at the most basic level the ideological element of mass-mediated culture is determined by the interplay established there between mass-produced signs and mass-produced commodities; and, further, that this new alignment of sign and commodity is responsible not only for its systematically biased content but also, and more fundamentally, for bias in its very mode of signification as well. The saga of the sign he unfolds reads like a post-modernist update of alienation theory. Infinitely replicable, displaced from symbolic time and place, converted into commodities in their own right, signifiers become free to float independently of any organic communicative process; and in that condition like landless proletarians they

rejoin social reality artificially in the form of the semiotically-endowed mass consumable commodity. Finally, as arbitrary markers linking the corporate game of product differentiation to the consumer merry-go-round of status and fashion, the signifying elements of design, packaging and promotion are drained of meaning in the self-referential play of their coded differences, which is exactly how, in deadening abstraction, they come to rule. Consciousness, in Baudrillard's account, is not so much falsified as headed off at the pass: the media factories of commercial semiosis prevail, in his pregnant phrase, by "fabricating non-communication."[16]

Without denying that such a tendency towards enforced meaninglessness is relentlessly at work, it would be premature however to declare it complete. Even advertising copy has become a zone of ideological controversy, and outraged responses to media stereotypes of women and ethnic groups testify to their continuing referential power. This being so, the axiological content of mass-mediatized culture, and not just its semiological or, for that matter, sensory forms, remains relevant to an understanding of its cultural effectivity.

In fact at the level of communicative substance, the semio-economic determinations of the culture industry *doubly* stamp its effluvia as token-bearers of a would-be pacifying ideology. On the one hand, the subject-object inversion prescribed by their consistently consumerist mode of address occults class and makes a world without capital unimaginable. On the other hand, the pseudo-reconciliations of gender, nature/culture etc., made possible on that mythological basis, and positively reinforced by the premium placed on popularity values, serve to exorcize culturally-based sources of conflict as well. The former of these mechanisms, consumerism, is perhaps too familiar to require further elaboration. But the latter, which might be dubbed the middle-of-the-road effect, does call for some comment: not only as a comparatively unexamined topic,[17] but also because the consensualist modality of mass culture holds the key, or so I would argue, to the riddle of the commodity's limited but effective capacity for cultural self-control.

With respect to this issue, Baudrillard's insistence on the centrality of commodity semiosis within the mass cultural ensemble while not wrong is unhelpful, and further clarification depends on our disentangling the relation he condenses between that moment, represented by publicity, and its obverse, the commodification of signs, represented by entertainment. What we discover in fact is that within this same complex duality the order of effectivity is here reversed: in the case of cultural tension management as opposed to that of consumerist inversion it is entertainment rather than advertising that provides the dominant paradigm for a type of normative intervention which the culture industry, just by virtue of what it is, is driven to make.

The golden rule of show business is not to antagonize the audience, for that is the hand that feeds. Indeed, its members should be positively stroked, both as the fine people they are and for the decent or at any rate normal values they hold. To be entertained is above all to be made to feel good. Where the audience is live, local, and socially homogeneous, the collective totems must be very

precisely acknowledged; but the more mass and therefore ideologically diverse it is, the more general the level of conventionality to which appeal must be made. Where there is not merely diversity but conflict, the task of flattering and in the same moment defining the collective identity of the audience is particularly difficult. The most cliché-ridden depths of popular mythology must then be plumbed, and awkward topics, controversial issues, and even potentially abrasive accentuations of genre and style must be avoided. A safe strategy for maximizing sales, box-office and ratings, in short, is to go mid-market and assiduously hug the middle-of-the-road.

Of course, if the entertainment industry, throughout all its branches, exhibited nothing but this entropic tendency, then its equally important need for constant thematic and stylistic innovation could not be met. But in this dialectic, the experimenter's licence to practice is granted in return for bearing all the economic risks, and successful novelties are rapidly co-opted, converted into mannerisms, and embalmed for later recycling as pseudo-historical nostalgia.

Only in popular music has this controlled oscillation ever gotten at all out of hand. The reason is not hard to find. Because of its intimate relation to ritual, emotion and physicality, music as the least directly representational art-form is also the least susceptible, whatever the technological and economic mode, to whole-scale serialization. It is the one sector of mass culture truly haunted by the return of symbolic exchange, and its history has constantly intertwined with that of the national, class and generational movements whose tragic, rebellious or celebratory moods it has been able, with fluctuating degrees of immediacy, to express. A central thread in this story has been the emergence of Afro-American music and its phased appropriation by successive layers of white working and middle class youth as a quasi-Dionysian dance cult. However, the point should not be over-emphasized; for even at this relatively organic level the major ruptures with middle-of-the-roadism — rag-time, jazz, swing, rock, reggae, punk — have been ambiguous in their meaning and ultimately subject to absorption by, or even *as*, the industry-dominated mainstream.

While the entertainment industry's penchant for self-censorship, cultural compromise and normative conventionalism has been a genuine expression of its own bad essence, these tendenices have of course been strongly reinforced by its ties with the whole machinery of mass media advertising. The degree to which advertising revenues directly pay the costs of mass entertainment varies from medium to medium, although given the extent of financial and functional interlock these differences may be misleading. In the limit case, American network TV and radio, the subsidy is total, and so too is the revenue-dependence of the medium on the size (and to a lesser degree the mix) of the audiences its programming can command; for it is on the ratings that advertising rates themselves rigidly depend. Here also, where they are compulsory, the conservative ideological implications of popularity values are most rigidly in evidence. Even less than media programmers, commercial sponsors cannot afford to alienate potential slices of their market. In effect, a double vigilance must

therefore be maintained: on the one hand to ensure that only acceptable cultural risks are taken in satisfying and competing for the medium's own audience; and on the other to ensure that the advertising material itself hits absolutely the right consensual spot when addressing its target market.

In its actual functioning, advertising in fact represents the degree zero of show business audience technique. The flattery of the performer was at bottom always a form of self-promotion. In consumer advertising, however, the trick is refined by naturalizing and in the full sense normalizing the conventional cultural values which that flattery sought to confirm, and which, *mutatis mutandis*, are here invoked to valorize the product. The sales aim of commodity semiosis is to differentiate the product as a valid, or at least resonant, social totem, and this would be impossible without being able to appeal to taken-for-granted systems of cultural reference.

In this sense advertising must go even further along the path of popularity than entertainment. The latter, faced by embarrassing cultural divisions, can retreat to jokes and good humour. In so far as conventionality is torn or contorted by ongoing ideological contradictions advertising, however, is constrained to at least construct the appearance of a non-contradictory value-consensus. This is obviously the case where the product's intended market, e.g. for "feminine" cigarettes or "masculine" perfume, is by definition ambivalent toward the cultural codings *prima facie* associated with it. But in a more diffuse sense, the whole discourse of publicity, including, by extension, the subsidized programming which colonizes the mass consumer market as an audience, absolutely requires a normality-pole. The creative genius of advertising and its platforms of associated messages is that it is able to establish one, mythically; and in such a way, moreover, as to occlude the consumerist ontology that anchors it, to reconcile all the cultural antinomies of an unstable ideological universe, and then — through an iconography that adheres even in its most stark typifications to the canons of realist representation — to pass the whole thing off, despite its uncanny resemblance to the familiar world in which we live, as a wistful dream.

IV

Breaking the circle

During the 1960's advertising was the most, perhaps the only, stable medium of mass ideological communication. Besides the downplaying of technological futurism and the increased use of sexual themes (the latter a cause of disturbance in itself), publicity's ideological feathers seemed hardly ruffled by the culture-storm[18] blowing, apparently, all around. Yet that storm did break out; and, as I have tried to indicate, the superstructural *decallage* within which it brewed and grew to hurricane force expressed a determinate historical moment of that same dialectic of culture and commodity which was also responsible for the spell-binding integration of the commercialized sign.

Baudrillard, who ignored the mediations by which both these moments are connected to capitalism's commodification drive, was transfixed by the Manichaean absoluteness of their opposition. Had the mediations been attended to, the operations of artificial semiosis would doubtless have seemed less omnipotent and the mass outbreak of the Symbolic less conjuncturally mysterious than he made them out to be. Of course, it is hardly surprising that the Edenic epiphanies and street-fighting psycho-dramatics of 1968 nowhere ushered in the New Age: the requisite programme, organization and political forces were altogether lacking. But what that temporary breakdown of normal cultural controls did demonstrate, against all the end-of-ideology soothsaying of the previous decade, is that at the ideological level *par excellence* the development of post-industrial capitalism is as conflictual as it is consensualist; and, indeed, that under the right circumstances accumulated cultural tensions can even engender a global social crisis.

Theory and the evidence of history thus combine to provide grounds for hoping that the circle of the commodity-form's normative self-regulation can indeed be broken. To what extent such a fateful outcome can be deliberately strategized is, however, a different question. Because of the complexity of the process wherein cultural politics arise, the rectilinear relation its issues bear to matters of class hegemonic control, and the potentially self-undermining character of any transparently instrumental invervention into hot zones of consciousness, we may doubt the feasibility of anything so ambitious as a co-ordinated, multi-level, plan of cultural campaign. But in a more circumspect and *ad hoc* sense, Marx's directive to enter the "real battles" of the world in order to "show it what it is actually fighting about"[19] does retain here its moment of activist truth.

Of course, for us it is the commercial media more than organized religion which require demystification; and within the field of cultural politics considered in this paper demystification is hardly enough. The positive deployment of transcapitalist discourse and symbology is also necessary, indeed crucial, since unlike the recognition struggle of master and slave which underlies Marx's concept of class conflict the cultural dialectic of commodification has no truly inner principle of sublation. This, on the plane of trade-union consciousness, and leaving aside its Jacobin inspiration, is presumably what Lenin meant by saying that revolutionary consciousness had to come "from without." On the plane of normative consciousness and in a spirit of preparatory *attentisme* an even more idealist formula could easily be proposed: the stronger and richer the transcendental cultural resources lying to hand at the moment when some fresh round of superstructural troubles break out, the more likely it is that something truly human will strive to emerge — and the greater the chance, perhaps, that we finally will.

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Notes

1. See V. Descombes, *Le Même et l'Autre* (Éditions de Minuit, Paris 1979), translated as *Modern French Philosophy* (Cam. U. Press, 1980).

2. In this essay I am focussing mainly on Baudrillard's early writings, particularly *Le Système des Objets* (Gallimard 1968); *La Société de Consommation* (Dengel 1970); *Pour une Critique de l'Économie du Signe* (Gallimard 1972); *Le Miroir de la Production* (Casterman 1973); and *L'Échange Symbolique et la Mort* (Gallimard 1976). For English translations of the latter, see *Mirror of Production* (Telos 1975); *For A Critique of the Political Economy of the Sign* (Telos 1981), and the excerpts from *l'Échange Symbolique* in J. Fekete (ed.) *The Structural Metaphor* (Univ. of Min. Press, 1984).

   It would require a whole separate analysis to consider whether, in switching from a sociological to a metaphysical exploration of nihilism in the later texts like *Oublier Foucault, La Séduction* and *Stratégies Fatales*, Baudrillard's social ontology of sign and commodity has remained basically the same.

3. This is the basic motif of *L'Échange Symbolique et la Mort*.

4. Pessimism about proletarian consciousness and correlative elevation of (critical) theory's role within the social dialectic, while absolutized in this 1944 text, was an explicit theme of Frankfurt thinking from the early 30's. See M. Horkheimer, *Critical Theory* (Herder and Herder, 1972) pp. 211-216.

5. Baudrillard, *L'Échange Symbolique*, pp. 118-28.

6. *Ibid.*, p. 73.

7. Baudrillard, *Pour une Critique de l'Économie Politique du Signe*, pp. 194-99.

8. The lament simulates what it projects, and for neo-Kantians (aren't we all?) there can be no escaping the fictitious character of the world. For Baudrillard's most explicit attempt to place himself outside this circle, see *L'Échange Symbolique*, pp. 7-10 and pp. 110-17.

9. The classic statement is to be found in E. Durkheim, *The Division of Labour in Society* (Free Press, 1964) Chap. 7.

10. For a brilliant traditionalist critique of the modern evolution of leisure see J. Pieper, *Leisure: The Basis of Culture* (Pantheon, 1952).

11. D. Bell, *The Cultural Contradictions of Capitalism* (Basic Books, 1976).

12. Ecclesiastical ecumenicism, from the angle of religion's absorption into the culture industry, represents a movement towards cartelization between the largest enterprises. The perverse Paisley protest has its moment of truth here.-

13. B. Friedan, *The Feminine Mystique*.

14. For the notion of 'dominance' in this context see L. Althusser, Ideology and the State' in his *Lenin and Philosophy* (NLB, 1971). Althusser's formulation is much too rigid, however. It is crucial, especially, to disentangle dominance (of an apparatus) vis-à-vis *individual* formation from the question of inter-institutional influence and power within society *as a whole*.

15. For a good social psychological elaboration of this ultimately Sartrian distinction see A. Esterson, *The Leaves of Spring* (Tavistock, 1970).

16. Baudrillard, For a Critique of the Political Economy of the Sign, p. 169.

17. Although they do not elaborate the point, a recent essay by G. Murdoch and P. Golding, 'Capitalism, Communication and Class Relations' states the main issue very well:

    ". . . the determining context for production is always that of the market. In seeking to maximize this market, products must draw on the most widely legitimated central core values while rejecting the dissenting voice or the incompatible objection to a ruling myth. The need for easily understood, popular, formulated, undisturbing, assimilable fictional material is at once a commercial impertive and an aesthetic recipe". Curran, Gurevitch and Wollacott, (eds.) *Mass Communication and Society* (Edward Arnold, 1977) p. 40.

18. This evocative phrase was coined by H. L. Nieburg in his insightful anthropological study of 1960's counter-culture, *Culture Storm: Politics and the Ritual Order* (St. Martin's, N.Y., 1973).

19. Letter from Marx to Ruge 1843. See D. McLellan (ed.) *Karl Marx: Early Texts* (Blackwell, 1979).

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BAUDRILLARD, CRITICAL THEORY AND PSYCHOANALYSIS

Charles Levin

Introduction

This essay presents a condensed version of an argument about the sign, the object and the symbol.[1] Its purpose, then, is to suggest how psychoanalytic thought, particularly "object-relations theory", may provide a way out of the stalemate in critical theory.[2]

The theory of reification, although essential to critical theory, is itself based on intellectualized reifications of what it means to be a "subject" and not an object.[3] The traditional theory of reification is described in the light of Baudrillard's work and then rejected in favour of another which views reification as an obsessional project of closing down or emptying out "potential space".

The phrase "potential space" was coined by D.W. Winnicott to refer to a dimension of "transitional" phenomena intermediate to subjectivity and objectivity. My most basic theoretical assumption is that the "space" of the "transitional object" is a place where people actually live, where they are creative, where they interact in depth, and where things are invested with meaning.

I

The best general approach to Baudrillard is through the philosophical tension in his work between structuralist social theory (Lévi-Strauss, Barthes) and critical theory (Lukacs, Marcuse). These are the two modern traditions, dragging their French and German antecedents with them, which are most obviously at work in Baudrillard's early texts. It would be a mistake, however, to think that he ever synthesized them, although it is true that the interplay of structuralism and cultural Marxism determined, to some extent, Baudrillard's own distinctive way of choosing a post-structuralist position. The net theoretical effect is more like the introduction of two corrosives which, having devoured each other, leave nothing behind but a luminous theoretical vacuum. Baudrillard's writing has, since *L'Échange symbolique et la mort*,[4] increasingly approximated a blank surface reflecting only the awful terror of what it had once tried to name.

What is interesting about critical theory and structuralism together (at least, in the medium of Baudrillard) is the dilation of their theories of the *object*. A reading of Baudrillard makes one want to return to these traditions simply to listen to the way objects are talked about. Baudrillard caught this element in their discourse early on,[5] and developed it rapidly. Armed with just the two

theoretical languages, the neo-Marxian and the structuralist, he abandoned himself to the world of things.

Jean Baudrillard has a knack for a kind of McLuhanesque "in depth participation," and he turns the two theoretical languages into quite precise tools of description which evoke the object world with amazing poetical force and tension. Although in the end he virtually destroys both structuralism and critical theory (something Baudrillard does to almost everything he touches), he has managed to extract and deliver a lot of what is interesting in the two traditions before bringing them into mutual disrepute. Most of this material has to do with *objects*.

Before Baudrillard critical theory had a great deal to say explicity about objects, which is odd because critical theory has always claimed to be more concerned with the fate of subjects. It can be argued, however, that critical theory has very little of value to say about subjects. According to critical theorists, subjects are beings that make things; they experience a world (usually one they have made themselves without knowing it); they transfer their feelings onto the world, and they internalize authority. In other words, subjects are beings who (according to critical theory) produce, project and introject.

Structuralists aren't much better on this score, although on the surface they may appear to be more sophisticated. Usually, a structuralist begins by arguing that the subject is not an ontological category. There is some value in this argument. But then the structuralists go on to imply that subjects are not epistemological categories either. They do this by arguing that the subject is "decentered". This is true, but not very interesting by itself, and not very different from what critical theory has already said. After all, what does decentering mean, if not producing, projecting and introjecting? The only difference is that critical theory disapproves of this sort of heteronomy, and wants to get rid of it, whereas structuralism thinks it is a good thing, and wants to extend it. Both traditions agree that the subject's experience is false, but not on the reasons why. There is nothing new in these arguments, taken by themselves, but something quite interesting happens when Baudrillard plays them off, one against the other.

Baudrillard is usually thought of as a structuralist or a post-structuralist thinker rather than as a critical theorist in the tradition of the Lukacs/Frankfurt School. But in fact, he remains deeply involved in the latter tradition. It is true that he has made his name as a debunker of Teutonic theory and is notable for being openly anti-dialectical. But Baudrillard is not just contra Marx: he is also contra Foucault, contra Saussure, contra Levi-Strauss, contra Freud, contra Deleuze, etc. In fact, Baudrillard is against any thinker whose ideas he takes seriously. To use a word of Marx's, he is a "counterdependent" thinker. His arguments nearly always depend on the credibility of the categories of the other thinkers he defines himself against. This feature of Baudrillard's discourse is quite typical of critical theory, and secretly dialectical. Perhaps he is saying that if dialectics are not, in his view, an intrinsic property of the world, they are certainly a feature of discourse about subjects and objects. At any rate, when

Baudrillard launches his critique of critique in *The Mirror of Production*, his tone is not so much that of a dyed-in-the-wool structuralist as that of a critical theorist denouncing himself.

There is another, more fundamental reason why Baudrillard should be considered a critical theorist. In fifteen years, since his first sociological publications, which were a review of McLuhan's *Understanding Media*[6] and his own *Le système des objets*, Baudrillard has not written a single thing which was not an attempt to elaborate a theory of reification à la Lukács, Horkheimer, Adorno, Marcuse — with a strong dose of Benjamin. The theory of reification is of course a story about a struggle between subjects and objects in which objects appear, if only temporarily, to have gained the upper hand. Broadly, a theory of reification is not only a theory of misplaced concreteness or of false objectivity (which implies a false subjectivity, of course); it goes further and claims that when objects are misunderstood in this way, they return to haunt the subject and spoil his whole experience. The theory of reification which Baudrillard works with has definite roots which go all the way back to Georg Lukacs and Karl Marx. Like Lukacs' important work, all of Baudrillard's work is a meditation on Marx's theory of commodity fetishism. This makes Baudrillard a critical theorist. There is nothing more essential to cultural Marxism than the theory of reification, which at root is always based on the idea that the structure of the commodity is in some way the abstract essence of capitalist life. If in his later work Baudrillard seems to part more and more with the rationality of critical theory and its interest in the emancipation of subjects, I think it is because his theory has developed gradually into something quite different from the traditional critical theory of reification: it has turned into what Baudrillard now calls "simulation". But this is still a theory of reification.

In order to explain this development, it is useful to return to Baudrillard's very clear analysis in *Critique of the Political Economy of the Sign*.[7] The argument is quite complex, and it depends first of all on a reading of Marx's theory of commodity fetishism.

Marx argued that objects (i.e., produced goods, or use values) are turned into commodities when they acquire through a complicated socio-historical development the additional characteristic of exchange value. Apart from the details which make this development specifically capitalist, one can say that, in Marx, to the extent that objects seem to become pure exchange values, they enter into a system, the commodity system, which appears to act independently of their producers and consumers. The origin of objects in labour and their purpose in satisfying needs tend to be obscured from public view. This is the argument that Lukacs elaborated into the theory of reification.[8] It claims that this false and borrowed power of objects can operate on three and perhaps even four levels: 1) the socio-economic; 2) the epistemological; 3) the practical; and 4) sometimes also the erotic.

Through the lens of critical theory, Marx can be read as having said or nearly having said: 1) that social beings are deprived of their social ground by a process of *extraction*, which robs them of economic power; 2) that they are thereby also

deprived of their (social) knowledge by a process of *abstraction* which is induced by the systematic and objectivistic quality of exchange value; 3) having been economically reduced and cognitively seduced, people begin to forget how to respond: they can no longer act or reciprocate. They can only react to what is "given", as if what is given were an intractable "second nature".[9] And finally, 4) we might add, following the arguments of many critical theorists, that there is a fourth dimension to the effects of reification — the one that I have described as erotic. Social beings not only tend to lose their power to be, to perceive and to act: reification also neutralizes or restricts or damages their ability to fantasize, which lies at the very root of everybody's ability to think.

Of course, this last dimension owes something to Freud. All told, reification amounts to a very serious charge to make against anybody, let alone a whole society. It means that commodity fetishism — or if you like, falsely perceived objects — are such a powerful force that they penetrate deeply enough into the lives of individual subjects to control their inner worlds. It sound like a paranoid fantasy, like something Judge Schreber might have thought up.

Now there are two things about this theory of reification that are important to note. The first is that it is hard to imagine how critical theory could ever do without it, for the notion that the commodity form somehow congeals all the bad contingencies of an historical era is fundamental. How can critical theory continue to be critical in the absence of some such hypothesis? The second is that it is hard to imagine how the theory of reification could possibly be true.

Now, these questions have been raised in a way that is obviously slanted for the purpose of discussion Baudrillard's work. Some detail may be distorted, but the underlying issues are fundamental, and Baudrillard has responded to them in a highly original way which is still coherent with the critical tradition. Equipped with the theoretical language of structuralism and some insights from French writers such as Bataille and Foucault, Baudrillard waded into some very deep water indeed in the mid 1970's, and he took critical theory along with him.[10] There was something quite innocent about this at the beginning. In his 1967 review of McLuhan, he said that when you generalize the slogan "the medium is the message" you have the "very formula of alienation in a technical society". He was interested in looking at the commodity as a medium of social values and as a model of public discourse. The idea was very simple.

All that Baudrillard did, in fact, was to point out that the object becomes a commodity not only by virtue of being an exchange value, to be measured and exchanged against other exchange values; the object is also and especially a commodity *because it is a sign*.[11] (This seems so obvious to many of us now that perhaps it should be disputed in order to make the whole discussion more interesting.) It means of course that the commodity is a signifier and a signified, with all the features of abstraction, reduction, equivalence, discreteness and interchangeability implied in the Saussurean theory of the sign. A commodity is not just an exchange value which obscures its origin in labour as an object of, by and for utility; it is an object which has been inserted as an arbitrary term into a purely self-referential system of signifiers which decides the object's meaning

before anyone can possess it or consume it or give it away. The commodity is an object in a system of objects; it is consumed as a sign of that system.

Baudrillard calls this phenomenon the "sign-object". He replaces Marx's notion of the commodity form (which is a social form tending to obscure the object's content) with the idea of an "object-form". This object form is also a social form, like Marx's commodity, but it has much deeper implications. What it "veils in mystery" is not the object's real value: *its* origin in labour and its finality in the moment of consumption — i.e., its use value. What the object form conceals is the object's own "nullity". The commodity is a *res nulla*: a *symbolic* absence. Or to put it another way, the object form (the commodity as sign) exhausts and evacuates the social space it occupies. It hides the fact that its meaning does not exist in a relationship between people (what Baudrillard would call Symbolic Exchange), but in the inner relations of signs and commodities among themselves.[12]

As a structural model of reification, this "object-form" is a much more radical hypothesis. It cuts deeper and gets to the 'real' sub-stratum of the social object: its use value. With the logic of signification as his tool, Baudrillard pries apart the bundle of relations which constitute the commodity, only to discover that use value does not designate the otherness of political economy at all, but its ideological groundwork. For included in the object form is precisely the assumed functionality and utility of commodities that Marx had wanted to restore to society by liberating the means of production and abolishing exchange value. According to Baudrillard, use value is simply a product of the alienated system of exchange itself. It is not the meaning of the object, anymore than the signified is the meaning of the sign; it is the effect of the play of signifiers. To use a phrase of Adorno, use value is not the "non-identical side" of the object; it is not a moment of particularity or of quality, such as might be found outside the form in the 'real' act of "consumption". Perhaps this explains the somewhat strained atmosphere of the Frankfurt School's attempts to explain the fetishization of culture in terms of exchange value.[13] For use value turns out to be an alibi for the exchange value system, rather than its hidden or repressed truth. It does not escape the logic of reduction, equivalence and fungibility imposed by political economy. On the contrary, it *is* political economy — its ideal and ideological referent.[14]

The consequence of this argument, of course, is gradually to shift the stance of traditional critical theory away from anti-objectivism to an intensified critique of naturalism. Eventually Baudrillard will carry this forward from the naturalism of Political Economy and Marx's critique of it to the functionalism of the Bauhaus, to the naturalism of the unconscious in various schools of thought, from Surrealism on to Deleuze, and finally to the "hyper-reality" (as Baudrillard calls it) of constituted self-regulating systems, which range from the naturalization of coded difference in molecular biology (DNA) to the cybernetic design of social life itself.[15]

But the critique of the political economy of the sign remains the centrepiece of Baudrillard's work. One cannot read his earlier books on objects and

consumption without anticipating this re-evaluation of all socio-economic values. The new model of reification that emerges transforms the whole problematic of the commodity, which has been the core of critical theory and cultural Marxism since Lukács. And all of Baudrillard's subsequent work flows from this conceptual realignment. The key to it, of course, was to read semiology right into the process of political economy, to find the logic of signification in the very structure of the commodity. What is important to grasp, however, is that this is not just another synthesis. There have been plenty of attempts to combine Marx and Freud. Baudrillard's inspiration was different. He wanted to use structuralist theory as the mimetic description language of reification as such. In Baudrillard, the Saussurean model of language really *becomes* the *action* language of the commodity; and the apparent self-sufficiency of the structuralist model of the sign delineates for him the form of reification as a social phenomenon. An interesting consequence of this in the later books, beginning with *L'Échange symbolique et la mort*, is that the equation *commodity = sign = reification* evolves with the internal transformations of the theory of the sign. As semiology begins to devour its own tail in post-structuralist discourse and in the work of Derrida in particular, the theoretical description language of structuralist discourse is no longer projected into the commodity, but hypothetically reembodied as the pure medium of reification, so that the opaque involutions of theoretical language come to serve as the perfectly transparent and unwitting surface of social reality.[16] Baudrillard calls this involution, "simulation", which is nothing other than reification as total semiosis, which now includes the body — or corpse — of social theory itself.

II

If the cutting edge of this conceptual reconfiguration is Baudrillard's attempt to introduce the question of meaning to Marxian discourse, this does not mean that he is able to tell us so much about the nature of social life today that we might not already have guessed. For this cutting edge is turned almost completely inwards, toward critical theory. Looking through the closing pages of *Le système des objets* or *La société de consommation*, the early works, we already find a host of disclaimers which testify, sometimes in a brilliant way, to the profound moment of self-doubt in the act of critique. What is relatively new in Baudrillard is the recognition that this moment of doubt redeems the recalcitrant object, and that there is no salvation without the object. The analysis of consumption *begs* the question of interpretation; it forces critical theory up against the consequences: it's interpretation or die. Échange symbolique or la Mort.

The fact that critical theory has systematically avoided this question is nowhere more obvious than in the traditional theory of reification, or more precisely, in the doctrine of commodity fetishism, which underlies all of critical theory's and cultural Marxism's vision of the modern age. Marx was never interested in the interpretation of commodities. He was concerned with their

"historical character", but not with their "meaning", which he dismissed as an illusion in the early chapters of *Capital*.[17] We can hardly blame Marx for not being attracted to the problem, but it is difficult to forgive the Frankfurt School, which professed to be concerned with culture. For what they fail to achieve, on the whole, is any charitable understanding of the role of things in the lives of people. Instead, the standard discourse of critical theory is laced with old Christian sentiments about people destroying their souls by worshipping powers they do not understand because they have projected them onto material objects. This is another way of saying that people are worshipping a false god, a graven image. Adorno was something of an exception to this at the theoritical level, but he was just as intolerant in practice. He described jazz enthusiasts as "temple slaves" prostrating themselves "before the theological caprices of commodities". He described people going to a Toscanini concert as worshipping the money they had spent on the ticket. This is the theory of commodity fetishism. It is part of a kind of religious or moral controversy, a sort of monotheistic attack on animism.

When critical theory is at its worst, what it wants, what it strives for, is a world without objects. The projected ideal is a kingdom of ends, the end of mediation. There is nothing outside absolute spirit anyway. It does not interpret; it decrees. The traditional theory of reification implies that so long as the totality remains inaccessible in its totality to the subject, the subject has been deprived of its essence. It is a vision of social reality which tends to equate emancipation with omnipotence.

Interpretation is impossible for critical theory during these bad theoretical moments because it does not approve of people endowing objects with magical properties, or projecting human qualities onto the world of things. Instead, they are expected to exercise magical control over objects. This is written directly into the theory of commodity fetishism. Objects can only have use value; everything else is mystification. As soon as people attach meaning to things, they plummet into false consciousness. The end of reification would amount to rational knowledge of the totality. People would have totally transparent relations with each other, either because there would be no objects to get in the way, or because objects would only exist insofar as they were rationally distributed according to need (presumably from a centre), or because they are only objects of disinterested aesthetic reflection, a type of relationship to an object which presumably does no harm to the spirit. This is why Marx must have preferred capitalism to feudalism: it was more rational, it made the real social relations clearer, there was less meaning to cloud the vision.[19] On this view, commodity fetishism is simply a residue of the old barbaric consciousness. The commodity ellicits a sort of social projection which disguises the real relations underpinning it. The object hides social reality. It must be eliminated.

Baudrillard's critique of the sign tries to cut through all this metaphysics. Reification ceases to be a mystical veil, a trick of consciousness, an alienation of the subject's power, the robbery of an essence, or a primitive projection based on ignorance. Instead it is a positive presence in its own right. It is physical and

it is organized in a describable way. It doesn't hide social relations; if anything, it is a tendency to prevent them from occuring. The self-sufficient object demands a self-sufficient subject. This autonomization and social isolation is achieved through what Baudrillard calls the "semiological reduction", which erodes the possibility of symbolic exchange. Where the commodity is, there the subject shall not be. But this is not the same as Marxian fetishism. It is the opposite, for the problem with the commodity as a systemic object is not, according to Baudrillard, that people attach emotional importance to it, but precisely that they cannot, because the commodity is already a sign. The logic of signification is no longer something to be ignored because it is a superstructural aspect of things which conceals a more profound economic logic, as critical theory once believed; the logic of signification lies, as Baudrillard writes, at the "very heart of the commodity". And because the sign-object is systemic, it comes with its play of meanings already coded. So the problem of reification, at least at the cultural level, is not that people have projected their powers onto things, but rather that objects have become increasingly closed off from human interaction in their systematic self-referential play. People probably have an incorrigible tendency to "fetishize" objects anyway; but the logic of signification blocks even this symbolic relation, and invites people to fetishize *systems* of relationship which are abstract and without much personal significance. This, I believe, is what Baudrillard means by the paradox that consumption has turned into a "system of interpretation" without meaning.[20] There is no meaning because there is no symbolic exchange. The symbolic is always about the potentiality of a relationship. The semiurgy of social objects reduces the availability of things for mediating social relations (symbolic exchange) and assigns them to mediating systems of signs instead. If commodity fetishism exists, it is because in our culture the object has become too rational: commodities come pre-fetishized.

III

Traditional critical theory has tended to parody the pattern of reification that Baudrillard describes to the extent that it holds out the vague promise of returning to a world of simple objects administered by simple subjects. But there can be no such world. In the sphere of culture, objects are never objective — but then they are usually not subjective either: they are neither neutral or natural facts nor hallucinations. This is even true for the real fetishist. For the interesting thing about a fetish, presumably, is that it is never clear what it is — whether it is really an object or whether it is part of the self. A fetish is probably undecidable, and for this reason, it can be thought of as existing in a free space between the subject and the object. But for the fetishist, this space is charged with an extraordinary amount of tension. The fetishist cannot tolerate his object's ambiguity, and wants to resolve it. What might have been a symbol, the symbol of a connection, has turned into a curse of sorts. The fetishist is like a lover who doesn't have a lover and therefore, in a sense, cannot have an object either. He cannot share his failed desire to merge with his lover with his lover's

failed desire to merge with him. He is alone with a thing that is not a thing — neither an other nor himself. He cannot wholly possess it because it is not self and he cannot abandon it because it is not other. The space between the subject and object where the fetish object oscillates so painfully is simply too dangerous. he wants somehow to close this space, but he cannot, because neither subjectivity nor reification are ever complete except in the moment of suicide.

The new model of reification changes our view of the subject. The subject is no longer a theory-praxis construct whose perception is clouded by the trickery of things. The subject is now an ambivalent psychological being whose space for living is gradually being closed off. Another way of saying this is that the subject cannot be, and has not been, strictly demarcated from the object — découpé. The realm of freedom cannot be abstracted from and separated from the realm of necessity, except as a sign — but this sign happens to be the ultimate illusory referent of the industrialized world, capitalist and communist. On this question, the only difference between the great blocks of political economy lies in their theories of distribution: the bureaucratic version is quite a bit more obsessive about controlling objects in the name of freedom.

The subject and the object cannot finally be distinguished. They overflow into the ambiguous space that exists between them, where people actually live, and things have meaning. This is where culture takes place. It cannot be wished away. It cannot be completely destroyed in a whole society, even by reification. It can only be more or less restricted, attenuated, under threat. We have lived in this ambiguous space ever since we were children, and we will never succeed in completely sorting it out into the categories of what is properly subject and what is object, or of what we actually made or thought up and what we simply found by luck or accident. Critical theory demands of us an impossible and debilitating maturity. We rationalize the ambiguous space as much as we can and as much as we have to, but we never do away with it because then we would not be able to live, we would have no where to play. This is what Baudrillard originally meant by symbolic exchange, and what he meant when he argued that the logic of the sign eradicates the social symbolic. (I cannot find any other meaning for it.) So reification ceases to be anything like the object's stolen powers returning to haunt the subject, and becomes more like the relative closure of a psychosocial space where, to borrow another phrase of Adorno, we might live in "harmony with the object", and with our own ambivalence.

The psychoanalyst Winnicott called this intermediate area "potential space" — it is where the transitional object exists for the child, between the more or less "me" and the more or less "not me". The transitional object is not an elimination of difference. It just leaves the paradox unresolved.[21] "This potential space is at the interplay between there being nothing but me and there being objects and phenomena outside omnipotent control".[22] The child is not challenged as to the logic of the situation. It is not expected to decide whether it really conceived this thing, or whether it just found a trivial piece of the objective world that it suspects it cannot control. The child is allowed to have its intense symbolic

experience. Nobody tries to define the object. Nobody tells the child, "that's just your imagination", or "that's just a bit of dirty old stuffed cloth". The child is allowed to play.

The tragedy of critical theory is that it has never been able to theorize this potential, transitional, symbolic space, although it has always been concerned with it. Critical theory expects so much from the subject that it can only explain away the damage by attributing fantastic, demonic power to the object. It leaves nothing human in between. There is no possible resolution but the destruction of one or the other: the death of the subject or the nihilating absorption of the object.[23] It is ironic that it was the greatest of critical theorists, Theodor Adorno, who presented these abstract alternatives to us most forcefully; and yet it was also he who grasped the life-saving compromise in the "nonidentical side of the object". The nonidentical side of the object, or symbolic exchange or the potential space of the transitional object are all names for a possibility which must be kept open, and opened further if reification is to be defeated.

Let me suggest, briefly, an extension of this thesis. The term potential space implies that there is a dynamic gap between the two relative poles that Winnicott — but also Habermas — call the subjective world and shared objective reality — or, in Habermas' terms, the "inner, private world" and the "outer, public world". My additional reflection is that this intermediate dimension, the world which grows out of the transitional object, has to be enriched and expanded *before* any idea of a publicly shared objective world such as Habermas envisions can be constituted in a genuine and healthy way. This is a crucial issue for cultural politics because there can be no "ideal (public) speech situation" without a foundation that openly and honestly embodies the pre-logical, symbolic root of action, relationship and meaning. Reification is ultimately nothing more than a betrayal or denial of this social symbolic root — which is why structuralist formalism makes such a good model of reified culture.[24]

The main battle among critical theories and cultural Marxisms today seems to be over the definition of this potential space. French theory has occupied it and called valuable attention to it. My criticism of the New French Thought is simply that in having called attention to intermediate areas of social experience, it has had a tendency to autonomize them as unbounded media (without subject and object), as pure media where signs literally devour their own meaning. So what I have been calling transitional space and what Baudrillard used to call symbolic exchange, Foucault now calls power, Deleuze and Lacan call desire, Derrida calls text and Baudrillard calls simulacrum. There is little effort in these trajectories to recover the constructive potential of the pre-logical symbolic dimension of experience. There is alternatively a tendency to stress the equivalence of three all-embracing terms: power = totality = irrationality, full stop. Foucault and Baudrillard and Derrida ultimately fail to solve the problems of critique because they reproduce, in their autonomous theoretical models of "power" and "text" what Baudrillard had originally described as the "very formula of alienation in a technical society" — The Medium is the Message. Instead of articulating an alternative, they reembody the old Hegelian theory of reification they attack.

The problem with Baudrillard's later work — the books that follow the *Critique of the Political Economy of the Sign* and *The Mirror of Production* — is that what began as a critique of naturalistic categories has grown steadily into an obsession, a kind of desire to expunge nature itself, or more precisely, to convert it into an enormous and meaningless cycle of collapsing culture. Baudrillard's simulation is just another word for reification; it is a type of reification bearing no reference to any subject or object, without any counterpraxis. The consequence is that theory — even critical theory — is always faltering behind: it can only mirror what passes it by, with the same aimlessness of simulation itself. Simulation means the death of play in the total omnipresence of play. Baudrillard has autonomized the intermediate area and gotten lost in it, forgetting the virtual difference between the me and the not me which structures human play. He has turned culture inside out and made it a natural process. Play has become simply the function of the universe. And so you have the French Ideology, and Jacques Derrida. Against this catastrophe, Baudrillard has only one strategy left: symbolic exchange, which finding that it can no longer define itself in opposition to the sign, abandons exchange for absolute irreversible reversibility in death; in other words, nihilism.

Baudrillard's argument that reification is not false consciousness but the systematic closure of autotelic signifying systems probably leads fairly inevitably to this nihilism. But it is still an interesting argument because it forces critical theory to begin theorizing the area of transitional phenomena. Whether it is the commodity alone which produces the social effect of reified constriction or whether the commodity has only been the most convenient theme for a critical hermeneutic is another question. There is no inherent reason why the problem of reification should be posed exclusively in terms of consumption. The point of Baudrillard's argument is that we feel not so much mystified by the commodity as excluded by it. We feel excluded from the sign object in much the same way that we feel excluded from (and even hostile toward) a closed group with its exclusively internal system of reference. We tend to get lost in such systems, however, because we feel we have no choice: we have to have objects, partly because we have to have meaning, and sometimes we will take whatever we can get, even though nowadays we often don't expect it to be very significant.

IV

The intention of this paper can be summarized in a slightly different set of terms.

Critical theory has tended to skirt around the issue of interpretation. There are plenty of exceptions, work that comes out of Benjamin for example, but on the whole this at least has been my experience of critical discourse. What this means in knowledge terms is that critical theory won't come to grips with the fact of uncertainty. Hence the tremendous reluctance, until recently, to open up Marx's categories for cultural interpretation.

In psychoanalytic terms, interpretation probably means learning how to live with oneself after one has tried to destroy the object. We all try to destroy the object, even if only in fantasy. The wisdom of Melanie Klein and others is that if the object survives our bitter attack, then we can not only love the object, but learn to use it as well. But before we can achieve all this, we have to grant the object just enough independent existence so that the possibility of its loss is real, and we can learn to mourn this possible loss.[25]

True, this means a kind of depression. But depression is not so bad — if we have the courage to repair the damage it was caused by. After all, we ourselves have already imagined this destruction, perhaps willed it, without realizing what we were doing. The very idea of our own destructive potential makes us paranoid, because we didn't know what it meant until we had tried it. But if we can be so violent without meaning it, then so can others, even when they don't mean it. This is the essence of paranoid thinking: they're out to get me, even though I know they aren't.

Depression is much less catastrophic, though it is very painful. Recent critical theory is a case in point. Think of the titles: Negative Dialectics . . . The Tragedy of Enlightenment . . . The Dialectic of Defeat . . . The Critical Twilight . . . L'échange symbolique et la mort . . . La Stratégie fatale. It all sounds depressed. But this is probably a healthy depression, a reparative one, perhaps a depression that will lead critical theory to shift its attention away from all the bad things it wants to get rid of in the world, and onto the new things it wants to put into it. This is not just a therapeutic suggestion, it is a tactical necessity, because certain things will never go away completely, they can only be crowded out by something better. Pornography is an excellent example.

Critical Theory must try to find ways to open up transitional areas of experience, so that we can all breathe more freely. And so that eventually paternalistic systems will not be able to trap us with the impossible decision whether we made our own lives and language, or whether we just found them or got them from somebody else and owe them back. But Critical Theory won't achieve this level of creativity until it admits it is (metaphysically?) depressed — because only then will it have the impulse to repair the damage.

Adorno probably understood this. He was so impressed by his own violence as he saw it mirrored in the violence around him that he wanted all of us to get down off our "royal thrones" and commune with the object. But Adorno couldn't translate this theoretical understanding into practice. Neither have we — though in certain ways as a generation we may have begun in the 1960's, with the counterculture, and feminism. At any rate, Adorno was probably too old, and reluctant to give up his rage.

The possibility of any future practice, and the key to interesting interpretations, will depend on our realization that objects are never simply there to be used in the way we merely choose — for in the last, depth-psychological analysis, they always represent another person, and the idea of a relationship with another person.

Appendix: Theses on Critical Theory

I

After Marx, Freud revived the whole idea of bad animal nature as a kind of psychic myth, and resurrected evil as the political problem of human self-definition in history. Marx was right to have concentrated his attention on social relations instead, but Freud's regression was also very fruitful: in the end, he saved the imagination. After Freud, bad animal nature could be construed even more fundamentally as 'bad' relations between internal objects and their split-off, repressed ego counterparts. This does not mean, as a Marxist would say, that bad social relations are simply "reproduced" in the individual. Although bad animal nature is certainly a kind of myth, a hypostatization of bad relations in history, the ego defenses are quite real.

Sometimes the "bad object" has to be taken inside if the possibility of future love and pleasure is to be preserved somewhere in the imagination. We blame ourselves to save others and their love; and then we blame others to save ourselves. In all this effort to control and eliminate pain, love can wither. This is a tragedy that Marx overlooked.

The ego defenses are part of the distinctive organization and energy of psychic reality. They are not 'created' by bad relations, they are provoked, nurtured, encrusted, moulded — and they are powerful in their own right. At relatively crude levels, the form and perhaps even the content of social life are recognizably those of the ego defenses, and this is especially true during early emotional maturation. They are catalyzed prefigurations of human relations, and psychoanalysis is very little or nothing at all if they cannot ultimately be distinguished from the behaviourist thesis.

II

Critical theory should be more playful.

The inner world is fantastic. It is already in formation before cognition and emotion are prepared to join intelligently with the environment. The inner world, or psychic reality, is composed not of impulses or "instincts", but of internalized relations, which are not easily changed. Very early on in this inner world, there are at least good and bad. Neither the good nor the bad can develop into anything real or reasonable in life if they are not allowed to play. But the fantastic opposition of the good and the bad can generate so much anxiety that play seems impossible.

III

Critical theory is insufficiently fantastic.

Fantasy is thought and action before the imagination and the world have mutually adapted. Melanie Klein, following Freud, linked fantasy and play, and then demonstrated an inverse relationship between fantasy and anxiety. The more of one, the less of the other. But the relationship is not balanced. An inhibition in play is a sign of anxious rigidity; but it is never clear how one reverses the alignment in favour of fantasy and play: why elaborate a fantasy that provokes anxiety? Perhaps it will come true?

In this way, psychoanalysis restores the imagination to the life of the body politic — but at the price of its *de*-idealization.

IV

Freedom can increase.

There is no longer much reason to doubt that early experience (which is thankfully still beyond direct social control) is decisive in the formation of a reactive self governed by a compliant ego — or in the formation of its alternative, an active self centred on a critical ego. The problem is that where the alternative is not well-grounded in psychic reality, it is difficult to choose it (often for the best of reasons). Yet Sartre was probably right that the alternative is still a real choice. It is even a kind of choice in a deathcamp. Still, pure expressions of freedom, however modest, are very hard to reconcile with the continuities of psychic and social reality. The therapeutic lesson of psychoanalysis has been from the beginning that every recognition or understanding of determinism implies an act or experience of freedom and vice versa. There is no necessity to determinism, but it is necessary to be determined to be free.

V

Critical theory is generated within a very narrow band of human experience; it doesn't create enough space for itself.

An unusual environment is required if the active, wanting, willing tendencies of a baby are to be reconciled with the emotional challenge of separation and individuation. In the absence of such a tender environment, action, wanting and willing are likely to be split-off and hidden away, remaining for ever infantile and sorely helpless.

Nobody outlives the pleasure of being alone, yet still in the safe presence of the (m)other, once they have had it. We are always in transition and we always create some kind of "space" for this process. It cannot be played out.

VI

The fragility of the potential space between the subject and the object can be so attenuated in life that play becomes a desperate effort to sustain the meaning of a few hardened symbols which are easily coerced and harnessed. The space in which the unity of earlier and later experience is preserved as the growing fund of the self's life in the world and the psyche's life on the planet can be overrun by the conquering drive of subject or object, or collapsed in pathological identity, omnipotent fusion, and the logic of defensive control, none of which ever outlast what they destroy. Critical theory should be much more aware of all this.

VII

On the other hand, the unusually tender environment which fosters the growth of the active self is precisely what makes the prospect of separation and indivuation so painful. It is very hard to learn to create this environment for oneself, and harder for society. A certain amount of "aggression" is needed on all sides if the process is to be carried through — a fact observable in mammals generally. But the human psyche is initially so adaptive and responsive and innately intricate in potential that its birth is never easily achieved. "Nature" has refined a process of specialized differentiation to the point where not only its

meaning but its substance are astonishingly symbolic.

The price of intelligence is probably symbolism which thrives on indefinition which reflects difficulty but the higher forms of pleasure too.

VIII

Critical theory has made a great deal of fuss about (what should be called) *secondary* adaptation — as if this is some sort of recognition of psychoanalytic truth. Over and over again, we hear that the individual is "produced" by the culture. In the same breath, psychoanalysis is dismissed as conformist because its theme is the adaptive growth of the individual. Critique is cheap when it ignores or laughs at the needs and strategies of the child. Human beings are always dependent — either in an infantile or a nature way — but dependent nevertheless.

IX

Coercion can be brutally external and social but its conditions of possibility are usually laid down in subtler ways. To achieve a genuine integration of psychoanalytic insight, critical theory must see how primary psychological adaptions are not always in detail directly concerned with the culture at large: they are not political decisions, they are obscure movements within the immediate psychic environment in a context of infantile dependency. Such awareness would weaken the grandiose illusion that critical dialetic can so easily penetrate the social veil; but it would strengthen understanding immeasurably.

X

Nature is perfectly capable of pathology, which is contained grossly in the painful difficulty of choice. Choosing and symbolizing are perfectly natural — we only pretend that they are opposed to nature because we forget that choosing is living, symbols are breathing, and neither choice nor symbol flicks on and off in dimensionless moments of pure rationality and morality. Nature can decide itself, but it often does so in painful and difficult ways, and a lot of this is localized in us. Being human is like being told that the result depends on you but fie on you if you think you know what the process is.

As painful, difficult, deciding parts of the universe, we need mediations. For this reason, critical theory should pay a great deal more attention to the symbolic and to the pressures and limits of the symbolic because it is at this deep level that we actually play out the limits of nature. We create the mediations we need ourselves and we are responsible for the quality of the mediations we create. Or to put it another way, we are almost entirely symbolic in our difference, but this is a responsibility rather than a transcendence: symbols are natural beings.

XI

We should not be overly ashamed of our feeble-mindedness with regard to the Symbolic, however. Critical theory continues to elaborate its fantasy without imagining too seriously that it can ever bring the Symbolic to heel. That is probably a good thing, for the exciting alternative is only an illusion: the illusion of Power, the hallucination of the elimination of the object — all in the name of

personal or collective transcendence. People are liable to call for the end of the object (which might be another person) because as everybody knows it is so easy for us to project the unwanted onto the object. But not only can nature not be transcended, it cannot even be tricked. Obsessional control, paranoid vigilance, schizoid detachment, psychotic misery — all are relatively useless paralyses of human fantasy.

The bad object has its place; it may be the loser, but it never ceases to exist as a possibility which must be accounted for in the existence of the good object. If prolonged, splitting, perhaps the most basic form of control, destroys the mediating power of symbolization. This is why potential space cannot easily be divided up in a worthwhile way. The bad, after all, is every bit as symbolic as the good.

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Notes

1. This is a slightly altered version of a paper delivered at the CJPST's "1983 Theory Workshops" University of British Columbia, Learned Societies, June, 1983.

2. The trend away from classical mechanistic atomism in psychoanalytic theory has been developing in Britain since the 1930's in a variety of quite different ways which have been grouped together under the heading "Object-Relations Theory." The object-relations theorists include, notably: Melanie Klein, Joan Rivière, and Hanna Segal (all of whom have never been able to give up the idea of a "death-instinct"); W.R.D. Fairbairn and Harry Guntrip (theoretically the most coherent group); and D.W. Winnicott and Marion Milner.

   The term "Object-relations theory" can be extended to include the work of some American psychoanalysts, such as Edith Jacobson and Otto Kernberg, and more remotely, the late Heinz Kohut. But this important American work has been hampered by clinging to dubious orthodoxies such as "primary narcissism" and "narcissistic libido."

   A prominent Canadian member of the British school is W. Clifford M. Scott, in Montreal.

   It is difficult to summarize briefly the object-relations point of view. It involves a clinically-inspired shift away from concern with instinctual development and management to an exploration of the emotional layerings of emerging ego-object structures. The potential ego is no longer viewed as inherently the "servant of three masters" — the somewhat schizoid defense centre of classical Freudian theory. Very often, however, so much of the ego is split off or repressed during development that a detached, reactive surface structure is all that remains of the outwardly functioning personality.

   (Some reflections on critical theory from an object-relations point of view are sketched in the Appendix to this article.)

3. The fundamental anxiety which underlies this ever-collapsing distinction is discussed from a psychoanalytic and ecological point of view by Harold F. Searles in *The Nonhuman Environment* (New York: International Universities Press, 1960).

4. Jean Baudrillard, *L'échange symbolique et la mort* (Paris: Gallimard, 1976).

5. In *Le système des objets* (Paris: Denoel-Gonthier, 1968) and *La société de consommation* (Paris: Gallimard, 1970).

6. "Compte Rendu de Marshall MacLuhan (sic): *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man.*" *L'Homme et la société,* no. 5 (1967), p. 230.

7. *For a Critique of the Political Economy of the Sign,* trans. and introd. Charles Levin (St. Louis: Telos Press, 1981).

8. One can see how this is rather like an historicized reading of Kant's thing-in-itself problem. For interesting discussions on this theme, see, among other works of Theodor W. Adorno: "The Actuality of Philosophy," *Telos,* no. 31 (1977), p. 128; *Negative Dialectics,* trans. E.B. Ashton (New York: Seabury Press, 1973), Part 111; and "Subject and Object," in *The Essential Frankfurt School Reader,* ed. and introd. Andrew Arato and Eike Gebhardt (New York: Urizen Books, 1978), passim.

9. The deep inner connection between this short-circuiting of social communication and the structure of the commodity is analysed by Baudrillard in *For a Critique of the Political Economy of the Sign,* Ch. 8.

10. I am referring to the fact that since *L'échange symbolique et la mort,* Baudrillard has made a nonsense of critical theory as it is understood by most of its practitioners, especially the followers of Habermas.

11. For Baudrillard, the rise of the commodity coincides historically with the passage from symbolic to semiological societies. The recent development is not the rise of the sign (consumerism), but the collapse of the rationality of signification, which has shifted the problem of the social object away from the commodity and onto simulated totalities.

12. It should be pointed out that this argument by itself does not commit Baudrillard to radical indeterminism. On the contrary, his argument seems to be, not that there is no longer any referentiality in neo-capitalist culture, but that there is altogether too much of it: reference is no longer an *act;* it is something received in combinatory forms.

13. See, for example, Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer, *Dialectics of Enlightenment,* trans. John Cumming (New York: Seabury Press, 1969), p. 158.

14. See the article, "Beyond Use Value" in *For a Critique of the Political Economy of the Sign.*

15. See "Design and Environment," in *For a Critique; L'échange symbolique et la mort* and all subsequent works by Baudrillard.

16. See *L'échange symbolique et la mort,* where Baudrillard's expressions of utter despair at the involution of post-modern social life can be read as brilliant parodic critiques of Derrida, Deleuze, Barthes, Foucault and Kristeva. Baudrillard's *Oublier Foucault* (Paris: Éditions Galilée, 1977) is perhaps the best example of his technique of dilating a mimetic theoretical description language.

17. Karl Marx, *Capital,* 1, trans. Samuel Moore and Richard Aveling, ed., Frederick Engels (New York: International Publishers, 1967), p. 75.

18. Theodor Adorno, "On the Fetish-Character in Music and the Regression of Listening," in *The Essential Frankfurt School Reader, pp. 278-279.*

19. See any edition of the *Communist Manifesto* or Karl Marx, *Grundrisse: Foundations of the Critique of Political Economy (Rough Draft),* trans. Martin Nicolaus (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1973), passim.

20. Jean Baudrillard, *La société de consommation* (Paris: Gallimard, 1970), passim; and "The Ideological Genesis of Needs," in *For a Critique.*

21. "I am drawing attention to the *paradox* involved in the use by the infant of what I have called the transitional object. My contribution is to ask for a paradox to be accepted and tolerated and respected, and for it not to be resolved (by) flight to split-off intellectual functioning..." D.W. Winnicott, *Playing and Reality* (Harmondsworth: Pelican, 1971), p. xii.

22. Winnicott, p. 118.

23. "Once radically parted from the object, the subject reduces it to its own measure; the subject swallows the object, forgetting how much it is an object itself." Theodor Adorno, "Subject and Object," *The Essential Frankfurt School Reader*, p. 499. Congealed fantasies of devouring the other or of being devoured by the other are of course often discovered at the roots of persecutory anxiety and guilty thinking.

24. See my "Introduction to Baudrillard" in John Fekete, ed., *The Structural Allegory* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, forthcoming).

25. Winnicott, "The Use of an Object and Relating through Identifications," in *Playing and Reality*, pp. 101-111. For the Kleinian point of view, see Hanna Segal, 'Notes on Symbol-Formation," *International Journal of Psychoanalysis*, vol. 38 (1957), pp. 391-397.

26. These reflections owe something to a midsummer night's conversation with John Fekete on Prince Edward Island.

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THE ARC OF A DEAD POWER
MAGRITTE/BAUDRILLARD/AUGUSTINE

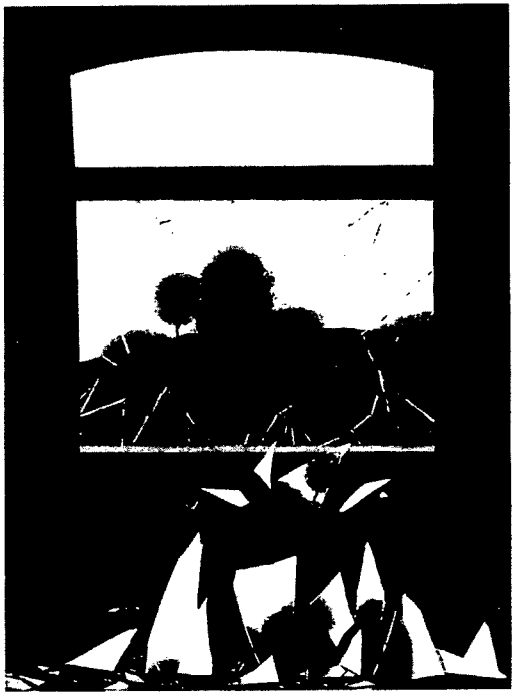
Arthur Kroker

Thesis: *This essay is intended to recover* the *radical insight of contemporary structuralist theory into the existence of ABSTRACT POWER by blasting through the evasions of the structuralist discourse to its suppressed metaphysical implications. What follows, then, is in the way of a circling around from the artistic imagination of René Magritte and the radical semiology of Jean Baudrillard to the hidden genealogy of modern power: Augustine's* De Trinitate. *Augustine's doctrine of the "trinity" and Baudrillard's theory of the "sign" are presented as reverse, but parallel, images of the other. And why? Simply because they represent the metaphor of a "dead power". This is the region of Nietzsche's power as a "perspectival appearance". Kant is reduced to a disenchanted expression of the primitive Christian doctrine of the "will to will"; and Augustine, as the perfect embodiment of Paul's closing of the "eye of the flesh" and the opening of the "inner eye" to an abstract power, is viewed as the anti-Nietzsche. And POWER? It's everywhere now, and for just the reason that Baudrillard gave in* Oublier Foucault: *Power doesn't exist; it was always only a "perspectival simulation" of itself. This is a discourse, then, on the PURELY ABSTRACT UNITY which is at the centre of western experience; and on the remarkable convergence of the trinity/sign as the magical formula of the "fictitious unity" of the modern* episteme.

René Magritte, the Belgian surrealist painter, is the artist of modern power. His work is, perhaps, the closest approximation in this century to the artistic imagination demanded by Nietzsche in *The Will to Power*. Magritte is the artist who deals in error, cruelty, and evil if only to work a deep reversal against the purely perspectival, and thus fictitious, unities of the "reality-principles" of western experience: judgement, truth, sociality, normativity, utility. Indeed, the paintings of Magritte are perfect texts for the study of power as a "perspectival illusion": an abstract power which produces its (symbolic) effects through a slight *trompe-l'oeil* in which, as Nietzsche has remarked, "the conditions of (our) preservation are projected into predicates of existence".[1]

There can, in fact, be few more searing depictions of the purely topographical universe of an abstract power than Magritte's *The Door to Freedom*. This painting, which was intended anyway to show the circular logic at work in the now obsolete representational viewpoint, is in the best of the pastoral mode. It consists simply of a landscape viewed through a window. There is, however, an odd and disconcerting difference. The window is shattered; and on the bits of glass — which explode inwards, not outwards — there are clear traces of the image of the image of the landscape. Now, representational art, and with it the classical (also representational) theory of power depended for its very existence

on the preservation of a privileged and substantive distinction between the sign and its referent. Power, in this case, always stood for something *real* outside itself: a referent like use-value, sovereignty, justice, democracy which would, and this simultaneously, concretize the regression into nothingness in the will to power and provide an after-glow for a power which had already disappeared into the "vanishing-point" (McLuhan) in western consciousness. Following Nietzsche's insights into the "in vain" of the ellipse traced by the will to power, Foucault has said that power in the modern era could only function on the condition that it hide its (real) existence as a purely cynical power. When the



René Magritte – The Door to Freedom/La clef des champs

horizon is wiped clean, who could tolerate the knowledge of a cynical freedom, an absent power, an existence falsely unified by the "fiction" of perspectival appearances? Magritte has recovered the reality of the non-existence of modern experience, and thus of its *structural* basis in the will to power, as nothing but a pure relation. In *The Door to Freedom*, we are suddenly ejected from the comforting illusion of an antinomic, and thus representational, theory of power into an "empire of signs" (Barthes) which consists only of a plunging downwards through an endlessly refracted imagery. A perspectival illusion is at work here which produces an image of the real (the antinomies of window and landscape)

only as a symbolic-effector to disguise the disappearance of the real into the endless curvature of the mirrored image. The significance of the traces of the image of the landscape on the broken glass lies, in fact, precisely in the circularity of its symbolic effect. We are very close to Nietzsche's impossible knowledge of the *regressus in infinitum* in modern experience when we reflect on Magritte's disclosure that the pure sign-system of *The Door to Freedom* reveals, after all, that the antinomic basis of western knowledge was only a perspectival *trompe-l'oeil* leading away from the reality of the mirrored language of analogy, similitude, and likeness. Signifier/signified; unity/variety; inside/outside: the antinomies are transformed into purely perspectival sites in the mirror of power. And what unifies the antinomies of the Sign, projecting them outwards as predicates of existence and then, in a quick reversal, dissolving them from within as purely symbolic effects already on their way to disintegration, is the existence of power as a process of abstraction and disembodiment. We are in the presence of a sign-system which functions on the basis of the liquidation of the real. Magritte's imagination is surrealistic to this extent: it teases out that precise point in the curvature of the ellipse of modern power in which power, abandoning its association with the psychology of sacrifice prepares to re-enter its own cycle of disintegration in the symbolic form of the psychology of seduction. This is the reverse side of Nietzsche's power/sacrifice: not the side of "conscience-vivisection and self-crucifixion"; but the dark side of conscience-cancellation and self-absorption. Like the exploding images in *The Door to Freedom* which collapse inwards only to reveal an endless, didactic recycling of the same image, power/seduction and power/sacrifice are reverse, but parallel, expressions of the same circuit of abstract power. It was Magritte's finest contribution to reveal that the real terrorism in Kant's antinomies has to do with the free-fall effect which they induce in the eye of power. Magritte's universe is decentered, silent, and metaphorical: his paintings, ranging from *The False Mirror* to the stereotypy of *La Reproduction Interdite*, point to our incarceration in the downward plunge of a structuralist experience. As Nietzsche also knew, power can exist now only in exchange. Like Marx's abstract labour before it, power has an abstract (symbolic) existence as the illusionary (and thus metaphorical) form of the imposition of the "fictititous unity" of the categories of the real. Paradoxically, the abstract value of power in circulation depends on the constant disappearance from view of that mysterious force which has always been the inner dynamic of modern power: the "will to will". In *The Door to Freedom*, the "will to will" has a purely perspectival existence. It is the disciplined, optical effect by which the eye traces out a smooth, unbroken curvature between the shattered image and its recycled mirror-image: the instantaneous optical operation of dividing, and thus privileging the antinomies of foreground and background. While the imposition of a willed continuity is, in fact, the secret form of power in the "door to freedom", there is also a reverse, cancelling motion at work in the painting. There is also the censoring of the scream of Nietzsche's "in vain" as the eye projects a reality-principle into the tautology of the mirrored image.

Magritte's insights into the tautological and metaphorical basis of power have their theoretical analogue in the radical structuralism of Jean Baudrillard. In a brilliant series of works, extending from *Pour une critique de l'économie politique du signe* to *Oublier Foucault* to *L'échange symbolique et la mort*, Baudrillard has explored the meaning of a "dead power". In *Oublier Foucault*, Baudrillard has sensed something of the awesome truth that power which functions as a metaphor for that which has no existence is fascist in character. It presents itself in the "aesthetic ritual of death"[2] as a power which has no signification, except in purely symbolic form, outside of itself. And power can do this because it has no representational function: the secret of power's existence is quite simply, that "power does not exist".[3] Limitlessness means that power is the name given to a certain coherency of relations: the terms to the relation (the "antinomies" of modern experience) vanish; and the "radical relationalism" which is the form of power as an abstract medium works to exterminate embodied experience. For Baudrillard, at the heart of power is a "radical semiurgy" in which the real is forced to undergo a continuous process of resymbolization. The result is the spread of a "dead power", a void, which in a desperate strategy of concretization seeks to embody itself in the "reality-effects" of human speech and social action.

Jean Baudrillard is then the theoretician *par excellence* of a dead power, of a power which owes its seduction to the "imminence of the death of all the great referents" and to the violence which is exacerbated by their last, desperate attempts at representation. This is power, not on its expanding and symbolic side (the side of a *political and representational* theory of power), but on its reverse side: the side of symbolic reversal, just where power affirms itself as void, as having only a cynical existence.

> This universal fascination with power in its exercize and its theory is so intense because it is a fascination with a *dead* power characterized by a simultaneous "resurrection effect", in an obscene and parodic mode, of all the forms of power already seen — exactly like sex in pornography.
>
> (*Oublier Foucault*)

Oublier Foucault is Baudrillard's accusation against a purely representational theory of power. In this writing there is traced out a great figurative movement in which power, abandoning its association with force relations, agency, structure and distributional vectors, coils around and presents itself as an empty cycle of exchange: reversible, relational, and seductive as "challenge". Baudrillard's theorisation of power as a dead sign, and consequently as a relational and optical term, is as close as any modern writer has come to Nietzsche's dark meaning in *The Will to Power* when he suggested that power exists now only as a *perspectival appearance*. For Nietzsche then, as for Baudrillard now, what drives power on, making it so seductive as a purely symbolic medium, is *not* the expanding and accumulative side of power: the side of consumption *par*

excellence. No, Power's secret lies in its intimate entanglement with death. It's just the existence of power as a challenge unto death, as a sign without a founding referent, which is the secret of the modern fascination with power. What Nietzsche described as the "will to will" (the abstract nucleus of a simulational model of power), Baudrillard denotes power as "challenge". This is power, then, *without* a reality-principle.

Indeed, in Baudrillard's estimation, Foucault's error was his almost nostalgic desire for power with a limiting term. In *Oublier Foucault*, Baudrillard notes that Foucault misinterprets the purely relational quality of modern power, just because he wished to tame power by closing the distance between power and its referents. The sociological vision of a normalizing society, or even the closed space of the panoptic, is not dangerous: Foucault's privileged world of the panoptic is just the postive space where power surrenders its non-existence as "challenge" and incorporates itself without a murmur of dissent into the valorized order of finalities (politics, sexuality, commodities). For Baudrillard, the dark side of power, the site where power is made dangerous once again, is just at that moment of reversal and cancellation when power, exploding beyond its *historical* signification by an order of referentialities, announces itself as a simulacrum and says that to accept its "challenge" is to enter a vortex of nothingness. It's just this *nihilistic* expression of power that Baudrillard theorizes; and not the positive order of representationality associated with *sociological power* (power/norm), *economic power* (power/commodity), or *political power* (power/sovereignty). Baudrillard's relational theorisation of power negates the affirmative order of reason only in order to recover the mythic origins of power. This is why, perhaps, Baudrillard can relativize Foucault's writings on the modern discourse of power/sexuality as the already obsolescent description of an era that is "now in the process of collapsing entirely".

> But what if Foucault spoke so well to us concerning power — and let us not forget it in *real* objective terms which cover manifold diffractions but nonetheless do not question the objective point of view one has about them, and concerning power which is pulverized but whose *reality principle* is nonethless not questioned — only because power is dead? Not merely impossible to locate because of dissemination, but dissolved purely and simply in a manner that still escapes us, dissolved by reversal, cancellation, or made hyperreal through simulation (who knows?)
>
> *Oublier Foucault*

In Baudrillard's world, power is always haunted by an "imaginary catastrophe" at its centre: the dilation of power now, after centuries of expansion, into a "single pure sign — the sign of the social whose density crushes us".[4] And if the "redoubled simulation" of power as its passes into its own simulacrum means the imminent death of all the great referents then it may also signify that fascism

is the precursor of a purely relational power. "As the violent reactivation of a form of power that despairs of its rational foundations, as the violent reactivation of the social in a society that despairs of its own rational and contractual foundations, fascism is nevertheless the only fascinating modern form of power".[5] And fascism's secret? It's just this:

> Fascist power is then the only form which was able to reenact the ritual prestige of death, but in an already posthumous and phony mode, a mode of one-upmanship and *mise-en-scène*, and in an *aesthetic* mode — as Benjamin clearly saw — that was no longer truly sacrificial.
>
> *Oublier Foucault*

For Baudrillard, fascism could remain the "only fascinating modern form of power" because it occupied that space in the cycle of power where politics in its sacrifical mode passes over, and instantaneously so, into the distinctly modern (cynical) region of power and seduction. And if fascism had about it an "*already nostalgic* obscenity and violence", if it was already passé as soon as it appeared in history, then this may only indicate why fascism remains the emblematic sign of modern power. "An eternal inner simulation of power, which is never already (*jamais déjà*) anything but the sign of what it was".[6]

Fascist power is, then, the political analogue of Magritte's *The Door to Freedom* and the paradigmatic expression of Baudrillard's "dead power". Baudrillard's world begins with the devalorisation of the social and with the loss forever of the autonomous historical subject. It's just this collapse of a rational foundation for power, the breakdown even of rationalization and its replacement by the new sociological principles of exteriorisation and simulation of the silent masses, which makes fascist power the dominant sign of the modern century. The loss forever of an embodied subject, of power with a reality-principle, also means that a fascist power is purely structuralist. On the side of the politics of seduction, Baudrillard's dead power is structured from within like Magritte's *The Door to Freedom*. In both instances, power is a pure relation: its structural code is tautology, metaphor, and lack.

That Baudrillard has been able to achieve such an austere desconstruction of power to its nihilistic traces may be due to the more sweeping fact that his imagination revolves around the conception of experience as a *simulacrum*. In his most metaphysical text, *L'échange symbolique et la mort*, Baudrillard remarked: "L'hyperéal n'est au-delà de la représentation que parce qu'il est tout entier dans la simulation. Le tourniquet de la représentation y devient fou, mais d'une folie implosive, qui, loin d'être excentrique, louche vers le centre, vers sa propre répétition en abyme".[7] For Baudrillard, we live now in the aesthetic inversion of the secret order of surrealism. Where once surrealism offered the possibility that privileged areas of "banal experience" could be transformed into special, artistic insights into the "hallucinatory" quality of modern experience, now "toute la réalité quotidienne ... déjà incorporé la dimension simulatrice de

l'hyperréalisme".[8] The eventual outcome of the transformation of experience into a *simulacrum* (a pure medium) is the introduction of an inner *redoublement* into the cycle of power. "C'est l'euphorie même de la simulation, qui se veut abolition de la cause et de l'effet, de l'origine et de la fin, à quoi elle substitue le redoublement".[9] In the *simulacrum*, the critique of the non-reality of a "real space" between the sign and its referent reveals the "referential illusion" at work in the interstices of (abstracted) experience for what it always was: "L'hallucination pathétique du signe et l'hallucination pathétique du réel".[10]

Baudrillard's *simulacrum* and Magritte's hallucinatory world of empty mediations *en abyme* spiral into one another as convergent texts because both contain a common, theoretical insight into the genealogy of modern power. Magritte and Baudrillard have, in fact, done the impossible: they have read social experience *in reverse image* in order to force the *imaginaire* of power to the surface. And they have done so by deciphering the enigmatic "code" of the deep, structural continuity in western experience: by, that is, interpreting the hieroglyphics of the "sign" as, at once, the DNA of the structural logic of experience, and the *limit* within which there takes place a relentless metamorphosis of embodied experience (labour, reflection, sex, death) into a language without passion.

Magritte, this exemplar of Nietzsche's artist, always understood the fatalistic tendency in the nightmare that he was exploring; and thus, there is no break in his imagination as he journeys deeper into the hidden recesses of power and the sign. *The False Mirror, Hooded Lovers, Memory, The Therapeutist*: these paintings are almost clinical diagnoses of the structural laws of value of a disembodied power. Magritte instructs us, and this carefully, in the invisible architecture of the binary language which forms the horizon of our imprisonment in a dead power. However, Baudrillard's project is different. His critical intention was, at first, more circumscribed: to project the radical implications of the theory of the sign into the domain of political economy. In *The Mirror of Production*, Baudrillard proposed to subvert Marx's *Capital* by showing that the sign was the structural code, the nuclear structure, of the commodity-form. For Baudrillard, the sign was the secret destiny of the commodity: the purely topographical structure of an "empty, symbolic exchange" within which there took place the fantastic "double-metamorphosis" in the circuit of capital. It was, in fact, Baudrillard's intention to disclose that the transformation of the commodity into the sign (*mercantilist* value-form into the *structural* law of value)[11] was the secret destiny of capital in the twentieth-century. This is why Baudrillard spoke of the "fetishism of the sign" and why, perhaps, so much of his early writings represent an ironic dialogue with the vanishing "object" of *Capital*. But it was also Baudrillard's fate to be the unwitting sorcerer of the Marxian legacy. His writings have teased out the Nietzschean regression which always existed on the dark side of Marx's "circuit of capital". By disclosing that the theory of the sign was the *morphology* of the double-metamorphosis of capital, and thus the structural genesis of the "magic" and "alchemy" of the fetishism of the commodity. Baudrillard also revealed that nihilism now takes root, not in the ideal substratum of Christian

morality, but in the culture of consumption itself. The "lack" which is the *imaginaire* at the centre of the culture of consumption is identical to the *abyss* which drives on the *ressentiment* and howling "spirit of revenge" in Christian metaphysics. The difference between the accumulation of grace and the cyclical movement of capital is only perspectival: this is the inverted region of the surrealistic slide between the two sides of *The Will to Power*. On the *historical* side of the cycle of a nihilating power, revenge (against embodiment) is structured in the form of the psychology of sacrifice. The "signs" of sacrifice are idealistic projections of conditions of preservation: dead grace, dead love, dead spirits. On the *materialistic* side of the will to power, *ressentiment* speaks in the language of seduction. But the "signs" of seduction, which depend anyway on the "pumping out" of concrete labour into the carcass of "dead labour" (Marx) are only the *camera obscura* of the sickliness of a sacrificial culture: hysterical consumption, charismatic technology (the new, material site of Heidegger's "will to will"), and mutilated bodies. In consumer culture, labour does not exist nor does value. The shattering forever of the chain of referential experience means, in fact, that the prime players of ontology — labour, need, use-value, utility — are the symbolic horizon of the *simulacrum* at the centre of the circuit of nihilism. Thus, what is the *trompe-l'oeil* of *Capital/The Will to Power* but a perspectival illusion as the single cycle of exterminism in western culture, having achieved a frenzied moment of high abstraction in the psychology of sacrifice, now hurtles back towards the original locus of power — the body — for a second colonization. This time, though, nihilism in the value-form (the "sign") of capital seduces the flesh with pleasure, not torture. But it's all the same, and it's exactly what is hinted at in Baudrillard's discourse. *Capital* is a grisly, almost post-modern response, to Nietzsche's haunting question: "Nihilism is standing at the door. Whence comes this uncanniest of all guests?".[12] *Capital* is forced to enter its own *simulacrum*, and to make a true confession of its continuous existence as a recitative of the "will of power". All of Baudrillard's thought has, as its gravitation-point, a violent and unpredictable discourse between Marx and Nietzsche: it is a brilliant reading of Marx's critique of political economy as the sign that the cycle of nihilism is entering its last, and perfect, phase of seduction.

Perhaps it was Baudrillard's stubborn insistence on seeing the Nietzsche in Marx: in taking the cyclical movement between "inertia and ecstacy" in *Capital* for what it was, a "stratégie fatale", which plays out, in banal form, the *redoublement* of *The Will to Power*? Or, perhaps, it was his fundamental insight that the sign represents the locus of disembodiment and abstraction always sought, but never achieved, through the exteriorisation of the senses in the commodity-form? Whatever the reason, Baudrillard has stumbled upon the hidden reservoir of signs in western experience. In an almost mad rush of creativity — as if the sign could no longer tolerate the symbolic disguises behind which it was forced to hide its existence as a skeptical power — all of the structural canons of the *simulacrum* tumble out of Baudrillard's thought. This is only to say, though, that Baudrillard makes explicit at the theoretical level what Magritte recognized

immediately, and perhaps instinctively, in a purely artistic gesture. Magritte discloses the, optical, because metaphorical, rules by which the *imaginaire* constitutes the inner horizon of western experience. And Baudrillard? His writings represent a careening tour of the semantic norms governing the endless circulation of a bi-polar structural power. If Magritte's paintings reveal the hidden face of terror in Kant's "antinomies", then Baudrillard shows precisely the *semiological code* by which the antinomies transform concrete experience in the direction of the *simulacrum*. In Baudrillard's world, we are in flight through a vast, social apparatus which has, as its principle of motion, an inner, semiological transformation of every particle of experience — bodies, labour, power, money, speech — through an empty cycle of abstract, symbolic exchanges. The inner circulation of embodied experience into a downward spiral of exterminism only means that the *simulacrum* fulfills Nietzsche's aphorism that "nothing wants to be preserved". The rules surrounding the "cycle of liquidation" at the heart of power and the sign remain constant: a fantastic "semantic cancellation" at the centre of the exchange process; a relentless "semiological reduction" of experience to the tautology of binary language; the "satellisation of the real"; an "inner semiurgy" which works to impose symbols without original referents; the sovereignty of the "structural law of value".[13] In short, Baudrillard reveals that *The Door to Freedom* involves the liquidation of experience by the empty language of the sign; and that the sudden convergence in the modern century of power/sign is nothing less than the grammar of the culture of nihilism.

II

Now, without irony, I wish to work a historical reversal of the surrealistic imagery of the sign. I wish, in fact, to complete the fantastic discovery by Baudrillard and Magritte of power as a sign of "that which never was" by tracing the genealogy of abstract power to its genesis in the structural logic of early Christian metaphysics. If the existence of power as a pure sign-system can be so accurately described by Magritte and Baudrillard, then, maybe, this is because the arc of a dead power is already in reverse motion, tracing the path of an ellipsis which takes it back to its origins in the disembodiment, and even disempowerment, of power itself. What I want to theorize concerning the history of nihilism is simply this: the "sign" is but the disenchanted expression *par excellence* of the trinitarian formulation in Christian metaphysics. The sign is the *form* assumed by the will to power on its contemporary side, the side of the psychology of seduction; the trinity is the *structural code* of the will to power on the sacrificial side of its cycle. There is, however, one significant difference: in the language of the sign, but not in that of the trinity, the presence of the "will to will" as the third term unifying the poles (the mirrored antinomies) of signifier and signified is suppressed from sight. The sign is, therefore, the trinity with its essential secret — the *abstract* will — made invisible.

The genuine originality of the discourse of Baudrillard/Magritte, and I could

also add the great, radical insight in New French Thought, extending through the structuralism of Derrida, Kristèva, Deleuze, and Foucault, is that, however unsuspectingly, they force us beyond the rubicon of representational theory. Their work provides a quick passage right through the eye of Nietzsche's will to power; from the side of (our) disenchantment in the society of the "sign" to the dramatic inversion of power in Christian dogma. The suppressed truth of structuralist discourse is precisely this: there is no fundamental discontinuity in the history (metaphysics) of power in western experience. The "sign" is, in fact, not antinomic, but trinitarian. And it is trinitarian because the discourse of the sign is but a concretization in the direction of banality and inertia of the primitive Christian doctrine of the will. What is nihilism on the "Christian" side of the will to power? It's the (semantic) reduction of experience to the "semiological code" of the trinity: an anthropology of the *imaginaire* in the value-form of "God", which was, anyway, only a semantic substitute for the disappearance of the embodied will. And what is nihilism in the contemporary century? It's simply this: structuralism reinvested by the will to power in the name of seduction. Baudrillard's *simulacrum* is canonical power with the head of God exploded from within.

This radical discovery of a deep continuity in the structural morphology of power commits us to follow through the Nietzschean regression which is, today, what the culture of nihilism is all about. We are plunging through the inner reversal in experience, past the nihilism of *Capital*, past the reality-flashes of dead money, dead status, and dead prestige, to the silent, inner reservoir of a cynical power, a cynical history, and a cynical God. The arc of a dead power traces a great trajectory back to a specific historical moment, and this not in the twentieth- but in the fourth-century, to where there took place the assasination of Christ (the elimination of *embodied* will) and the birth of God (the empire of abstract power). It is, indeed, the fateful figure of Augustine who stands at the beginning of the ellipse of modern power; and it is towards his theorisation of the metaphysics of a purely rhetorical power that society now dissolves. It is as if Augustine marks a great threshold in western consciousness: the silencing, on the one side, of the cynicism of the *amor fati*; and the eruption, on the other, of the *lack* which drives forward the *simulacrum*. In his texts — vast regions of theoretical discourse — Kant's judgement, Nietzsche's insight into power as a "perspectival illusion", Marx's "dead labour", and Baudrillard's "dead power" — suddenly fuse together as particles in a great and common field of discourse: a discourse which has its structural genesis in Augustine's fundamental inversion of the order of western experience. Augustine's texts, ranging from the *Confessions* to the *City of God* to *De Trinitate* are the fundamental rupture from which everything explodes outwards in a furious burst of nihilism: an explosion of the "in vain" which now becomes more visible to the extent that power, as a sign of nothingness, spreads out in the social form of banality.

We can capture something of Augustine's importance as the limit and horizon of the modern project by understanding his theory of power for what it is: the reverse image and completion (on the side of sacrificial power) of the

theory of power/seduction proposed by Baudrillard and Magritte. There is, indeed, almost a family resemblance between Augustine's purely topographical world of "serenity" and Magritte's tortured, but also silent and serene, world of violently detached fragments of experience. Magritte's vivid depiction of the referential illusion at the centre of modern existence has its (philosophical) origin in Augustine's liquidation of the warring tension in the field of embodied experience. Magritte is, in fact, only releasing in the medium of painting the scream which has been suppressed in western consciousness by the cancellation of the finitude of the body (through Augustine's "conversion"), and by *our* reduction to the will to truth of a vast, delusional system of signs. Thus we might say that Augustine's conversion is the philosophical anthropology of Magritte's *The Door to Freedom.*

In Augustine's *Confessions*, there is an actual, written account of the exact moment at which there took place a fundamental rupture in the interstices of western consciousness. Augustine's conversion in the garden at Cassiacium marks a great threshold in the western mind: a fundamental, seismic division between the warring antinomies of classical experience, and the "serenity" of the undivided will (the "will to will") of modernism. Augustine's account of the bitter struggle of his conversion is, in fact, a metaphysical exploration of the desperate struggle of the will to overcome the finitude of the body. The "conversion" is, really, from one philosophical *épistème* to another: from the impossible tensions of classicism (symbolized by the skepticism of stoicism and the dogmatism of Platonic rationalism) to the "serenity" of the will breaking in upon itself in the (reified) form of its own simulation. "Thus soul-sick was I, and tormented, accusing myself much more severely than my wont, rolling and turning me in my chain, till that were wholly broken, whereby I now was but just, but still was, held".[14] Augustine's project was to close forever the "eye of the flesh" and to open the "inner eye" to a God (who was not there), to an *abstract* power. And thus when Augustine says, "And now it spake very faintly. For on that side whither I had set my face, and whither I trembled to go, there appeared unto me the chaste dignity of Continency, serene, yet not relaxedly, gay, honestly alluring me to come and doubt not",[15] he is midway (psychologically) between the finitude of the embodied will and the *imaginaire* of the will to will. Augustine's conversion ("a light of serenity infused into my heart, all the darkness of doubt vanished away")[16] marks a fundamental divide in the western mind: it is at this point, in fact, that the will to will (the sole condition of possibility for the liquidation of "doubt") is transposed into a predicate of existence. Indeed, it could even be said that Nietzsche's project of diagnosing the "sickliness" of "two thousand years of Christian morality" is in the way of a circling around to that epochal moment when Augustine "nilled" embodied experience (Nietzsche's "becoming") *from within* by transforming the will into a pure, abstract medium. The free-fall into the *imaginaire*, which Baudrillard will later identify as the "eternal, inner simulacrum" of power and which Magritte will paint as a world horizoned by a relational will to truth, has its philosophical genesis in that slight *trompe-l'oeil* of the first fall into the "inner

eye" of power. And everything is driven on, psychologically, by a fierce "spirit of revenge" against the body: "But Thou, O Lord, are good and merciful, and Thy right hand had respect unto the depth of my death, and from the bottom of my heart emptied that abyss of corruption. And this Thy whole gift was, to nill what I willed, and to will what Thou willedst".[17] From this moment on, the will, disembodied and having only a *rhetorical* existence, is fully implicated in a topographical empire of delusion. Having no (real) existence of its own, the will discovers its truth-value (Nietzsche's "fictions") in a dominion of signs which undergo an endless metamorphosis in a mirrored world of tautology, metaphor, and simulation. After Augustine, power could only exist on the condition that it operate as an abstract medium. The inner "surrealistic slide" (Barthes) at the centre of abstract power (a sign-system without a real referent) was counter-pointed, and thus disguised, by the hysterical compulsion of canonical law. That Augustine was also obsessed with the creation of a complex system of liturgical signification (the functionality of the *ordo conditionae nostrae*) only meant that the inner regression which drove on an abstract power depended for its very (simulated) existence on the deployment of a functional and symbolic replication (at the corporate level) of the body. As an early father of the Sign, Augustine also illustrated that the psychotic inversion (apparent over embodied unities) represented by the circulation of abstract power would operate in a language which was functional, reductive, and hyper-real. It is the silent terrorism of the "aesthetics of the hyper-real" which is, in fact, the object of Magritte's artistic imagination. And why? Perhaps because since Augustine nothing has changed in the deep, structural code of western experience: it has all been a ceaseless "outering" or "ablation" of embodied experience into the medium of abstract power. From Augustine's conversion on, the structural logic of western experience remains the same. What changes, and this continuously, is the specific truth-effector (metonymy) which horizons the exteriorisation of the senses into the *simulacrum* of the abstract will: grace (Augustine), critical reason (Kant), normativity (Spencer), fear (Hobbes), communications (McLuhan).

But if there is a startling topographical filiation between Magritte and Augustine and if, in fact, we can claim that Augustine set in motion the structural code of nihilism, then this is only because Augustine's primary contribution — the doctrine of the Trinity — is an early, but never superceded, description of the inner circuitry of the sign. There is, perhaps, no more fundamental account of the limits of the modern project than Augustine's *De Trinitate*. This text is, and this implicitly, an extended reflection on the metaphysics of the conversion experience. It exists now as one of the central documents of western thought because of its explicit and detailed analysis of the discursive formulations surrounding the inner, genetic structural logic of modern society. *De Trinitate* is on the other, positive side of *The Will to Power*. It is so because the "trinitarian formulation" is disclosed to be the basic condition of possibility for the operation of the modern mind. It is, in effect, the structural logic of the trinity which has been projected outwards as the basic categories (metaphorical) of western existence. Everything that Nietzsche says

about the *inverted*, structural logic of modern consciousness exists, in crystalline form, in this text. Power as a "perspectival appearance", an inverted order of reality with the power of death over life, the reign of "apparent unities", the "fictions" of form, species, law, ego, morality, and purpose: Nietzsche's searing insights into reality as an illusion have their genealogical root, and reverse image, in the *simulated* categories of *De Trinitate*. Indeed, long before Kant (repeating the radical discovery of Augustine) abandoned knowledge of immediate experience and retreated to the *simulacrum* of procedural and regulatory knowledge unified by abstract judgement, Augustine had already undertaken a similar phenomenology of the western mind. It was Augustine's unique accomplishment to overcome the *stasis* in classical experience, represented by the antinomies of idealism and positivism, by seeking a new, *purely formal but internal*, principle of unification. As the Canadian thinker, Charles N. Cochrane, has claimed in his classic text, *Christianity and Classical Culture*, Augustine transformed the Athens-Jerusalem debate into a new, and more dynamic, synthesis by the simple expedient of abandoning the search for an "external mediation" of experience.[18] Augustine subverted the representational logic of classical experience with the introduction of a *tautological, metaphorical, and rhetorical medium of symbolic exchange* as the source of a new, internal mediation of experience.[19] Augustine's trinity is a vacant exchange process in which the divided will of embodied experience is transformed, through an "inner semiurgy" (Baudrillard), into the serene transparency of the "will to will". Augustine is the precursor of the modern world because he succeeded, where others had failed, in discovering the magical formula of western experience: the transformation of (our) formal possibilities for survival into absolute categories of existence.

This is just to say that Augustine formulated the rhetorical rules surrounding the sign-form as the locus of modern experience. Augustine's trinity represents in emblematic and almost diamond-shaped form the secret origin, and destiny, of western consciousness. There is, indeed, no need to look further than the trinity for the genealogical source of a society which disintegrates into the dark night of nihilism. The trinity contains in codified form the whole structural logic of institutional action which is at the epicentre of the structure of western experience. And it does this, of course, *not* as a religious doctrine (God was always only a reality-effect disguising the simulation) but as the structural logic of identity (the identitarian logic of the sign) which informs the mystery of unity/contradiction in the deepest interstices of being. In its metaphysical, but really semiological, formulations, we discover the most reductive, and transparent, description possible of the "apparent unity" in which the (regulatory and procedural) conditions for our preservation are transformed into "predicates of existence". When Nietzsche said that "nothingness spreads", then he may also have had in mind the imaginary, and thus fictitious, quality of the trinitarian formulation. For the very existence of the trinity depends on a succession of structuralist principles, each of which is a recitation of nihilism. Everything is there: *the substantialisation of the imaginary* (Augustine remarked that the riddle of

finite experience was solved when he realized that "spirit was substantial"); *the extermination of corporeal existence as a referent of the real* (the "nilling" of the flesh); and *the privileging of the crede ut intellegas* (the precursor of Nietzsche's "will to truth").[20] To examine anew the formulations of *De Trinitate* is to gain special insight into the modern project, at the very moment of its inception and from the inside out. It is, in fact, a rare moment when the hidden, metaphysical locus of the western mind spreads itself out for scrutiny, when, in effect, the structural code which will come to limit experience is compelled to disclose its secret. Long in advance of the "perfect nihilism" of the modern century, the trinitarian formulation signifies the incarceration (and resymbolization) of corporeal existence into an abstract and semiurgical sign-system: an imperialism of the sign which declares that, henceforth, power will be rhetorical because the *signs* of power (the triadic and simulated trinity of being/will/consciousness) are only "perspectival unities" masking our plunge downwards into the *regressus in infinitum.*

Baudrillard's *simulacrum*, this wonderful statement on the purely rhetorical structure of modern power, is only in the way of a final coming-home to the doctrine of the trinity as the invisible text of the will to power. We are speaking now of fully commensurable texts, of parallel theorisations of the sign-form which fly towards one another as perspectival points on a common ellipsis. There is, in fact, almost a perfect fit between Baudrillard's theorisations of the inner circuitry of the sign and Augustine's formulations of the rhetorical principles of the trinity. Baudrillard's celebrated insight into the "semantic cancellation" at work in the *simulacrum* is an echo of Augustine's earlier, philological reduction of the sign-system of the trinity (father/memory as signifier; son/intelligence as signified; and voluntas/will as the perspectival closing of the tautology) to a "sound which is made by no language".[21] And Baudrillard's "semiological reduction" is nothing more than Augustine's insight that in the mirror of the trinity, signifier and signified circle back towards one another as refracted (and simulated) images in a common tautology. Between the simulacrum and the trinity, there is a great logic of equivalence. Baudrillard speaks now of the "radical questioning of the real" which takes place through the exercise of a "dead power"; Augustine had already formulated the dead signs of "beauty, truth, and goodness" as *simultaneous* extermination-points of the real and simulations of "apparent" life.[22]

Like the sign-form, the trinity is nothing-in-itself; it is a pure "perspectival illusion" which functions by pumping out the domain of the real, and by reducing experience to its *inverted form* in a semiological logic of abstraction, simplification, and equivalence.

Almost in the image of the "empty, symbolic exchange" at the centre of the *simulacrum*, the trinity is a circulating medium in which everything, having been resymbolized into the value-form of *memory* (the "semiological reduction" of time) and *truth* (the value-form of liquidated imagination) is thrown into a cycle of exchange. Like Baudrillard's "seduction" which drives on the cycle of exchange of an abstract power, and which is, anyway, only a disguise of the will

to power; the trinity is mediated by caritas which, like its later counter-part in seduction, only means the charisma of the will to will. With its transformation of experience into a tautological, metaphorical and regulatory cycle of exchange, the trinity is only on the other side of the disenchanted world of the *simulacrum*. It's all the same: the semiological rules of operation are identical — analogy, similitude, and refraction. And in the logic of the sign-system, whether that of the trinity or the *simulacrum*, the simulated poles of experience (memory/truth; signifier/signified) collapse towards one another in an "inner slide" of co-referentiality and co-laterality.[23] An inner cycle of the elimination of the real is at work. That is why, perhaps, Baudrillard's "structural law of value", the "aesthetics of hyper-realism", and the nightmarish vision of experience thrown into its own "inner semiurgy" is but the rediscovery of Augustine's insight: the trinity owes its charisma, *not* to the preservation of the real, but to the disappearance of the real into its own vanishing-point. The "unmoved mover" which is the locus of death at the receding centre of the "inner eye" is just what Baudrillard will later say: It's "lack", the "void" which drives on consumption and which makes our exterminism in the simulacrum an entirely satisfying condition for (our) preservation.

III

Is it not, at least, ironic that we have always lived within the horizon of *De Trinitate*? And is it not a significant contribution by Baudrillard and Magritte that they have compelled us to confront a cynical power? Nietzsche reported on only one side of the will to power: the *sacrificial* cycle of exchange symbolized by the enchantment of the world with the *ressentiment* of "grace". It's our fate now to live in that dark region where power suddenly passes over into its opposite, the plunging downwards of society into the last cycle of the Nietzschean regression. This is the side of hyper-materialism as nihilism. We thus live on the imploded side of the will to power: the side of empty seduction, dead labour, and abstract power. And symbolic of the modern century is the radical disenchantment of the sign. What else can explain our taking delight in images of dead society, fragmented bodies, and video ideology as signs that, at least, we know we are trapped in the "joke" of a cynical history. The age of "perfect nihilism" is recuperative to this extent: we are the people who know that Nietzsche's "joke" continues. The convergence of trinity/sign as structurally identical value-forms means that we have *never* escaped "two thousand years of Christian morality". Barthes had the formula of modern anguish right: the metaphor (trinity/sign) abides; the metonymy (sacrifice/seduction) alters.[24] That Baudrillard and Magritte force us back to the genealogical traces of nihilism in Augustine only means that we are being swept away, once more, in the reverse motion of the eternal recurrence.

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Notes

1. Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Will to Power*, translated by W. Kaufmann and R.J. Hollingdale, New York: Vintage Books, 1968, p. 276.

2. Jean Baudrillard, "Forgetting Foucault", *Humanities in Society*, Vol. 3, No. 1, Winter, 1980, p. 110

3. *Ibid.*

4. *Ibid*; p. 105.

5. *Ibid*; p. 110.

6. *Ibid.*

7. Jean Baudrillard, *L'échange symbolique et la mort*, Paris: Éditions Gallimard, 1976, p. 114.

8. *Ibid*; p. 115.

9. *Ibid*; pp. 114-115.

10. *Ibid*; p. 115.

11. *Ibid*; p. 76.

12. F. Nietzsche, *The Will to Power*, p. 7.

13. For Baudrillard's most comprehensive description of the critique of the political economy of the commodity-form, see his text, *Pour une critique de l'économie politique du signe*, Paris: Gallimard, 1972. In this text, Baudrillard explores the significance of "la réduction semiologique" for a critique of the referent of production. Baudrillard discusses the "satellisation of the real" in two important essays, "L'économie politique comme modèle de simulation" and "L'hyperéalisme de la simulation", both of which appear in *L'échange symbolique et la mort.*

14. *The Confessions of Saint Augustine*, translated by E.B. Pusey, New York: Collier Books, 1961, p. 129

15. *Ibid*; pp. 129-130.

16. *Ibid*; p. 131.

17. *Ibid*; p. 128.

18. Charles Norris Cochrane, *Christianity and Classical Culture: A Study of Thought and Action from Augustus to Augustine*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1940. It was Cochrane's thesis that Augustine's development of the "trinitarian formulation" provides the "creative principle" for the imminent unification of western experience that classical discourse had always sought for in vain. For an extended reflection on the significance of Cochrane's metaphysical analysis of Augustine, see my earlier article, "Augustine as the Founder of Modern Experience: The Legacy of Charles Norris Cochrane", *Canadian Journal of Political and Social Theory*, Vol.3, No.3, Fall, 1982, pp. 79-119.

19. St. Augustine, *The Trinity*, Washington: The Catholic University of America Press, 1963. Augustine's "trinity" fuses the ABSTRACT REFERENTS of knowing/willing/knowledge as co-relational predicates of each other. It's not that becoming is its own ground, as much as the

opposite: the abstract referents of experience simulate the ground of unification to which concrete experience will be delivered. Augustine says, for example, "But in these three, when the mind knows itself and loves itself, a trinity remains: the mind, love, and knowledge; and there is no confusion through any commingling, although each is a substance in itself, and all are found mutually in all, whether each one in each two, or each two in each one. Consequently, all are in all". This is the metaphysical genesis of the simulacrum because the three *relations* in the trinity are *abstractions* from embodied experience. *The Trinity*, p. 227.

20. In *The Confessions*, Augustine emphasized the possibility of the "direct deliverance" of consciousness. "For I AM, and KNOW, and WILL; I AM KNOWING AND WILLING: and I KNOW myself to Be, and to WILL; and I WILL to BE, and to KNOW". p. 234.

21. St. Augustine, *The Trinity*, p. 483.

22. The trinity provides an abstract unity for western experience, a simulated coherency which is carried forward, on the side of sacrificial power, by the referents of beauty, truth, and goodness. This is also Nietzsche's combination of the will to virtue, the will to truth, and the will to judgement as the ABSTRACT COHERENCY of the will to power.

23. The abstract unity of western experience traces an internal curvature in which the categories of existence refract one another: Augustine remarks that "the mind should know itself as it were in a mirror". *The Trinity*, p. 298.

24. R. Barthes, *Critical Essays*, Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1972, p. 242.

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POST-KEYNESIAN POLITICS AND THE POST-SCHUMPETERIAN WORLD

Robert Malcolm Campbell

"It may turn out I suppose, that vested interests and personal selfishness may stand in the way [of full employment]. But the main task is producing first the intellectual conviction and then intellectually to devise the means. Insufficiency of cleverness, not of goodness is the main trouble".

John Maynard Keynes
in a letter to
T.S. Eliot
1945

In hindsight, it appears that the great accomplishment of the Keynesian era was that it (temporarily) transformed political economy by bureaucratizing economics and trivializing and tranquilizing political life. Indeed, if a limitless faith in the individual's capacity to reason is the essence of liberalism, then Keynes was perhaps the greatest liberal of the 20th century — a hyper rationalist who believed that "nothing is required and nothing will avail, except a little, a very little clear thinking". And, as Keynesianism's demise has left a messy and increasingly irrational political world in its wake, the cry goes out for a new Keynes, for a new technical approach which will solve the problem of stagflation and reconstruct the blissful de-politicized world which had previously been promised by Keynes.

Of course, this is chimerical — as was the Keynesian project all along. Nonetheless, the dispelling of the illusion of Keynesianism raises the compelling question of what the 'post-Keynesian' world will settle down and be. After all, the historical purpose of Keynesianism had been to provide a means whereby capitalism's tendency to depression would be contained and the increasing demands for economic democracy would be acknowledged — but in a way which would not threaten either capitalism or liberal democracy. However, it is clear that the 'business cycle' still rules the lives of capitalist nations and their citizens, while the aspirations for economic democracy have never been fully (or even substantially) validated. So, what of capitalism and liberal democracy? What are the political implications of the transformation of the Keynesian world to a post-Keynesian one?

I

It will be recalled that capitalism and liberal democracy had been severely threatened through the Depression and war years. Despite differences between them, the two major economic theories of the day (Classical and Marxist) agreed that the twentieth century demand by the working class for democratic access to

the fruits of economic activity was the quintessence of the Depression. Classical thinking suggested that union strength had perpetuated high wages in weak economic circumstances, such that potentially profitable investment opportunities were constrained. However, to reduce wages would require the curbing of trade union power, inevitably necessitating measures of coercion, thereby accelerating the 1930's trend to extremism and fascism. Marxists saw the Depression as resulting from labour's increasing strength in the class struggle. But to reduce economic instability via public works or increased state involvement in the economy would increase the size and control of the public sector, and place conflicting pressures on liberal democratic politics. While the war eliminated the problem of unemployment, the economic accomplishments of these years legitimized state planning, thereby inhibiting a return to the classical, laissez-faire world; on the other hand, to perpetuate the wartime approach to economic matters would be to continue a condition of political control incompatible with capitalism and traditional liberal democratic politics.

The fundamental question was whether capitalism could meet the requirements of an increasingly democratic society. It appeared that it was incapable of being stabilized unless trade union strength was curbed or unless an increased state involvement in the economy was instituted. While the latter might have doomed capitalism, both approaches raised serious doubts about the future of liberal democratic politics. Indeed, the predominant bourgeois vision of modern society in the pre-war and wartime years was a pessimistic one, a vision uncertain about the capacity of capitalism and liberal democracy to withstand the potentially destructive forces of economic instability and socio-economic demands. It was in this historical and existential context that Schumpeter confronted the question of the survival of democratic politics. In *Capitalism, Socialism and Democracy*, he concluded that there were three major preconditions for the existence of democratic planning of the economy: (1) the limitation of the area of political decision-making; (2) the exercise of political self-restraint both within Parliament and in society-at-large; (3) the existence of capable political leadership and a well-trained bureaucracy. These conditions were seen to be necessary if the legitimacy of the democratic process were to be sustained. Strict boundaries for political activity were needed to ensure that democratic politics would be effective within these bounds. Expectations had to be checked — both within Parliament and in society-at-large — in order that democratic politics not be swamped by potentially unrealizable demands. These conditions in turn were needed to insulate the technical experts in the bureaucracy from political pressures, to allow them to manage the economy successfully. If the economic goods were delivered, the effectiveness and legitimacy of capitalism and liberal democracy would be sustained.

What distinguished Keynesianism as an approach to economic affairs from other types of approaches was that it offered to stabilize economic conditions and respond to demands for social and economic democracy while fulfilling these Schumpeterian conditions. There is, admittedly, considerable controversy about what Keynes himself suggested in terms of analysis and policies, as well

as about which subsequent adaptations of his ideas most accurately reflects a 'Keynesian' position. It is not possible here to scrutinize Keynes's texts or to evaluate the applications of his ideas. But it is worth noting, as Schumpeter pointed out, that Keynes tended to cover his analytical tracks by attacking as well as defending classical precepts. Moreover, given the pragmatic aim of Keynes's work (directed to solving Britain's economic problems) there can be difficulties in establishing transcendental characteristics in his writings. Further, Keynes has been 'used' by a wide and eclectic array of economic theorists, policy-makers, and political groups and politicians. The result has been that 'Keynesianism' has become a generic term, its specific meaning being determined by those who have appropriated Keynes's ideas and the manner in which these ideas have been (ab)used.

As a result of these factors, it is not surprising that there are a multitude of competing versions of Keynesianism, stretching from right to left on the political continuum. But, what is critical is to note that these versions differ in the degree to which they are in tune with the Schumpterian conditions. In order to clarify this point, four (admittedly soft) models or versions of Keynesianism are illustrated below in ideal type form.

mood/vision	Supply Side	Demand Side
PESSIMISTIC	**ANALYSIS**: Chronic Instability of investment process exacerbated by drying out of opportunities – stationary state inevitable.	**ANALYSIS**: mass poverty radically constrains production possibilities.
	POLICY: extensive state role in socializing investment and directing resources.	**POLICY**: state to initiate far-reaching re-distribution of resources and income to buoy production.
OPTIMISTIC	**ANALYSIS**: creative capacity of private investment constrained by economic instability and falling profits.	**ANALYSIS**: cyclical downturns exacerbated by the falling demand accompanying rising unemployment
	POLICY: marginal state role in keeping business confidence high; indirect incentives: subsidies, credit, countercyclical policies, etc.	**POLICY**: marginal state role in ensuring effective demand: tax changes, self-financing social security, etc.

FIGURE 1

One can categorize different variants of Keynesianism in two general ways: in terms of the 'vision' and the 'mood' of economic circumstances held by the advocates of a particular variant. In broad terms, a 'supply side' vision of Keynesianism competes with a 'demand side' one, and each has an optimistic and pessimistic variant. Each of the four resulting versions of Keynesianism presents a particular analysis of economic circumstances and a specific scenario of the role which the state should play in economic life.

Different advocates of Keynesianism found capitalism's economic instability to lie on either the supply or demand side of the basic economic equation. That is, that capitalism was prone to periodic crises was seen either as due to the absence of the proper conditions for production or as a problem of realization. The demand side vision is that most popularly associated with Keynesianism. In this view, an adequate capacity for production is seen to be constrained by the low level of demand associated with the narrow income base of the mass of the population. On the other hand, the supply side vision suggested that economic crises arose because of the fact that capitalism suffered from a chronic instability in the investment process (i.e. the process by which commodities are supplied).

The implications of each of these visions is determined by the mood of its adherents. The pessimistic supply side vision was a stagnationist one, presenting a picture of the drying out of profitable investment opportunities, the decline of capitalist spirit and enterprise, and the inevitable arrival of the stationary state. On the other hand, the more optimistic supply side adherents emphasize the continuing creative capacity and potential of private investment, which needs only encouragement and an environment conducive to private economic activity (in this way, George Gilder has contended that Keynes was a supply sider). On the demand side, pessimists concluded that the relative poverty of the population ensured that capitalism's immense productive capacities could never be fully exploited and that capitalism would continually be buffetted by crises of realization. Optimists in turn suggested that 'normal' cyclical developments in the economy were exacerbated by the falling demand associated with rising unemployment.

These distinctions take on operative significance in the way in which they form a matrix of suggested policy responses to capitalist instability. And, within this matrix, policy responses varied in the degree to which they fulfilled the Schumpeterian conditions. The pessimistic variants of Keynesianism appeared to require extensive, controlling roles for the State in the economy, which would be unlikely to fulfill the Schumpeterian conditions. On the supply side, the State would have to do the job which capitalists appeared to be unable and/or unwilling to do. This would require the socialization of supply side activity and state directing of investment and economic resources. On the demand side, the State would have to act to socialize consumption through a fundamental and politically tricky redistribution of economic wealth and resources, in order to ensure an adequate level of effective demand. The more optimistic variants appeared to require a far less dramatic role for the State, which would be more likely to fulfill the Schumpeterian conditions. Optimism on the supply side implied but a marginal and indirect role for the State in producing a "proper economic environment" which would ensure business confidence and healthy levels of investment in a continued free enterprise world. This 'environmental' role suggested a policy agenda which would include low taxes, cheap credit, subsidies, etc., as well as countercyclical budgeting and policies to ensure buoyant demand, which would act as an inducement to investment and the

supply side. Depending on the degree of optimism within the demand side vision, the redistribution necessary to ensure adequate levels of demand might only be marginal in degree or take place episodically. This could easily be accomplished through tinkering with the tax system and/or by establishing self-financing social welfare programmes.

Governments and political leaders had their own visions of particular economic and political circumstances to which they had to respond, and they chose that version (or combination of versions) of Keynesianism which appeared to them to be the most appropriate and politically expedient. Countries with serious problems, statist traditions, and/or weak capitalist ideology tended to opt for the more interventionist variants, with the degree of seriousness of legitimacy and accumulation problems determining the supply or demand emphasis. Those countries with the greatest 'liberal parliamentary sensibilities' (arguably, the Anglo-American democracies) tended to embrace the less interventionist versions of Keynesianism, as these were more readily amenable to fulfilling the conditions for perpetuating liberal democratic politics. In turn, they tended to balance legitimacy and accumulation needs by mixing supply and demand policies.

In this paper, Keynesianism refers to this second tendency, to the political approach to socio-economic matters which was most alive to the Schumpeterian requirements for the perpetuation of liberal democratic politics. This version comprises mainly the optimistic and supply side variants, and will be termed supply-side Keynesianism. It may appear to be perverse to use this phrase, given Keynes's rejection of Say's Law (viz. supply creating its own demand) and his focus on effective demand producing employment. But, supply side Keynesianism has been used as a phrase to emphasize that, in the last analysis, private activity in a free market economy would continue to determine the basic allocation and distribution of resources. Indeed, this Keynesian argument has been that, once governments acted to produce the 'proper environment' (including a sufficient level of demand), then supply conditions and the market would look after themselves and generate a high degree of economic activity and employment. Governments would simply keep a close eye on economic circumstances, taking action to encourage private economic activity whenever a cyclical downturn threatened. Then, indirect or 'environmental' actions could be initiated, including countercyclical budgeting, low interest rates, subsidies, as well as economic and social security measures. But, governments did not have to be concerned about controlling the economic terrain, or shaping the specifics of what was demanded, the details of investment decisions or the kinds of employment produced. Governments would only produce generalized macro inducements, while the market would continue to determine the specific patterns of allocation and distribution. And, as governments would be reacting to marginal and short-term fluctuations in the economy, their involvement would be episodic and incremental, not permanent and ambitious.

Relative to earlier expectations about what would be needed to stabilize capitalism and absorb demands for social and economic democracy, this

approach was politically restrained, and emphasized that — as long as the proper economic environment was perpetuated — private economic activity and the supply side had the capacity to generate employment and economic stability. This supply-side, market-oriented version of Keynesianism differs dramatically from that planning-oriented version which rests on Keynes's famous phrase in the General Theory that "a somewhat comprehensive socialization of investment will prove to be the only means of securing an approximation to full employment". Adherents of a more interventionist Keynesianism have thus argued that political control of investment decisions would be needed, as well as the elimination of private rights to the allocation of resources and the initiation of long-term comprehensive planning. There has been considerable confusion about this point. One can certainly make the case — from the supply-side perspective — that chronic instability in the private investment process must be countered by a greater degree of socialization of the allocation of resources. But, this would widen the politico-economic agenda, increase political expectations about economic matters, and ensure that politics and economics would be integrated and not insulated from each other; that is, the Schumpeterian conditions would no longer be fulfilled. On the other hand, it also can be maintained — in supply-side, market-oriented terms — that Keynes was not referring to political control of investment decisions but rather to the *overall level* of investment which was needed to ensure the full use of economic resources. " . . . apart from the necessity of central controls to bring about an adjustment between the propensity to consume and the inducement to invest, there is no more reason to socialize economic life than before . . . I see no reason to suppose that the existing system seriously misemploys the factors of production which are in use . . . when 9,000,000 are employed out of 10,000,000 willing and able to work, there is no evidence to suggest that the 9,000,000 men ought to be employed on different tasks, but that tasks should be available for the remaining 1,000,000 men. It is in determining the volume, not the direction, of actual employment that the existing system has broken down". After defending the classical view of things in this regard, Keynes then proceeded to a vigorous defence of the virtues of the capitalist market system, praising the advantages of efficiency, decentralization, individual freedom and initiative which it allowed. Here, then, is the way in which George Gilder can see Keynes as a "supply-sider", for this is the manner in which this particular version of Keynesianism was committed to the continuation of capitalism and the perpetuation of liberal democratic politics.

The supply-side, market-oriented variant of Keynesianism offered to fulfill the three Schumpeterian conditions for liberal democracy. First, it contributed to the establishment of strict and limited boundaries for the exercise of democratic politics and the perpetuation of the authority of the market. Controversial (and threatening) matters relating to distribution and ownership were removed from the political agenda by Keynesianism's focus on the elimination of unemployment via limited economic management. By perpetuating the market system, specific, detailed and micro decisions were to be

made by individuals in the market and not in the political arena. Generalized and limited Keynesian policies presented a far less involved and less divisive political agenda than socialized investment, economic plans, and National Policies would have produced. These latter actions would have required a considerable degree of consensus building which, in turn, would have required a particular array of social forces in the community. If this was lacking, these policies would either fail or quickly become illegitimate, bringing tremendous pressure to bear on liberal democratic politics. Instead, the limited range of decisions on the policy agenda and the minimization of the difficulties of consensus building ensured that pressures on liberal democratic politics would be minimized.

Second, these pressures were also limited by this Keynesian project's apparent capacity to generate political self-restraint. On the one hand, the very promise of a limited agenda and a relatively passive role for government was a promise which deflected considerable private expectations to the market place. This was particularly the case for labour. The promise of the socialization of uncertainty (via counter-cyclical policies and a modicum of social security) was traded on to the political agenda in return for the withdrawal from the agenda of fundamental questions about ownership, distribution and political control of the economy. This placed severe limits both on public expectations of what democratic politics would do in the economy as well as on what politicians would be allowed to do. This commanded the attention of politicians themselves, as they were presented with the possibility of stabilizing economic conditions and responding to working class demands, but without introducing radical programmes, nationalization, controls, etc. — any of which could have alienated considerable political support. On the other hand, Keynesian policy provisions promised to be of a generalized, macro sort, which would not display specific costs and benefits but rather universal advantages. This set a political framework in which the ostensible neutrality of policies would inhibit the escalation of political demands in response to perceptions of political favoritism. For labour and the political left, full employment was offered, as well as economic stability, social security, an increased role for the state, and a validation of working class claims for economic democracy (viz. increasing labour income sustaining national income and economic stability). For capitalists and the political right, the rejection of public ownership and state planning was appealing, as was the Keynesian vision of a market-based economic stability, encouraged through a policy of low taxation and interest rates. For the middle class and the political centre, there was the promise of economic and political stability, with no drastic increase in taxation, and a common sense, pragmatic state orientation to a vibrant market economy. That policies would be "in the interests of all" eased anxiety about an active government favouring one group over another. This eased expectations and pressures about what democratic politics would do in the economy. Moreover, what had previously been a politicized and ideological context for economic matters was defused by the vision of a benign government, aided by its expert

bureaucracy, rationally, routinely and technically managing the economy; all of this seemed 'beyond politics' and more akin to the world of accounting.

Third, this Keynesianism promised to continue to centralize power, at the centre, away from the margins, at the executive level away from the legislature, and to the experts away from the amateur politician. The Keynesian accomplishment of limiting the range of politics and generating self-restraint was critical, for it allowed the technical, bureaucratic realm to remain insulated from politics. The extension of the 'bureaucratization of politics' and the triumph of the authority of technique ensured that 'irrational' sectoral and political intrusion or unrealizable demands would not undermine the capacity of the technical realm to manage the economy effectively. As long as 'apolitical', 'technical' and 'pragmatic' policy delivered the goods, the public would be happy, and the perception of the effectiveness and legitimacy of liberal democratic politics would be sustained.

In sum, this version of Keynesianism offered the prospects of a stabilized capitalism, acknowledgment of demands for social and economic security, and the fulfilling of the Schumpeterian conditions for liberal democratic politics. The market would be left to get on with the job of allocating economic resources and rewards, thereby allowing liberal democratic politics to avoid agonizing and divisive choices about economic matters.

II

The supply-side market-oriented variant of Keynesianism offered the possibility of a particular style of politics and a distinctive approach to economic policy. As bureaucratic management delivered the economic goods, expectations would be realized and social pressures on governments would be eased. And, as Keynesian policies were limited and seen to be in the interests of all, the legitimacy of governments' actions could be assumed and their apolitical qualities be trumpeted. This scenario was promised as a result of an analysis which suggested that economic prosperity could be maintained through the initiation of a limited array of generalized demand policies (as opposed to an extensive array of detailed supply and planning policies). Hence, it was anticipated that Keynesian politics would comprise a constrained world, involving but the routine application of rationality and technique. And, this 'democratic elitist', Schumpeterian world more or less unfolded as anticipated. The bureaucratization of economic affairs produced the bland, tranquilized 1950s, while a limited welfare system and a more developed system of consumer credit generated the mass gratification of the consumer society of the 1960s. All the while, politics was distinguished by its paternalistic style, low levels of participation and the routinized application of technique to social problems. In short, it appeared that the successes of Keynesianism had accomplished the elimination of class politics, the end of ideology and the coming of the post-industrial society.

More nuancé analysis than is possible here would demonstrate that this picture is somewhat overdrawn and inaccurate. While it is impossible here to catalogue what actually happened in the post-war period, Irwin Gillespie — and others — have indicated that the extent of application of Keynesian policy was very limited (*Canadian Tax Journal*, May-June 1979), and economic stability and full employment were never realized. On innumerable occasions, governments did not anticipate or mitigate economic problems and did not pursue policies in tune with this particular version of Keynesianism. Over the years, successive governments adopted other types of tools and policy objectives (balanced budgeting, sectoral planning, etc.) such that supply-side, market-oriented Keynesianism was relegated to a secondary if not a marginal position. From early in the post-war period through to the late 1960's, the view emerged and persisted that this Keynesian approach could not deal effectively with a variety of crucial economic factors and situations. Indeed, any reasonable expectation as to the possible concretization of this Keynesian vision had withered away by the late 1960's.

If this is the case, whence the view that post-war economic and social stability was largely due to the successful use of Keynesian policy? The adoption and ostensibly successful perpetuation of this Keynesian approach was a function of three broad factors. First, this was a period in which there was tremendous optimism about the potential social benefits of applying collective human intelligence to rational economic management. While liberals had first trumpeted the efficacy of human intelligence, the socialists had appropriated the issue and reconstructed it into a notion of collective intelligence which, it was anticipated, would be expressed through the plan. Liberals had traditionally advocated laissez-faire in the economic realm, contending that not only did individuals best know their own self-interest, but that they were capable and intelligent enough to realize it. But, as Keynes and other liberals saw, the world — if left to run itself — would not always generate benign results: "The world is not so governed from above that private and social interests always coincide". So, liberals extended their rationalist faith from the individual to the social group (viz. the bureaucracy), without their optimistic rationalism weakening: "Experience does not show that individuals, when they make up a social unit, are always less clear-sighted than when they act separately". This orientation was bolstered substantially by the successful planning experience of World War II, which had established the new authority of technique. Indeed, there was considerable bureaucratic and political consensus by war's end as to the nature and direction of economic policy. As a result, there was persistent faith in the post-war period that the rational application of Keynesian techniques would ensure stable economic circumstances. This optimistic rationalism in turn contributed to the continued authority of the market. Despite the broad criticisms lodged against capitalism during the 1930s and early 1940s, capitalism entered and survived the postwar period with a surprising degree of legitimacy. This was the result of the widespread confidence that Keynesianism's limited intervention in the economy would ensure that the market would generate economic growth and stability.

Hence, the postwar period was dominated by the twin authorities of technique and the market, contributing to the illusion that successful Keynesian management was responsible for the economic prosperity of these years. This dominance was bolstered by two other critical factors of this period. Whatever its motives, American leadership of the postwar Bretton Woods system resulted in two decades of relatively stable international economic conditions and substantial consensus amongst the Western industrialized nations. After World War II, the United States was willing and able to establish a 'managed' international economic system, a system based on the principle of free movement of capital, goods and exchange, but one effectively managed by the United States through the dollar as the accepted international unit of exchange. While the Americans benefitted immeasurably from this 'liberal imperial' system (by printing dollars it financed its military and political expenses and expanded its multinational corporations throughout the world), its allies accepted the system, given the liquidity generated and the economic and political stability which was created. The reign of the American dollar encouraged a rapid expansion of trade and international economic activity from which all countries — Canada included — benefitted immensely. This in turn contributed substantially to sustaining the authority of the market and Keynesian technique, as did the third factor, the unfolding of the long-term postwar boom. Despite prophecies of imminent collapse, the international capitalist system generated substantial growth in the post-war period. Given a variety of technological developments (electronics, transportation and communication, chemicals, etc.), cheap energy, a large and relatively quiescent labour force, stable international economic conditions and market-oriented governments, there was substantial business confidence and extensive opportunities for profitable private economic activity. This tendency was strengthened by the evolution of the Cold War, which created immense demand for raw materials, armaments and high technology equipment. Given the prospect of economic stability and full employment (as well as social security) relations between capital and labour were more or less stabilized, and social and ideological pressures on governments were restrained.

Thus, optimistic rationalism, the protective umbrella of American empire and the long-term boom contributed to the persistence of the illusion that it was the exercise of Keynesian analysis and policy which had produced perpetual economic stability and prosperity. This was the context in which the pessimistic, stagnationist version of Keynesianism could be rejected in favour of the more optimistic supply-side, market-oriented version. However, with the passing of these three conditions, the authority of Keynesian technique was undermined. First, the hyper-rationalism of Keynesianism created overoptimistic anticipation about the capacity of the Keynesian design to accurately analyse economic conditions and initiate appropriate and successful policies. Governments formulated policies on the basis of limited information and constrained knowledge — given the continued predominance of the market. Not only were governments perpetually uncertain about market conditions and private

intentions, there was no certainty that individuals in the market would react to governments' inducements in the desired manner. Similarly, there were elements of the market economy which could not be influenced through the use of Keynesian policy. It also became apparent that micro and supply factors and the long run pattern of economic development affected the possibility of attaining high levels of employment and economic stability, and the Keynesian design could not address these possibilities. Hence, a variety of economic problems existed (even during the most apparently stable economic circumstances), including regional, sectoral, structural and international problems. But, it was the development and persistence of inflation which weakened the authority of technique and undermined the confidence that the economy could be managed effectively. Given a variety of technical constraints, the existence of market power, the basic asymmetry of its design and competing policy objectives, the Keynesian design was singularly ill-suited to cope with inflation. Symbolically, perhaps, the Keynesian era ended with Milton Friedman's Presidential Address to the American Economic Association in 1967. In attacking the idea of the Phillips curve (which had ostensibly demonstrated a trade-off between unemployment and inflation), Friedman and his monetarist followers weakened the optimism and consensus that the Keynesian tools could be used to promote economic stability. Further, they also challenged the rationalists' contention that collective human intelligence could be used to manage the economy. Moreover, the persistence of regional, sectoral, structural and international problems and — particularly — the simultaneous existence of unemployment and inflation signified that the market was not functioning properly. In general, as the perception arose that economic policy was ineffective, the authority of technique declined; as the perception grew that the market was not functioning, the authority of the market was diminished.

The weakening of the post-war's optimistic rationalism was a function of the degeneration of the economic circumstances which had sustained the twin authorities of the market and of technique through the postwar period. By the late 1960's, the United States had become unable to provide the international political leadership necessary to stabilize the international economy; indeed, by 1971, the Bretton Woods system had unravelled. From the Canadian perspective, there were two important consequences. First, by exploiting their dollar authority, the Americans had sustained their political, military and economic predominance internationally. This was particularly the case during the Vietnam War. As the Americans acted to retain their military authority, the expenses of the war conflicted with the expenses associated with the effort to retain legitimacy domestically; rather than choosing one over the other, increasingly worthless and non-redeemable dollars were used to finance both objectives. This generated considerable inflationary pressures from which the Canadian economy could not hide, given the continued predominance of the open market and the intimacy of the Canadian-American economic relationship. Second, as the regenerated European and Japanese nations began to reconsider the costs of American military and political leadership, tensions arose within the

western alliance. Further, as the Europeans and Japanese came to outcompete the United States, and as the costs of military and political empire accumulated, the American balance of payments situation deteriorated seriously. In order to protect itself, the United States imposed trade and investment controls and made the dollar inconvertible. These controls seriously affected the Canadian economy and constrained the formulation of its economic policy. In general, given the rise in international economic competitiveness (and the development of regional trading blocs), and given the uncertainty in world political and economic conditions, Canada began to lose the benefits of a stable international economic system. As a result, the authority of Keynesian techniques was weakened, as these were developments and problems to which the Keynesian design could not address itself.

The results of the degeneration of the conditions of long-term growth were similar. Growth had previously insulated economic management from political and ideological pressures and conflicts. The quiescence of the labour force, the confidence and activism of capitalists, and the consensus or accommodation between capital and labour had been generated and nourished by sustained economic growth. As the long-term boom came to a close, groups and classes scrambled to protect their economic interests. Governments were unable to control this development, unless they made fundamental decisions on economic distribution. Unwilling and/or unable to do this, inflation developed as a surrogate for economic growth in governments' attempts to deal with continued expectations of economic prosperity. However, as inflation persisted and intensified, the authority of technique and of the market was further undermined (particularly as there was uneven success in self-protective measures). Hence, inflation destroyed the barriers which had insulated economics from politics and generated political and ideological pressures on governments, pressures to which Keynesianism could not respond.

With the decline in the authority of Keynesian rationalism and technique, the weakening of the post-war boom and the destabilizing of the world economy, the illusion of the capacity of the supply-side, market-oriented Keynesian design was dispelled and the possibility of Keynesianism politics was undermined. Given the persistence of the idea of government responsibility for economic circumstances, there was ever-increasing pressures placed on governments to redress economic problems whenever bureaucratic management did not deliver the goods in a satisfactory manner. But, as public expectations about governments' actions increased, the politico-economic agenda widened to include a range of non-Keynesian issues and objectives. As a result, there was decreasing opportunity for the Schumpeterian conditions to be fulfilled.

First, to the extent that governments moved from the passive, 'environmental' Keynesian role to a more active interventionist one, they also moved from the realm of 'apolitical' policy back to the political world of tensions and controversies about economic matters. Once governments introduced sectoral and planning measures ("disaggregated" policies), these policies became far

more detailed and specific than generalized Keynesian measures, and involved far more specific and obvious costs and benefits. The more detailed and specific governments' policies became, the harder it was for them to portray their actions as being neutral or in the interests of all. Hence, it could no longer be assumed that governments' actions would be accepted as being legitimate. Similarly, as political involvement in the economy increased, governments became open to the charge of spawning an unmanageable bureaucracy and of infringing on business and property rights. Supply-side, market-oriented Keynesianism had promised to avoid precisely these sorts of problems, by limiting the range of the policy agenda and minimizing the difficulties of consensus-building. But, the transition to a more interventionist role resulted in governments confronting a variety of conflicts over economic policy decisions, and a diminished possibility for constructing a consensus around their policies.

Second, the bureaucracy faced increasingly formidable technical problems in the form of more complicated economic analysis and more nuance policy, as a result of increased state intervention in the economy. The more complex that analysis and policy became, the less likely it was that the bureaucracy would be successful in delivering the economic goods. In conjunction with the evolution of a contradictory police agenda (viz. increased and conflicting social pressures and expectations), this led to a decline in the likelihood of the effectiveness of government action in the economy. Ultimately, this decline in effectiveness (or at least the perception of ineffectiveness) resulted in the collapse of the legitimacy of governments' actions.

So, with the demise of the Keynesian era, the Schumpeterian conditions for liberal democratic politics were severely weakened. In conjunction with stagnationist concerns about the future of capitalism, Schumpeterian concerns arose that overextended expectations and overloaded government threatened liberal democratic politics. A widening politico-economic agenda and persistent expectations ensured that the bureaucracy and the market could not be insulated from political and ideological pressures. Hence, there was a concern that liberal democratic governments could not long sustain their legitimacy under conditions in which they appeared to be perpetually ineffective.

III

Once the Keynesian illusion had been dissipated, governments were confronted by two broad policy options with respect to troubled economic circumstances, neither of which appeared to have the capacity to reconstruct the Schumpeterian conditions. First, in reaction to the severe weakening of the forces of economic growth and the 'muddled failures' of an incremental, market-oriented Keynesian approach, governments could seriously extend their presence in the economy to stimulate economic growth and shape the market and economic development to a desired, non-inflationary pattern. Government measures would include economic controls (of wages, prices and profits), long-term industrial strategies (to ensure the 'best' allocation of resources as well as

international competitiveness), and increased emphasis on re-distributive and equity goals. Rejecting the claims that social expectations were not valid, the planning approach argues that governments' failures to realize these expectations were the result of the formulation of half-hearted policies which continued to rely on market forces. Hence, it was expected that with a 'rearrangement' of economic development and a fuller application of collective human knowledge, economic circumstances could be dramatically improved and social expectations more fully realized. And, governments in Canada took tentative steps in this direction throughout the 1970's and early 1980's, in the form of wage and price controls and industrial development programmes. Nonetheless, the post-controls economic orientation of the government ('The Way Ahead') was distinctly market-oriented (despite Trudeau's New Year's Eve Galbraithian ruminations about the 'new society'). Similarly, while governments were willing to speculate about the industrial strategy needed to pump-up economic growth in Canada, Richard French ('How Ottawa Decides') has shown how the formulation of this strategy over the last decade and longer has been marked by tensions between planning and market principles; the Finance Department's market orientation has persistently emerged triumphant over the planning proposals of the Industrial Departments, such that Canada entered the 1980's with an industrial 'strategy' which remained an essentially market-oriented one (Olson and Johnston's private sector-based plans).

The on-again, off-again Canadian flirtation with planning — a running theme of post-war Canadian life from World War II through the Diefenbaker years, the Economic Council of Canada, the CDC, etc. — reflects a continued ambivalence about the role of the state in the economy. Planning proposals and actions generate serious political controversy, reflecting concerns about the propriety of state control of the economy as well as Schumpeterian anxiety about its impact on political democracy. These controversies and inhibitions have reflected three considerations surrounding the planning orientation, all of which have constrained the reconstruction of the Schumpeterian conditions. First, there is serious concern about whether the actual planning policies adopted will be successful in realizing the objectives of this approach. The planning orientation attempts to extend the post war's optimistic rationalism that collective knowledge can be used to improve the economic situation. However, given what appeared to be the perpetual failures of economic policies in the late 1960's and 1970's, there is far less confidence in the early 1980's that far-reaching and ambitious economic programmes would be successful. As noted earlier, the more ambitious the policy which is designed, the greater the likelihood that it will be ill-conceived and/or founded upon incorrect analysis of economic circumstances. And, a failed ambitious policy would generate serious economic damages leaving the political initiators of the policy in a severely weakened political situation. Indeed, the Canadian government's economic and fiscal strategy for the 1980's — centred on accelerated resource development with spin-off industrial developments — foundered on the unanticipated collapse of the world market and resource prices. The bits and pieces of this

particular strategy are still being collected as major industrial projects stall, private investment stagnates, unemployment rushes to two million and the legitimacy of the government plummets. While Keynesianism had offered minimal political risks and potentially high political benefits, planning policies offer huge political risks and costs, particularly as the potential benefits of these policies are long-term in arriving while political expectations are fundamentally short term in nature. In short, the post-Keynesian ear is marked by a pessimism that there are 'rational solutions' to economic problems waiting to be discovered and supplied by governments and their bureaucracies. As a result, there is considerable wariness about the economic and political risks of the planning orientation.

Second, even if it could be contended that a rational solution to economic problems existed, there continues to be an absence of a viable ideological or moral orientation in Canada that could be used by governments to guide them in their policy decisions. There is simply no consensus in Canada about what these plans and policies should be. The Keynesian approach had anticipated no difficulties in this regard (as a result of its limited policy agenda and its promise of non-discriminatory and universal benefits). However, the planning orientation cannot assume the existence of a consensus around any particular matrix of policy decisions, given the greater ambitiousness of its agenda and of its programmes and the fact that these decisions would produce more obvious and specific winners and losers in the economy (regionally, sectorally, etc.). Whenever governments introduce planning devices or policies, or intervene in a specific or detailed way, they have great difficulty in portraying their actions as being in the national or collective interest. As a result, policies emanating from the planning orientation have tended to exacerbate regional and sectoral tensions in Canada, and perpetuated the context of a beleaguered and illegitimate government, doing battle with society. In short, the post-Keynesian era requires a new ideological framework or consensus for economic policies, the absence of which will ensure that policy decisions will generate substantial political conflict and controversy.

Third, there is considerable doubt about whether the planning option can be pursued in liberal democratic fashion and fulfill the Schumpeterian conditions. The planning option widens the politico-economic agenda, raises expectations about the capacity of governments' actions and makes economic matters an exclusively political responsibility — in short, it burdens liberal democratic politics with crushing pressures. Given the absence of any obvious consensus-building formula, given the likelihood of policy failures, and given rapid technological change and a highly competitive world, could liberal democratic policies survive these pressures? To carry out the planning option, governments would have to negate the impact of market processes, and deal with international forces, foreign ownership, large corporations and unions, and technological changes. Only in this way could planning policies become operative or have any chance of success. Similarly, any 'new national policy' in Canada would probably require centralization of political power and the imposition of the

policy on to the provinces, given present political divisiveness. There is profound political anxiety that illiberal measures would be required to overcome the constitutional, international and socio-economic roadblacks which stand in the path of the planning option. All of this is in stark contrast to the Schumpeterian promises of the supply-side, market oriented variant of Keynesianism, which had promised a constrained political world in which stresses and strains on liberal democratic politics would be minimal.

Hence, governments' flirtation with the planning orientation has been inhibited by the decline in optimistic rationalism, the absence of ideological and economic consensus, and the fear of political authoritarianism. And, these factors have been the stuff out of which the second post-Keynesian policy option was constructed, that is, the market orientation. As a result of the perception of the ineffectiveness of governments' economic policies as well as because of the political tensions generated by increased state participation in the economy, governments' actions in the economy from the late 1960's onward experienced diminishing legitimacy. It is in this context that proponents of the market orientation suggest that governments should radically retrench their role in the economy. Given the limits to collective knowledge and policy rationality, it is argued that planning or pseudo-planning approaches should be resisted, as economic processes and developments are simply too complex for politicians and bureaucrats to understand. Indeed, the last decade's decline in productivity and economic growth is seen to have been a function of irrational bureaucratic and political interference which has resulted in the protection of inefficient enterprises and the squeezing out by governments of private activity in the market. As the rate of growth began to decline, political action to avoid a recession is seen to have perpetuated high wages and prices, ballooning government spending and deficits, and a frantic increase in the money supply, all of which generated inflation and a further deterioration of economic rationality. Hence, a treadmill of declining growth, partial response, inflation, declining productivity, etc. With respect to the political realm, it is argued that politicians purchase electoral votes through the abuse of their budgetary resources; not only did this squeeze out private market activity (as government spending and deficits shifted resources to the private sector), but this process created 'over-extended' social expectations, which legitimized misleading and dangerous notions about equity, equality and the capacity of political action to improve economic circumstances. In general, advocates of the market orientation contend that the market has been overheated by excess demands while the political process has been made volatile as a result of an 'overloaded' agenda and perpetual political and ideological squabbling about economic matters.

Hence, advocates of the second option are sympathetic to the Schumpeterian concerns about democratic politics and militate for a radical retrenchment of the state's role in economic life. On the one hand, it is contended that if the market is 'freed' and cleansed of its political and ideological impurities, then economic rationality will be reconstructed, growth and productivity will rise, and there will be decreased pressures for government action in the economy.

Inefficient firms will improve themselves or go bust; artificially high wages or prices will be penalized by bankruptcies and unemployment. In short, responsibility for economic matters should be returned to the market, which will generate a more rational realignment of economic resources than politicians and bureaucracies could hope to attain. Similarly, it is contended by the market advocates that once economic matters are removed from the political agenda, then political, ideological and class pressures will be released from the democratic process and returned to the market place. Expectations about governments' economic actions will hopefully decline, and controversies about economic distribution and the allocation of resources will be worked out via the benevolent oppression of the market process. It is anticipated that this will re-kindle the initiative and enterprise of more self-reliant individuals and industries, leading to a renaissance of market activity.

This option was embraced to an extent in Canada, in the form of the monetarist economic policies of the late 1970's and early 1980's, as well as in the attempts by governments to limit spending, repair the budgetary imbalance, promote private investment and deflate public expectations. Moreover, as noted earlier, industrial strategies have had a distinct market-orientation. However, as with respect to the first option, governments have remained ambivalent about the extent to which they should shed their post-war political responsibilities and allow market forces exclusively to determine economic outcomes. The result, then, has been an on-again, off-again flirtation with monetarism and supply-side strategies. While social security programmes have been threatened, governments have not ravaged them, with the result that most Canadians remain 'corrupted' by their relationship with the state. Moreover, while unemployment has been high and rising, corporations threatened with bankruptcy have received substantial government assistance and the government iself continues to intervene in the economy. This reticence to cast Canada's economic fate to the winds of the market place reflects two broad considerations, which also constrain the reconstruction of the Schumpeterian conditions.

First, as with respect to the planning option, there are serious doubts about whether the policies of the market orientation will realize their objectives. While the planning option remains faithful to the optimistic rationalism of the post-war era, the market orientation is an energetic expression of the faith in the market's capacity to produce an effective and acceptable matrix of economic outcomes. However, governments and observers have had doubts about whether a 'freed' market economy would regenerate itself, producing born-again capitalists and soaring investment and productivity levels. Recent experience in the U.K., U.S.A. and Canada has indicated that market-oriented policies have been less successful than anticipated: supply side inducements have not led to a flood of private investment while the techniques of monetary controls have proved to be both too difficult and unsuccessful. As in the planning option, the market approach holds serious political risks. The potential beneficial results of marked regeneration will be medium-to-long term in arriving; however, political expectations are short-term in nature, and will confront rising unemployment

and bankruptcies. In short, the post-Keynesian era has recently been marked by a pessimism that the market has the capacity to sort out the pressing economic problems of the late 20th century. As a result, governments remain sufficiently wary of the economic and political risks to shy away from a full embracing of the market option.

Second, it is unclear whether social expectations about economic and social security and government involvement in the economy can be dramatically altered without resorting to illiberal political measures. The market approach demands the diminishing of expectations, but these expectations and government responsibility for them have been continuously validated over two generations. Cutting government spending, eliminating social and economic programmes, and deliberately generating unemployment and bankruptcies raises intense political questions of equity and social morality which can be answered only by referring to the ideology of free market capitalism. But, it is extremely doubtful whether a mass commitment to a market morality can be reaffirmed. Moreover, this morality is only weakly embraced by those most dominant in the market place; large corporations — with the assistance of government – have planned and carried out extensive economic programmes, shaping markets in the process. Some of them are sluggish and inefficient and will have to go, once the market approach is initiated. But, it is inconceivable that they will go bankrupt or be taken over while placing less negative pressures on governments than that placed by the mass of the population affected by these policies. In the absence of an economic and ideological consensus around a market approach, it will be difficult for governments to portray these market measures as being in the interests of all. In short, while expectations will certainly be assaulted by initiating these measures, it is unlikely that expectations could be sufficiently diminished without the stimulus of draconian political action. While ideological and class pressures may be directed to the market place, the 'benevolent oppression' of the market place may not be forceful enough to resolve these conflicts. Given the recent weakening of faith in the powers of the market process, and the absence of an ideological consensus around a market morality, it is inconceivable that an exclusively market approach could be pursued successfully without resort to illiberal measures and political coercion.

Thus, it is apparent that the post-Keynesian world is markedly different than the Keynesian one promised to be. While there was considerable optimism about Keynesianism's capacity to deliver economic and social stability, there are now serious doubts about whether either of the post-Keynesian options will be successful or can be carried out as designed. Moreover, in contrast to the Keynesian promise to minimize political pressures on governments and ensure the continuation of liberal democratic politics, both of the post-Keynesian policy options involve considerable political risks for governments which threaten the stability of liberal democratic politics. On neither technical nor ideological grounds does there appear to be a consensus around either of the post-Keynesian alternatives. As a result, as events in the 1970's and early 1980's have demonstrated, successive governments in Canada have rejected an

exclusive reliance on either option. While governments responded to pressures to intervene in the economy to improve economic circumstances, they have been wary about the effectiveness of these policies and about the impact of these policies on the traditional Canadian liberal democratic 'way of life'. On the other hand, governments acknowledged the economic powers of the market place, but they have remained concerned that an exclusive reliance on a market orientation would not generate satisfactory economic circumstances and would lead to an unfair distribution of economic rewards and punishments. So, fearing the divisiveness which would result from embracing either approach, governments have pursued both strategies, with the result that there was little chance that their policies would be successful. And, given the continued lack of policy effectiveness, the legitimacy of governments continued to wane.

The major political implication of the demise of the Keynesian era is that neither of the post-Keynesian policy alternatives appear to be capable of reconstructing the Schumpeterian conditions. Keynesianism had appeared to resolve the problem of how the state could involve itself in the economy to ensure socially desired results in a way which did not threaten capitalism or liberal democratic politics. However, the planning and market options necessitate, yet again, fundamental choices about the role and style of politics in economic life. And, compared to these two options, the Keynesian world looks blissful indeed. And so the cry goes out for a new Keynes to come along and propose a 'technical' solution to the problems of inflation and economic stagnation.

But, this is chimerical, as was — perhaps — the Keynesian project all along. Schumpeter certainly thought that the Keynesian design was ahistorical and politically naive. And, as one attempts to sort out the character of the post-Keynesian world, one is confronted again by three Schumpeterian concerns. First, can democratic politics long survive and retain legitimacy if it continually produces policies which are perceived to be ineffective? There is considerable evidence that suggests that the capitalist system is going through a downturn of the 'long cycle'; other evidence suggests that a fundamental technological revolution is unfolding which will take a generation or longer to sort out. Whatever the case, it appears that an extended period of economic and social dislocation is about to be endured and that — optimistic rationalism put aside — there may be little that governments can do, short of initiating draconian measures. If this is the case, then governments' policies will continue to be ineffective and their legitimacy will decline. Nonetheless, pressures on governments will continue to mount to initiate non-existent solutions. How long will increasingly illegitimate governments resist the temptation/necessity to act in authoritarian fashion to impose social and economic stability?

Second, are there exhaustively rational ways of viewing our increasingly and bizarrely complex technological world? How optimistic can one be about the existence of 'rational' solutions to complex economic problems, ready to be discovered and applied by politicians and bureaucrats? Of course, the absence of rational approaches and policies exacerbates the first issue presented above. On the other hand, the experts' and governments' presentation of the rational or

'miracle' solution may be socially unpalatable. Whither democracy in conditions in which 'technological necessities' require unpopular policies?

Third, if neither of the post-Keynesian alternatives appears to be capable of reconstructing the Schumpeterian conditions for liberal democratic politics, then perhaps it is necessary to enter into the 'post-Schumpeterian' political world. If it can no longer be assumed that political leadership and its bureaucracy can deliver the goods in rational and desired fashion, then continued ineffectiveness will lead to the decline in democratic governments' legitimacy. And, if Schumpeterian politics persist, it is inevitable that political and bureaucratic elites will move towards extreme policies and an authoritarian style of politics. Hence, the Schumpeterian vision appears to be less compelling (or even unreasonable) at present, as this particular vision of democracy may no longer offer any political attractions. Indeed, a vigorous case can be made that the post-Keynesian world requires the reconstruction of the classical democratic vision of a radical participatory democracy. On the one hand, traditional notions of 'rationality' appear to have become anachronistic in a hyper-technological environment; surely what is rational about the way economic resources are used must be determined in any increasingly social and democratic way. Only a participatory style of politics can ensure this. On the other hand, even if the economic results of this approach are no less unsatisfactory than the alternative approaches, these results stand a better chance of being accepted if the process generating these results is seen to be legitimate. Indeed, this participatory approach to public economic policy may be the only approach which can perpetuate a democratic style of politics. And, despite traditional concerns about the inefficiency and impracticality of a classical democratic approach, it is highly unlikely that it would generate any worse results than the Schumpeterian, bureaucratic approach is now presenting.

The livelihoods and future of the mass of the population is presently being affected by the daily changes of a relentless technological transformation. Past experience suggests that the (corporate-dominated) market process will not sort out these changes to benefit the mass of the population. And, as present analysis suggests there is little reason to anticipate that this process will be well-managed by the political and bureaucratic elite. Obvious political roadblocks notwithstanding, surely the time is ripe to resurrect the idea that those whose lives are most dramatically affected by these decisions should contribute to the formation of economic policy and to the construction of strategies for the use of technology and resources?

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ANTHONY GIDDENS'S THEORY OF STRUCTURATION

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The seven books written by Giddens in the years 1971 to 1979 are a remarkable appraisal and reworking of the major currents of existing social theory. The critical part of his work begins with the founders of social science in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries and goes on to what he has called "the orthodox consensus" of the period from the end of the Second World War until about the late 1960's. The constructive part of his work can be divided into two. One is his reconciliation or blending of elements of positivism, structuralism, hermeneutics and Marxism in his theory of structuration and the other is the application of this methodology in his theory of industrial society. The latter, although begun with his book on class structure (Giddens 1973) and continued in chapters 4, 5 and 6 in *Central Problems in Social Theory* (Giddens 1979), took a large step forward in 1981 with the publication of volume one of *A Contemporary Critique of Historical Materialism*. A second volume is to follow and so Giddens's theory of industrial society must be regarded as incomplete. For this reason comment on and criticism of it is premature and can only be tentative. In this paper I have chosen to deal, for the most part, with his epistemological undertaking or the "clarification of logical issues" (Giddens 1976:8); the outcome of which is his distinctive theory of structuration and will draw most heavily on the three books published in 1976, 1977 and 1979. However, because some of the papers in *Central Problems in Social Theory* as well as volume one of *A Contemporary Critique of Historical Materialism* are avowedly based on the theory of structuration, I shall include a short treatment of the links between the two parts of Giddens's work at the end of the sections of the paper on the theory of structuration.

As introduction, it may be helpful to try to place his work against the backcloth of other more established social theories and of some of the recent developments in them. In a very broad sense, Giddens's writings can be seen as a fresh attempt "to bridge the gap" between the positions in the long-standing debate over whether social practices are best explained by some kind of natural science of society or by some version of the interpretative process of understanding. All serious social theory has been concerned with this bridging operation, but two circumstances give special significance to Giddens's attempt to do so. One is that it is taking place at a time when naturalistic social theory has been considerably undermined, not only by the failure to deliver adequate explanations, but also by the attack on its underlying epistemology which has been mounted by contemporary philosophy of science and language. So Giddens has been able to use new means for the old task.

The other circumstance which makes his work unusually significant is its relationship to recent social theory in both its "academic" and Marxist forms. In

respect of the former, Giddens's writings represent a decided break from the predominantly naturalistic tradition of English sociology. The criticisms of his theory of structuration which have come from this quarter, for example, that of M.S. Archer (1982), would seem to bear this out. As would the uneasiness among some of his other critics in the face of Giddens's readiness to accept a large measure of doubt and contingency in the matters of either philosophical or sociological certainty (J. Bleicher and M. Featherstone, 1982:72). Giddens's relationship to Marxism is, of course, an important issue in both his theory of structuration and his theory of industrial society and will be dealt with at the appropriate points in the body of the paper. Here, it should be pointed out that Giddens, while building on some elements in Marx's thought is not a "Neo-Marxist" of any kind and "in diverging from Marx, wants to propose the elements of an alternative interpretation of history" (Giddens 1981:3). Such a thoroughgoing "deconstruction" rather than a "reconstruction" (Bleicher and Featherstone 1982:63) is bound to be rejected by all those who wish to retain those elements of Marxism which Giddens rejects.

More specifically, the work of Giddens can be seen as following up several strands in existing explanatory and interpretative social theory. He draws substantially from phenomenology (including ethnomethodology), hermeneutics, structuralism, systems theory and certain aspects of Marxism. He takes little, if anything, from functionalism as it developed in American sociology and British anthropology and, while recognizing the affinity of his ideas to symbolic interactionism, he is highly critical of that division of subject-matter as is suggested by the terms, "micro" and "macro" levels of analysis. At the same time, he is determined not to abandon the pursuit of that intersubjective causal analysis which is necessary for any critical stance in social theory. Obviously, neither the simple juxtaposition of hermeneutics and naturalistic causation, nor the easy choice of one or the other, will do. Only a satisfactory integration of both will suffice and it is no less than such a thoroughgoing integration which Giddens presents in his theory of structuration.

Preliminary Overview

By reason of its integrative task, Giddens's theory of structuration is an exceedingly close-knit one which does not allow itself to be broken down into parts which are readily comprehensible in isolation. This is especially so when one tries to present an abridged account of what one takes to be the essentials of the theory and its implications. So it may be advisable to begin with a brief and dogmatically expressed overview of what Giddens finds wrong with "the orthodox consensus" and how he proposes to set it right. Thereafter I shall attempt a more detailed statement of his views of social action, of structure and of how he makes them into a whole. That done, I shall turn to the links between the theory of structuration and the theory of industrial society. Finally, I shall elaborate some of the implications of the theory along with some possible criticisms.

In the final chapter of *Central Problems in Social Theory*, Giddens lists five shortcomings of mainstream sociology which I shall repeat and then try to reduce even further. The first weakness of most, if not all of it, is its "mistaken self-interpretation of its origins *vis-à-vis* the natural sciences" (1979:240). Seeing itself as a newcomer and claiming its youthfulness as the reason for its difficulties, sociology, in the rather less than innocent sense referred to by Giddens (1979:8), doggedly strove after general laws of the same logical form and predictive power that the natural sciences were considered to possess. It thus remained blind to the differences between nature and society. Its second weakness was its "reliance upon a now outmoded and defective philosophy of language" (1979:245). That is to say that language was seen simply as a means of description and communication without adequate recognition of how it played a crucial part in constituting and perpetuating social life. Third, "orthodox sociology relied upon an oversimple revelatory model of social science, based on naturalistic presumptions" (1979:248). So it dismissed the lay criticism that it was telling people things they already knew and misread the role of lay knowledge in producing social practices, which lay behind the criticism. In this way, sociology largely failed to deal with a vital part of social reality: its construction by actors; and thereby, lost a good deal of its subject-matter. Without this crucial element, it was possible for orthodox sociology to get by, almost without noticing, that it had a fourth shortcoming, viz., that it "lacked a theory of action" (1979:253). By this Giddens means that it lacked "a conception of conduct as reflexively monitored by social agents who are partially aware of the conditions of their action" (1979:253). As a consequence various more or less deterministic explanations were offered. These usually took the form of "structural" factors which in the short or long run were considered to determine people's conduct. The fifth and last shortcoming listed by Giddens is, in a sense an extension of the first one in that he seems to feel that not only the followers of the logical positivism of Hempel and Nagel, but also even some interpretative theorists, e.g., Winch and Habermas, have not entirely freed themselves from "the positivistic model of natural science."

For our present, introductory purpose, I wish to try to reduce (without distorting what I retain) the number of shortcomings to three. First, the "natural science" self-understanding is too deterministic and so leaves out the measure of autonomy possessed by social actors. Second, and as a result, the vital part played by language, consciousness and the consequent lay knowledge in the production of social reality is neglected. Third and for the same reason, the orthodox consensus has been unable to integrate adequately a theory of face-to-face interaction with one of institutional analysis.

What then does Giddens propose to do to remedy these shortcomings? First, he places people at the very centre of things by making them the active, skilled agents who actually produce, sustain and transform social life. Second, by using a notion of structure rather different from those used in orthodox sociology and one which was compatible with the role he gives to actors, he considerably reduces its determining effect, and gives equal importance to

structure as means or resources. Third, he achieves the decisive integration of "action" and "structure" through their interdependence which is brought about in the production of structure (in Giddens's sense) by actors using it as a resource and at the same time repeatedly reproducing it as a constraining outcome of their interaction. In this way the "duality" of structure, which is simultaneously both the means and the outcome of action, links action and structure as integral parts of each other and replaces the separating "dualism" of face-to-face interaction and the constraining properties of the resultant systems of repeated social practices and relationships. With this crude indication of what is to come, we can now turn to a more detailed account of forcibly separated elements of the theory of structuration.

The Theory of Social Action

A fundamental criticism that Giddens makes of almost all existing social theories is that they do not have an adequate theory of social action, or agency (1976:93-98, 126; 1977:167; 1979:49-53, 253-257). Either they retain too much determinism (including even Parsons's would-be "voluntaristic" theory) and reduce the actors to mere puppets who respond more or less mechanically to the factors, forces and structures which are held to determine in various ways their actions. Or they make the opposite error and actors are endowed with nearly complete autonomy and full knowledge of themselves and their actions. In contrast, Giddens wishes to "promote *a recovery of the subject* without lapsing into subjectivism" (1979:44) and while recognizing the limits of our self-knowledge. In seeking to achieve this aim, Giddens turns initially to theories of mainly idealist origin, but then goes on to make certain additions of his own.

Although Giddens's theory of action owes much, as we shall see presently, to phenomenology, the philosophy of language and hermeneutics, he also notes its closeness to Marxian *Praxis* and to Marx's contention, in the introductory paragraphs of *'The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte,"* that "Men make their own history, but they do not make it just as they please." While Giddens is critical of the positivist and functionalist aspects of Marx's writings, elements of his philosophy of history are decisively used by Giddens. However, Marx himself did not systematically develop this theme of the partial autonomy of human agents and it is to the later philosophers of language and hermeneutics that Giddens must go for a more adequate account of how it is possible for actors to "make their own history" even if within certain limits. Where does the partial freedom from constraint, or voluntarism of social actors come from? This question, of course, takes us all the way back to the roots of the gap between explanation and understanding which Giddens is trying to bridge. Very broadly speaking, all interpretative social theory makes the assumption that we do not have the more or less direct access to the objects and events of our experience which naturalistic explanations presume; rather, what is accepted as "knowledge" are the interpretations we place upon objects and events through the exercise of consciousness. Hence what we create in the first place we may,

although with difficulty, recreate and transform. This is what gives us a measure of freedom in making and remaking the social world within the constraints imposed by incomplete knowledge, nature and the social arrangements, both past and present, made to satisfy needs. Here, too, lies the essential difference between nature and society as seen by phenomenology and hermeneutics and which Giddens also accepts (1976:15-16, 160). However close and important the ties between the two may be in some respects, or in some ultimate sense, nature is not a human product whereas society is. The endlessly repeated social practices which comprise social life are not "given" as nature is, but brought about by actors endowed with consciousness, language and a body of collective lay "knowledge."

These three elements in interpretative theory are closely allied and the unravelling of their meanings and complex interrelationships would be an immense task. There is considerable overlapping in the usages of the terms but they can be loosely held together, as it were, by the inclusive concept of *Verstehen*, or understanding. Hence it is necessary and more useful here to distinguish the earlier usage of this term from that which is taken over by Giddens. People have probably always known about their awareness of themselves, their ability to reflect on their conduct and of the possibility of "self-fulfilling prophecies", and the attempt to take them into account when explaining social life is a long-standing one. Thus in the earlier notion of *Verstehen*, as generally understood in North America and usually attributed to Max Weber, "understanding" was the insight attained by putting oneself in another's place or reliving another's experience in some way. It was seen as a useful source of hypotheses which could then be put to the test of intersubjective causal analysis in one form or other. In this way the claims of interpretative theory were partially recognized but also relegated to a minor, preliminary role. Similarly, the ability of actors to monitor and modify their conduct in the light of their own, or others', expectations was dismissed as of minor importance.

In strong contrast, the more recent view of *Verstehen*, which Giddens applies, raises reflexive consciousness, language and collective lay knowledge to the utmost importance. For they become the very preconditions and means of any kind of social interaction whatsoever. "Understanding" is therefore the knowing, or having a competent grasp, of the collective lay knowledge, expressed in language, which is a precondition of our being able to interact with others. It is upon this stock of shared knowledge that actors draw in order to produce the social practices through which they pursue their interests. Giddens calls it "mutual knowledge" or "common-sense understandings possessed by actors within shared cultural milieux" (1976:88-89) and refers to it as "taken-for-granted" knowledge; or what any competent actor could be expected to know. Gadamer, a leading exponent of the philosophical hermeneutics on which Giddens draws, uses the term, "tradition" (1960), while Wittgenstein and his followers talk of "forms of life". But whatever name it bears, a competent, if not a wholly complete or even conscious, understanding of it is, in Giddens's words, "the ontological condition of human society as it is produced and reproduced by its members" (1976:151).

Thus far in his theory of action Giddens has incorporated fairly well-established elements of interpretative theory. But he is far from being uncritical of hermeneutics and phenomenology and he goes on to make certain additions in order to meet some of his objections. I have chosen to deal with three of these which seem to me to be especially important, namely, his insistence on action as continuous *practical* intervention rather than concentrating on meanings and intentions; the inclusion of and stress on power; and the crucial question of the limits to, or the constraining conditions of action.

In his definitions of action (1976:75; 1979:55) Giddens calls it "a continuous flow of conduct"; a "stream of actual or contemplated causal interventions of corporeal beings in the ongoing process of events in the world"; and, a little earlier (1976:53), "the practical realization of interests, including the material transformation of nature through human activity". This definition makes several important points. The stress on action as a continuous flow or stream of acts precludes the breaking up of action into discrete, abstract and context-less acts so dear to analytical philosophers and others in search of examples. It emphasizes the practical nature of action and restores the notion of interests and along with them the weighty implications of the division of interest among individuals or groups. Perhaps most important of all, it establishes the voluntaristic capacity of actors to intervene in "a potentially malleable object-world" and to have "acted otherwise" should they have seen fit to do so (1979:56).

Giddens repeatedly insists on the need to take into account the difference of power in social relationships; not only because we have to know *whose* meanings, norms and rules are being made effective, or because interaction does not always take place between peers, but mainly because power is logically related to action by implying the application of means to achieve outcomes. True to his aim of reconstructing inadequate elements of social theory, Giddens proposes a composite view of power as the (sometimes latent) capability to use resources both in the sense of "transformative capacity" at the level of interaction and also in the sense of domination, or the power *over* people, at the "structural" level of established institutions and systems which arise out of repeated social practices. In the latter sense, power involves relations of autonomy and dependence in circumstances where the outcome requires the agency of others (Giddens 1979:91-94). In this way the Parsonian view of power as a facility and the over-simple, but useful, view of power as some kind of zero-sum game can be satisfactorily combined. For Giddens's theory of action, however, it is power in the sense of transformative capacity used in active negotiation among actors which is chiefly involved and is concerned with the continuous intervention by actors in events. At least *some* measure of this kind of power is inherent in the very concept of agency which implies the possibility that the actor could have done otherwise. So the actors do not just *know* the meanings and the rules, but have the capability of using them to negotiate the interactions and relationships they produce. They do not simply follow or apply fixed patterns which they have internalized or committed themselves to; they actively bargain using all the transformative capacity they have to produce

practices which are not simply slavish repetitions but contain new elements which alter the relationships as they reproduce them.

To back up this claim to a measure of autonomy for actors, Giddens turns to what he calls the "dialectic of control" (1979:6, 72, 145-150). All power relationships, whether in direct, face-to-face interaction or on the impersonal, institutional level, are a two-way affair in that almost always one partner has more power than the other, but almost never does one partner have no power at all. With the possible exception of someone in a strait-jacket, the subordinate partner in a power relationship has some measure of autonomy even if it is only the desperate act of suicide. Far more often subordinates do have a significant effect on what happens in society. This reinforces the actors' ability to intervene and accounts in part for the ever-changing content of social practices and the relationships built upon them.

The last respect in which Giddens reconstructs the hermeneutic theory of action is in the crucial question of the limits of action. Strictly speaking, this is a question of the extent to which actors are able to give reasons for their actions or what Giddens calls "the rationalization of action" (1976:83-5; 1979:56-9). Thus it bears on how far their "stocks of knowledge" will allow them to reflect on and rationalize their conduct. But there is more to it than simply being able to give accounts of why they acted in a particular way. For the same stocks of knowledge are used in *taking* action: in their reflexive monitoring and intervention in the course of events. So the limitations which Giddens sees as affecting the rationalization of action also affect the action itself. In his "stratification" model of action, Giddens sets two kinds of limits on actors: unacknowledged (or unconscious) sources of action, on the one side, and unintended consequences of action on the other.

A concept of the unconscious has an important place in Giddens's theory although, as one would expect, he warns against reducing the theory of action to the workings of the unconscious and leaves the conscious reflexive monitoring of action by active agents in pride of place. He does so by distinguishing "practical consciousness" from both the unconscious and discursive consciousness. Practical consciousness rests on the tacit, taken-for-granted "mutual knowledge" which actors use to produce social practices, but of which they cannot give a full, systematic, discursive account. Thus it is knowledge of which the actors are neither unconscious nor yet fully conscious. The measure of discursive ability to analyse and give coherent accounts of their conduct is also incomplete, but, Giddens suggests, is probably greater than is often realized by would-be revelatory social theory. Giddens's conclusions on the unconscious are, he says, rudimentary and for our purposes here it is perhaps sufficient to recognise that unconscious elements of motivation are present in social action and that this represents a limitation on the actor's consciousness.

With the notion of "unintended consequences" we return to firmer sociological ground. At bottom it is no more than the commonplace that our thoughts and actions have a way of escaping from our initial intentions and so producing consequences we did not expect but which we then have to take into

account. Marx's theory of Praxis can, I think, be interpreted as an example of this: in order to provide people with their material needs, social arrangements are made which have unintended consequences which later become a hindrance to those very provisions for the satisfaction of material needs. Similarly, in the interpretation of written texts the intended meaning of the writer is only the beginning, as it were, and the text can quite legitimately come to have quite different meanings for later readers. Such facts have long been recognized in social theory and have been handled in a number of ways. Surely one of the best-known and sophisticated of these is Merton's treatment of "manifest" and "latent" functions and criticism of it can be used as a convenient means of showing the importance of unintended consequences for the theory of action as well as, incidentally, the grave weakness of the way they are handled in structural-functionalism.

Considerable portions of Giddens's writings are devoted to a detailed and devastating dismantling of functionalism (1976:21; 1977:96-129; 1979:111-115; 210-216 and elsewhere) and he bluntly says at one point (1979:7) that his whole theory of structuration can be regarded as "a non-functionalism manifesto". Nevertheless, he does concede that structural-functionalism recognizes the significance of unintended consequences of action and this is what we are concerned with here.

However, the treatment Merton gives is seriously marred in two ways. First, he wrongly tries to turn latent functions into causal explanations of manifest ones by assuming that the former fulfil certain needs of the reified group. Secondly, and more important, he fails to include in his notion of manifest functions the constitutive role of actors through their rationalization and monitoring of their conduct in the light of their mutual knowledge. So the agents are left out of the picture altogether and their behaviour is explained by assuming that societies have needs and are able to bring actors to fulfil them without knowing that they are doing so. In place of this Giddens argues that we have to recognize that actors know a good deal about their interactions, and that this knowledge enables them to produce social practices and to rationalize them. Yet at the same time, their actions escape, as it were, from their intentions and have unintended consequences which then become limiting conditions of future action. So in the famous example of the Hopi rain dance, the actors (or most of them) may well interpret the dancing as a way of making it rain but their action has consequences other than this, for example, perhaps great solidarity, which then becomes a condition of further action.

But there is much more to the notion of unintended consequences than the failure of functionalism to deal adequately with them; or even than in providing a limit to the effectiveness of the rationalization of action and the interventions of actors. For this escape from the intentions and purposes of actors is a chronic feature of social action and a major link between face-to-face interaction and the repeated, "deeply sedimented" social practices or institutions. I shall have more to say about this, the central issue of Giddens's theory of structuration, in the following section. Here, I want only to point out how unintended

consequences are a limitation on social action as conceived by Giddens. The other matters of its effects on the nature of social generalizations and the resultant precariousness of social outcomes I shall deal with in the third section of this paper.

Structure and its duality

Having, in his theory of action, reinstated human actors as the active, skilled agents who, within limits, produce, maintain and change social practices, Giddens has the task of providing a compatible conceptualization of "structure" and one which can be satisfactorily integrated with his theory of action. For, as already indicated (see above), the burden of Giddens's criticism of existing social theories was their inability to account adequately for the role of actors and to show how face-to-face interaction could be integrated with institutional relations. On this basis Giddens is critical of all three of the main frameworks of social theory. Interpretative theories and the closely allied philosophies of action which Giddens discusses do have a theory of action, or agency, but, Giddens argues, it needs to be complemented by the inclusion of the elements of power and temporality (1979:54). Even more damaging, of course, is the fact that they lack any serious theorization of institutions. This tends to give the impression of actors who are entirely conscious of their motivations and unaffected by the "escape" of unintended consequences. In contrast, functionalism has a theory of institutions, but a defective one. Nor is functionalism successful in generating an adequate theory of action. In functionalism, structure is most often a descriptive term used for the more or less static pattern or organization of social relationships while the more active, explanatory part of the theory is carried by the notion of function. It is this dichotomy, Giddens says, which prevents functionalism from having an adequate theory of action because the notion of function leads to the contention that systems have needs which actors must, willy-nilly, fulfil. As we shall see shortly, this same dichotomy precludes functionalism from developing a proper understanding of temporality in social life. In structuralism, while it has, of course, a very decided theory of institutions, structure appears in a variety of forms as some kind of underlying determinant of surface appearances and so leaves very little room at all for a theory of action. The final point of Giddens's criticism of both structuralism and functionalism is that they seem unable to sustain the distinction between structure and system which both of them make.

Given his aims and the weaknesses he sees in other theories, Giddens's reformulation of the concept of structure abandons the dualism of statics and dynamics and firmly separates structure and system. In place of the former he introduces the notion of temporality and he achieves the latter task by altering the concepts of both structure and system significantly. The distinction which Giddens makes between structure and system can serve as the starting point for the clarification of his conception of structure (1979: 64-66) because his view of

social system broadly corresponds to the widely accepted (although also rather confused) picture of "structure cum system" as an observable pattern or organization of relationships. In Giddens's definition, systems are the "Reproduced relations between actors or collectivities, organised as regular social practices" or, "Social systems involve regularised relations of inter-dependence between individuals or groups, that typically can be best analysed as *recurrent social practices*. Social systems are systems of social interaction: as such they involve the situated activities of human subjects, and exist syntagmatically in the flow of time" (1979: 66). So the all-important thing about systems of relations and social practices is that they are "the situated doings of concrete subjects" (1976: 128), and therefore exist in time and space.

This is what so clearly distinguishes system from structure which Giddens sees as an "absent" or "virtual order" of rules and resources which are "temporally 'present' only in their instantiation, in the constituting moments of social systems" (ibid). In clarification of this Giddens refers (1976:118-9) to the difference between "language," as a set of signs and the rules of their use which is possessed by a community of speakers, and "speech" as concrete acts of communication performed by members of that community. Speech acts do exist in time and space and they draw upon and instantiate language as they do so. But language as a set of rules and resources has no existence except in the moments when it is being used to constitute speech acts. In the same fashion, structures exist only when they are drawn upon by actors to produce social practices. (Giddens is insistent that this is "not because society is like a language, but on the contrary because language as a practical activity is so central to social life that in *some* basic aspects it can be treated as exemplifying social processes in general" (1976:127). Thus social structure and language, when differentiated in this way from speech and social acts, can be said to be "subjectless" and therefore placed beyond any "subject/object" relationship which would tend to infringe on the measure of autonomy of actors essential to social agents. Structure as conceived by Giddens does not refer, as it does in some "Structuralist" thinking, to models constructed by observers, nor, as it does in functionalist thought, to the static description of the patterns of relationships found in collectivities. Instead it refers to the rules and resources used by actors in the production and reproduction of social practices designed to pursue their intentions and interests. The idea of social life as the reproduced practices of active agents is fundamental to the theory of structuration in that it shifts the focus of explanation in social theory from its existing concern with order and social control, with the relationship of individuals to society and the internalization of values and the functional needs of social systems and the determinants of behaviour, to the production and maintenance of social practices by the skilled and knowledgeable performance of its members within the limits set by nature and their own history. This means that "structural analysis", or the study of social systems, is "to study the ways in which that system, via the application of generative rules and resources, and in the context of unintended outcomes, is produced and reproduced in interaction" (1979:66).

Having established this shift in focus through his definitions of structure and system, Giddens devotes considerable attention to the dimensions or elements of the rules and resources which go to make up structures (1976:104-113; 1979:65-69, 82-94). He proposes that rules and resources be analytically separated into three kinds: the communication of meanings via interpretative schemes; the exercise of power as transformative capacity; and the evaluative judgement of conduct through norms and sanctions. He is careful to insist that in actual social practices there is intermixture of all three and also to ensure that "negotiable" quality of meanings, evaluations and even power is not overlooked. Thus the analogy with games and their rules is misleading because social rules are not altogether fixed but are amended as we go along. Or moral claims and obligations can be endlessly debated and redefined and even relations of power, as already indicated, are always, in some measure, two-way ones. However, important as this part of Giddens's treatment is, I think in a paper such as this, it is necessary to give priority to the matter of showing how the duality of structure and its binding of space and time enable Giddens to effect the vital linking of his theory of action with the analysis of institutions and social systems.

When actors as competent social agents draw upon their knowledge of structure in all three of its dimensions, they are using structure to produce the flow of their day-to-day interaction. *At the same time*, however, as structures are instantiated by being thus drawn upon, they are being reconstituted, or reproduced; just as language is kept in being as it were by the speech acts which draw upon it. Hence comes the crucial character of the "duality of structure" as both the medium, or means, through which social practices of interaction are produced and also as the outcome, or product, of such interaction. Says Giddens: "By the duality of structure I mean that social structures are both constituted *by* human agency, and yet at the same time are the very *medium* of this constitution" (1976:121). Or again, "By the duality of structure I mean that the structural properties of social systems are both the medium and the outcome of the practices that constitute those systems" (1979:69). The consequences of this duality are of the greatest importance. First, it reveals the essential recursiveness of social life as a series of repeated or reproduced social practices brought about by the interaction of actors equipped with "practical consciousness" and the capacity to intervene in events. This involves, as I have indicated, a highly significant shift in the focus of explanation in social theory: "Social analysis must be founded neither in the consciousness or activities of the subject, nor in the characteristics of the object (society), but in the duality of structure" (1979:120). Secondly, it means that structure must be seen as both enabling as well as constraining. We are certainly constrained by the interweaving of meanings, norms and power in regularised social practices of our own making, but such elements of structure also enable us to produce and transform social practices. This is perhaps more easily seen in the dual nature of sanctions as both inducements and coercion. Thirdly, the duality of structure "expresses the mutual dependence of structure and agency" (1979:69). However,

I wish to postpone discussion of this decisive point until after the theme of temporality, which also contributes to this end, has been brought in.

Giddens's treatment of "temporality" or "time-space" is complex and comes fully into the picture only in the third of the three books under discussion. But, as we shall see shortly, the notion of "time-space distanciation," as developed in volume one of *A Contemporary Critique of Historical Materialism*, is central to his theory of industrial society. Here my concern with it is limited to the way in which it forms part of the theory of structuration. For it is clear that time-space intersections or relations are implicated in his theory of action as a continuous flow of day-to-day conduct, his view of structure as instantiated only in the moments of its use, and the way in which he brings together face-to-face interaction and institutionalized social practices. It is for this reason that Giddens considers that temporality is "integral to social theory" (1979:198) and that "in order to show the interdependence of action and structure" it is essential "to grasp *the time-space relations inherent in the constitution of all social interaction*" (1979:3).

Giddens traces the failure of both functionalism and structuralism in this respect to their use of the "statics/dynamics" dichotomy and the resultant tendency to identify time with social change in a simplistic way. So in functionalism and structuralism time and space are generally conceived as some kind of "environment" or "receptacle" of social practices which is in some sense external to them (1979:198-206). All this Giddens rejects and in its place proposes a conception of time-space as "the modes in which objects and events 'are' or 'happen' " (1979:54), or as the manner in which structure provides not only the "binding of time and space in social systems" (1979:64), but also their extension. These statements call for a good deal more in the way of clarification than we can give them here and my discussion will be restricted to but one aspect of Giddens's view of time-space as set out in his writings up to 1979 — the binding and the extension of time-space through structure.

If, following Giddens, social life is viewed as repeated social practices brought into being and made to happen by active agents, then time and space are inherent in, and constitutive of, such a process because interaction has to be carried on across differences in time and space which might otherwise disrupt it. Or, put differently, social life has to be sustained and transmitted across the "gaps" produced by differences in time and space (1979:103). Only by being able to "overcome" time and space, could individuals or groups maintain a "presence" in the social world and give some kind of form to their interaction. This is one reason why Giddens rejects the Parsonian version of the problem of order as one of social control or compliance. Rather, it is one of coping with, or "binding", the possibly disruptive effects of time and space differences in order to produce and sustain a form of social life. This is what makes time and space so much more than simply an "enrivonment" of social action and it is achieved by the use of structure as an absent order of rules and resources available to actors. It is in this sense that time-space enters into the constitution of social practices and is, moreover, manipulated by actors in their relations with one another. For

example, in the ways described by Goffman of "front" and "back" regions (1959), or in Giddens's discussion of class relations (1979:206-10). Structure, in Giddens's sense, also extends the range of interaction across time and space. This has, of course, been the effect of much technological development from the invention of writing up to the present day of electronic communication. The "Great Transformation" to modern industrial society would be unintelligible without taking into account these changes in the way time and space are built into and dealt with by social practices.

We are now at last able to end this section of the paper by showing how, via the duality of structure, Giddens's theory of structuration brings together, in an integral way, his concepts of action and structure. It should be held in mind here that effecting this integration of action and structure is the more substantive part of the larger "bridging operation" referred to at the beginning: the reconciliation of interpretative and naturalistic methodologies. In order to clarify what is involved in "linking action and structure", I propose to distinguish also between the more formal conceptual connecting of an interpretative, active notion of agency to the concept of an "absent" structure, on the one hand and, on the other hand, the linking of "face-to-face" interactions with other "impersonal" interactions, both of which are nonetheless concrete forms of social interaction situated in time and space. After all, it was the failure of existing social theories to make this link which is one object of Giddens's criticism and it is therefore also an important task of his theory of structuration to tie all the forms of social interaction firmly together in a seamless unity. Thus, insofar as the formal connection of action and structure is concerned, it is no more than showing how the theory integrates the concrete acts of actors with the notion of an "absent" structure of rules and resources which actors draw upon, and is a relatively simple matter of conceiving of both action and structure in such a way as to render them interlocking and complementary. Then it is clear that action and structure are linked in the moments of instantiation when structures are drawn on by actors in the production of their day-to-day conduct. This is the sense in which it can be said that, "The duality of structure relates the smallest item of day-to-day behaviour to attributes of far more inclusive social systems: when I utter a grammatical English sentence in a casual conversation, I contribute to the reproduction of the English language as a whole. This is an unintended consequence of my speaking the sentence, but one that is bound in directly to the recursiveness of the duality of structure" (1979;77-8). This relation of moment and totality is very different from the relation of "parts" and "wholes" which is characteristic of functionalist theories (1979:71).

However, social practices are more complex than language and there is another and more important connection than the formal one between action and structure which has to be made. And that is the linking (or, better perhaps, the "holding together") of face-to-face systems of social interaction and those other systems of social interaction which do not involve actual physical presence, but nonetheless exist in time and space and are not "absent" in the

manner of structure. The making of distinctions amongst possible kinds or levels of systems of social interaction on the basis of physical presence may not be the only or best way of doing it, but it is one which has often been used in social theory and which Giddens also incorporates in his differentiation of social and system integration with the former defined as "systemness on the level of face-to-face interaction" and the latter as "systemness on the level of the relations between social systems or collectivities" (1979:77-8). In passing it may be noted that this distinction is not altogether satisfactory as both face-to-face interaction and any other kind are all nonetheless social systems of interaction and so the distinction as made by Giddens becomes one of the difference between interaction among individuals and between groups or collectivities. Such a distinction is reminiscent of "the sociology of small groups" or of the "micro" and "macro" levels of analysis and Giddens is clearly uncomfortable about its use. I shall return to this point at the end of the paper. For the moment, however, we are concerned only with how the theory of structuration prevents this kind of fragmentation however it may be conceived, and holds all kinds of social systems of interaction together, even though it is often convenient, through the application of a methodological epoché, to "bracket" one kind or level of interaction in order to concentrate on another (1979:80-1).

So, whatever the differences between forms of social systems of interaction may be in other respects, and however these may be distinguished from one another, the decisive integration of them all lies in their common origin as the products of social actors consciously drawing upon an "absent" structure of rules and resources which is both the means of their being able to do so and also the reproduced outcome of their activity. This is what links the immediate face-to-face interactions of human agents with all other less personal, more institutionalised and "extended" forms of social systems of interaction. The face-to-face interactions underlie and sustain the recursive institutional forms. In Giddens's words: "The notion of the *duality of structure*, which I have accentuated as a leading theme of this book, involves recognising that the reflexive monitoring of action both draws upon and reconstitutes the institutional organisation of society" (1979:255).

It remains only to fit the concept of temporality as used by Giddens into this picture. Temporality operates not only in the moments of the instantiation of structure, but also in the longer duration of time and in the extension of space made possible by structure. This, joined with the repetition of social practices results in institutions, which Giddens defines as "deeply-layered" (1979:65) or "deeply-sedimented" (1979:80) social practices. As he puts it: "an understanding of institutional forms can only be achieved in so far as it is shown how, as regularised social practices, institutions are constituted and reconstituted in the tie between the *durée* of the passing moment and the *longue durée* of deeply sedimented time-space relations" (1979:110).

The links between the theory of structuration, whose essential features have been outlined above, and Giddens's theorizing of industrial society are close

and detailed. To deal adequately with them even in their present unfinished form would require another and different paper. All that can be done here is to point out in a rough way the major areas in which the two parts of Giddens's work are related. One way in which this could be done is to begin with the criticisms Giddens has of Marx's historical materialism and then go on to indicate what Giddens proposes in their place.

As early as in the *New Rules of Sociological Method* in 1976 (1976:12), Giddens made the distinction between Marx's writings as "a natural science of society which happened to predict the demise of capitalism and its replacement by socialism" and Marx's work "as an informed investigation into the historical interconnections of subjectivity and objectivity in human social existence." The former Giddens rejects largely because of its functionalist, evolutionary and Utopian implications. Elements of the latter are incorporated in Giddens's theory of structuration — for example, Marx's notion of Praxis; the measure of active intervention through which people make themselves and their history (even if only within limits); the analysis of historical specificity or situatedness and the importance of unintended consequences which "escape" and become constraints. Thereafter and notably in *Central Problems in Social Theory* (1979:Chap.4) and in *A Contemporary Critique of Historical Materialism* (1981: Introduction and passim), Giddens has set out in detail his criticism of Marx's views on a wide variety of topics bearing on the historical development of capitalism. Summarily stated, Giddens accepts and uses in his theory of industrial society very little more than Marx's treatment of modern capitalism as radically distinct from what went before. In his interview with Bleicher and Featherstone, Giddens puts this as follows: "... I think the importance of Marx is really to point up the differences between capitalism and pre-existing societies and not to try to compress them all into some overall scheme of evolutionary change" (1982:63-4).

In the place of other features of historical materialism and also to make good certain omissions in it, Giddens has put alternatives drawn from the theory of structuration. For example, the centrality of Giddens's treatment of time and space "distanciation;" the distinction between "authoritative" and "allocative" resources in domination; the crucial theorizing of power and the use of violence in the nation-state; the significance of surveillance and the storage of vast quantities of information in the modern state. Using these components, Giddens has produced a theory of industrial society markedly different from either historical materialism or those theories which simply substituted political power for economic power and left out some of the most decisive aspects of the modern industrial nation-state while, at the same time, making no allowance for skilled and creative agency.

Implications

To the extent that it is found acceptable, the theory of structuration offered by Giddens as an alternative to the "orthodox consensus" has important

epistemological and practical implications. The first of these is for a closely-linked cluster of issues concerning the relation of the lay knowledge of actors to the technical knowledge of observers; the question of relativism; and the inherent critical stance of social theory. If the lay or "mutual knowledge" is that used by conscious agents in the production and reproduction of social practices, then it is not simply subject to correction by the revelations of the technical knowledge of observers. Rather, it has to be grasped by the observers as constituting the very object of their study. Without this grasp of the presuppositions and prejudgements which make social practices possible, they would literally not know what it was they were looking at. This Giddens refers to as the first stage of the "double hermeneutic" (1976:146, 162) which is required in the study of social life. It involves the *use* by observers of the agents' natural language and lay knowledge in order to generate adequate descriptions and explanations in theoretical terms. The impossibility of a pure metalanguage is ensured by actors' incorporating observers' technical concepts and "because the concepts invented by the social scientist presume mastery of concepts applied by social actors themselves in the course of their conduct" (1979:247).

In the process of mastering the body of mutual knowledge which constitutes a particular form of life, observers run the risk of ending up in the rather helpless position of being unable to escape from what they have come to regard as a closed system which is immune to critical evaluation from "outside," as it were. Giddens offers a way out of such historicism or relativism via the second stage of the double hermeneutic which enables observers to subject the mutual knowledge, beliefs and the practices based upon them to critical assessment in the light of their technical and comparative knowledge. In thus linking lay and technical knowledge, Giddens kills two birds with one stone. The temptation of naturalistic social theory to "correct" lay knowledge prematurely is arrested and at the same time the inability of interpretative theories to judge between differing stocks of mutual knowledge or frameworks of meaning is overcome. Or, put in another way, in his double hermeneutic Giddens has embodied both the claim of interpretative theory that social reality is a creation of human agents which rests upon "prior" meanings and presuppositions and has therefore to be understood before it can be explained, and also the positivistic demand for some kind of "external," non-relativistic explanation. On this basis, what Giddens calls "a sort of paralysis of the critical will" (1979:250-1) is avoided and the potential of social theory as criticism is grounded. For, as Giddens points out (1976:159) "social science stands in a relation of tension to its 'subject matter' — as a potential instrument of the expansion of *rational autonomy of action*, but equally as a potential *instrument of domination*."

The last epistemological implication of Giddens's theory is for the character of the regularities of social conduct and the kind of generalisations which can be made about them. Unlike the regularities of the natural world which are, in a sense, fixed and "given," social regularities are brought about by the actors who produce them. So they are essentially historical and unstable or mutable. This point of view provides a considerably more adequate explanation than is usually

offered for the failure of social theory to come up with the kind of generalisation and predictability of which the natural sciences are thought capable.

Before concluding with the practical or political implications of Giddens's work, I wish to deal here with two possible criticisms. One has to do with the distinction Giddens makes between social and system integration and the other concerns the second stage of the "double hermeneutic."

The first matter arises out of the way in which the theory of structuration achieves the all-important integration of the various forms or levels of interaction through the duality of structure. In the interpretation offered above, this integration comes about because action or face-to-face interaction, or "strategic conduct" is in a sense the originator of, or prior to, the other levels in that face-to-face interaction is presupposed when one thinks of the other forms of interaction or institutionalized social practices. Thus, in his discussion of social and system integration (1979:76-81), Giddens says, "it is extremely important, for the point of view developed throughout this book, to emphasize that the systemness of social integration is *fundamental to the systemness of society as a whole*. System integration cannot be adequately conceptualized via the modalities of social integration; nonetheless, the latter is always the chief prop of the former, *via the reproduction of institutions in the duality of structure*." So, as pointed out above, the decisive linking of all forms and levels of social systems of interaction lies in their common origin as the products of actors drawing on the structure of rules and resources in face-to-face interaction.

Having, in this way, thoroughly integrated all forms of interaction, is there any necessity for making further distinctions and divisions? Is there not some risk that rather doubtful divisions between individuals and groups, or "micro" and "macro" analysis might thereby be reintroduced? Giddens argues that he makes the distinction between social and system integration "in order to recognise contrasts between various levels of the articulation of interaction" (1979:74) and "as a means of coping with basic characteristics of the differentiation of society" (1979:76). I would suggest that the notion of "presence-availability" (1979:103; 206-7) along with the use of the methodological epoche, or bracketing (1979:80-1), should serve to meet these requirements and at the same time preserve intact the thorough-going integration of all levels of interaction; from the face-to-face form all the way to the most completely impersonal and highly institutionalized kind of interaction.

It is noteworthy that one of Archer's criticisms of Giddens's theory of structuration seems to be a version of this point. Within the framework of her broader criticism that the distinction between macro and micro "levels" must be sustained, she argues that the use of the epoche here "merely transposes dualism from the theoretical to the methodological level — thus conceding its *analytical* indispensability" (1982:467). Against Archer it could be argued that in view of the important similarities between her "morphogenesis" and structuration, the difference seems to be one of conceptualization only and therefore less serious.

The second matter is probably more important and concerns the concept of the "double hermeneutic" or, more exactly, the second part or stage of that process in which the "technical conceptual schemes" (1976:79-80) of "social scientific analysis" (ibid:158) are called upon to make possible a rational and intersubjective evaluation of "mutual knowledge" and also to deal with "the problem of adequacy" (1976:148-154). Or, stated differently, the issue here boils down to the intention set out in the Introduction to the *New Rules*; to show how "to sustain a principle of relativity while rejecting relativism" (1976:18).

Despite the thorough treatment of these and other methodological matters in Chapter 4 of the *New Rules*, some ambiguity seems to remain over the question of whether or no the plea for a relativistic, "authentic" understanding applies only to the first part of the double hermeneutic (1976:148); thus accepting the logical objection to relativism (1976:145) for the second part of the double hermeneutic and thus also implying that the technical analysis done at the second stage is wholly objective. That this is not the case is strongly suggested, however, by Giddens's insistence that there is significant overlap, and a shifting relation, between lay and technical knowledge (1976:151; 153; 159). Such an overlap and shifting relationship between the two parts of the double hermeneutic makes it likely that even the second stage will display some degree of relativity and so weaken the efficacy of the second stage of the double hermeneutic.

In one sense, this criticism is the opposite of that made by those who, like Archer, want Giddens to provide more precise "theoretical propositions" about, for instance, exactly when actors will be transformative and when merely reproductive. For the gist of this argument is that *all* knowledge, technical as well as lay, remains more or less "seinsverbunden" in Mannheim's sense. Or, in Gadamer's terms, the presuppositions and prejudices of the constitutive "tradition" cannot be completely transcended. This throws doubt on the possibility of a second stage of the double hermeneutic being any more than the wider "inter-subjective criteria of validity" which Simonds argues was all that Mannheim was seeking (1978:19) and which Ricoeur also seems to be suggesting (1974:16-17).

It is probable that Giddens would not be satisfied with either of these two alternatives. In rejecting both the kind of certainty and definitiveness Archer is anxious to achieve and also the persistence of hermeneutic tradition, he would be remaining constant to his goal of blending the two. In any event, such criticisms do not detract from the importance of the practical implications of Giddens's work to which we now turn to end this paper.

The implications of a practical, political kind, which deserve to be recognised, flow from his determined recovery of the active role of individuals in social life and the consequent rejection of determinism. While actors are certainly far from all-knowing about themselves and are subject to constraints, including those of their own making, social existence is inherently contingent, uncertain and precarious. Possibly it is for this very reason that certainty has been so avidly sought after. But, however that may be, perhaps the most

unfortunate effect of existing sociology in all its more influential forms (not excluding Marxism) has been the support it gives to a deterministic view of social life. In many cases this has been contrary to the intentions of the theorists concerned and may be taken as evidence of the way in which texts and actions escape the original intentions of agents. Nonetheless, whether intended or no, there has been considerable support for a more or less thorough-going determinism.

The result has been what one would expect if the interpretative argument is correct: viz., that the deterministic "prophecy" has been fulfilled and the emancipatory potential of knowledge has been largely subverted or left unrecognised. To the extent that the technical knowledge offered by sociology has seeped into the mutual knowledge used by people, this has meant they have been able to talk themselves into a measure of unfreedom and pessimism about their chances of "making their own history" even if only within limits. In such a world-view are to be found "the paralysis of the critical will;" the purely "instrumental" conception of knowledge which members of the Frankfurt School have analysed; and also the overly simple notion of power as being all on one side and totally constraining. These are some of the things which have constituted the social world and made it as it is.

By insisting on the active role of people, by restoring the part played by mutual knowledge and by showing that structures are enabling as well as constraining, Giddens has renewed and given fresh thrust to the possibility of emancipatory knowledge and of human social life as at least partly open and amenable to the conscious efforts and hopes of those who live it. People have had a share in making the social world the way it is and can remake differently if they so choose and go about it in the knowledge that they can do so.

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HEGELIAN MARXISM AND ETHICS

Norman Fischer

I

Did Lukács, as a representative figure of Hegelian Marxism, create an ethic based on overcoming the fact/value dichotomy? To that question we may add another. Do we want Lukács to have overcome the fact/value dichotomy? My answer to both questions is "not completely", and I hope to show that Lukács, indeed the Hegelian Marxist tradition as a whole, has created false friends and false opponents by claiming to have overcome the distance between facts and values, whereas the best work in this tradition has actually created a new way of looking at facts and values which links them more closely than traditional accounts, but still allows some autonomy for value. The result is a Marxist and socialist ethic which differentiates itself from other ethical systems through the way it lessens the gap between facts and values without completely overcoming it.

An example of such false friends and opponents: E.P. Thompson has recently criticized structuralism from the standpoint of a romantic and moral English version of Marxism which he finds exemplified by William Morris. Such a critique should be in many ways amenable to Hegelian Marxists. Yet, in search of an ethical Marxism Thompson has had to counterpose "English poetry" to the tradition of "German philosophy and sociology", in part, no doubt, because Hegelian Marxists have often seemed to simply converge with structuralists in their critique of an ethic based on autonomous values. I submit, however, that a reconceptualization of the Hegelian Marxist tradition on facts and values would show that in the long run that tradition is closer to Thompson on the issue of ethics than it is to structuralism.[1]

I say this in spite of Lucien Goldmann's attempt in one of his last essays to sharply separate two lines of Hegelian Marxism on the question of facts, values and ethics: one which did not keep the fact/value dichotomy (himself and Lukács), and one which brought it back (Marcuse and Bloch). Goldmann argued that in Marcuse's philosophy a world of values was set off against a world of facts, whereas Lukács was truer to Hegel in that he overcame the distance between the two. Indeed, Goldmann argued that according to Lukács' own interpretation of left Hegelianism as an attempt to introduce the fact/value dichotomy into a philosophy (Hegel's) which had already overcome it, Marcuse would be a left Hegelian, defender of a Fichteanized Hegelianism in which values are separate from facts, a position which for both Lukács and Goldmann is a distortion of Marxism and Hegelianism.[2]

The problem with Goldmann's account is that he presents the overcoming of the fact/value dichotomy as a univocal doctrine in Hegel, Marx, and Lukács and, by implication, in himself. Leaving aside the question of whether it is univocal in Hegel, Marx, and Goldmann (I do not believe that it is), I will argue that it is multivocal in Lukács and further that his most famous work, *History and Class Consciousness* presents a third ethical way between the traditional way of accepting the fact/value dichotomy and what Goldmann presents as the traditional way of overcoming it. I stress that this is a third way and neither simply acceptance of the distance between facts and values nor simply acceptance of the ability to totally overcome that distance. I want to show that Hegelian Marxism has more affinities with, say, Thompson's English moral tradition than might be imagined. But it is not identical with that tradition, and I do not accept structuralist or positivistic accounts that assert such an identity.

This means that I accept many of Lukács' criticisms of autonomous ethics. If there is anything that begins to define Marxist and socialist ethics it is that it establishes itself in part by appealing to a broad range of facts, and analyses of historical laws and structures, certainly a broader range than most other ethical systems. Yet in the end, and this is what Lukács often forgot, understanding these facts, structures and laws, must combine with modes of valuation in such a way that ethical questions are always approached both naturalistically and non-naturalistically; and this combination of naturalistic and non-naturalistic ethics arises both from a factual analysis of what is the case for those moving or potentially moving toward socialism, and a moral analysis of what should be the case for them.

The question of whether Marx himself had an ethics autonomous from his factual and sociological investigations has recently interested philosophers coming from the tradition of English philosophy. Yet I believe that, whatever their intentions, the image of Marx that emerges from those who hold that Marx did not have an autonomous ethics, Allen Wood for example, is not of a person who has overcome the dichotomy between facts and values by changing our conception of both, but of one who has given up the specifically valuational elements; hence, Wood's ultimate resemblance to Althusser. And it is the desire to keep those valuational elements that characterizes the work of Thompson and of Wood's critics, who do have a hard time of it, precisely because what autonomous valuational elements exist in Marx are certainly not presented in the language of English ethics.[3]

Yet there is something right about these attempts to find autonomous valuational elements in Marx. Marxism needs some autonomy for a valuational language; and this is not just a philosophical desideratum but a need arising out of the failure of the line of automatic progress and the realization, particularly coming from Eastern Europe, that a Marxism without moral choices is a Marxism that will never lead to democratic self-activity. Indeed, the first impulse of that renewed Eastern European ethical Marxism has been to criticize too heavy a Hegelian dose of overcoming facts and values. This is most true of Kolakowski, who has criticized Lukács for giving up on autonomous

ethics, but it is also true of Lukács' own students in the Budapest school. Furthermore, Eastern European doubts on the issue of ethics, facts and values are certainly bound up with changes of emphasis in Frankfurt school thought. Habermas' search for an ethical Marxism has led him to criticize both Hegel and Marx and to argue with Marcuse on the importance of finding a groundwork for ethics; and the body of ethical work produced by Habermas, giving relative autonomy to ethics as communicative action, has been utilized now by the Budapest school as part of the fundamentals of their ethics. Of course neither Habermas nor the Budapest school have gone as far as Kolakowski in accepting the fact/value dichotomy, and they have also, unlike him, remained broadly speaking within the Marxist tradition by continuing to stress historical materialism and the relations of production.[4]

The paradox that emerges from much of this recent work (Anglo-American philosophers who want to find theories of ethics in Marx, Thompson's critique of Althusser, Kolakowksi's critique of Lukács, Habermas' critique of Marcuse) is that Hegelian Marxism itself can be seen as one of the obstacles to the creation of a genuinely ethical Marxism. Yet at the same time that this general charge comes into view against Hegelian Marxism, it should also become clear that actual investigation of the broad range of Hegelian Marxists — Gramsci, Horkheimer, Adorno, Goldmann, I.I. Rubin — shows that in their concrete arguments they were usually concerned with opposing some theory which concerned itself only with facts and not with values. However, what differentiates these thinkers particularly from thinkers within the English ethical tradition, is that values are always tied closely enough to facts that it is easy to misread their works and see the Hegelian Marxists as denying the realm of value altogether. In short, the valuational elements present in their work must be decoded in the light of the Hegelian enterprise of changing our ordinary concepts of facts and values. Each Hegelian Marxist is different from those who talk about values cut off from facts and from those who positivistically confine themselves only to the world of facts.

In section two of this essay I examine how one centrally important Hegelian Marxist, i.e. Georg Lukács, adopted a middle way between accepting a world of autonomous values and concentrating on the facticity of the world. Other Hegelian Marxists differ from Lukács, but I believe that often their general problematic was the same as his, i.e. like him they offered different images of human activity and will, according to whether they leaned more toward acceptance of an autonomous world of values or more toward stressing the facticity of the world. In section three I will also suggest that these different images of activity and will can be located in different tendencies in classical German philosophy as well as different tendencies in Hegelian Marxism itself. If Kant and those Hegelian Marxists who stress the superstructure tended toward the view that liberation is a pure act of will, dependent on value autonomy, and Hegel, particularly when he stressed objective spirit and *Sittlichkeit,* and those Hegelian Marxists who stress the relations of production,

toward the view that the potential for liberation must be lodged in the depths of existing society, Lukács in *History and Class Consciousness* tends toward the view that the potential for liberation is lodged in the deep structures of society analyzed by historical materialism, but can only be brought to the surface by an active creation of the will, which cannot be accounted for in terms of the more determinate structures of historical materialism, and depends upon value autonomy.

Although this standpoint is not exactly the middle way sought by all Hegelian Marxists, I believe that many of the central figures of this tradition (including Goldmann) stressed the autonomy of values more than would be suggested by the catch all rubric "Hegelian Marxists who have overcome the fact/ value dichotomy." Indeed I would reverse Goldmann's judgment, which I think is inconsistent with much of his best work, and suggest that neither Hegel nor Marx ever completely overcame the fact/value dichotomy, a task that was more properly left to the right Hegelians. We will never understand Hegel, Marx, or the complexities of the Hegelian Marxist tradition, until we understand that overcoming the fact/value dichotomy always means changing, in many different ways, our concepts of both facts and values and attempting to give a proper combination of a naturalistic ethics, based on a close connection between facts and values, and a less naturalistic one, stressing the relative autonomy of value.

II

I will begin with an analysis of various statements in Lukács' works concerning facts, values and ethics between his early writings and the writing of *The Young Hegel* in 1938. Michael Löwy has recently argued that roughly from 1910 to 1918 Lukács rejected Hegelianism; that from 1918 to 1923 he began to accept it and that in 1923 with *History and Class Consciousness* he did accept it.[5] Although I do believe that there are three stages in Lukács' thought on these matters, they cannot simply be expressed in terms of Lukács relation to Hegel, nor are they so easily arranged chronologically, although the logical and the chronological do roughly coincide. Logically one stage is represented by Lukács' early essay on idealism in which he rejected Hegelianism because he saw it as excluding all autonomy for ethics. Another logical stage is represented by *The Theory of the Novel* (1910) and *History and Class Consciousness.* It is obvious that by the time he had written *History and Class Consciousness* Lukács had begun to accept Hegel's critique of autonomous ethics, although I would date the beginning of this acceptance even earlier with *The Theory of the Novel.* However, I hold that the ethical system presented in both *History and Class Consciousness* and *The Theory of the Novel* is one in which autonomous and nonautonomous ethics are combined. One can see this as a blending of Kant and Hegel or as a blendling of aspects of Hegel or both. I tend to see it as both, since I hold that neither Lukács nor Hegel ever got rid of non-naturalistic elements in their work except when they became most inclined toward a positivist acceptance of what is. Hegel approaches this in some sections and versions of the *Philosophy of*

Right. Lukács approaches it in the third stage, both logically and chronologically, of this thought, i.e. in his book on Hegel, *The Young Hegel,* as opposed to his book that used Hegel, *History and Class Consciousness.* Actually this third stage in Lukács' attitude toward ethics, which involves more complete rejection of the fact/value dichotomy and increased conservatism, begins between 1925 and 1926 with his review of Lasalle's letters and "Moses Hess and the Idealist Dialetic," and receives its most complete expression in *The Young Hegel.*

I will argue that in these three stages are three concepts of the will and human activity: (1) a stage when accent is put on the power of the will and activity to go beyond facts, a stage when the fact/value dichotomy is completely accepted. In this stage Lukács accepts Kantian non-naturalistic ethics against Hegel; (2) a transitional period to completely rejecting the fact/value dichotomy and accepting a more completely naturalistic ethics. Out of this period the third way on facts and values is constructed; this stage blends naturalistic and non-naturalistic ethics; (3) a stage when action and will become much more based on sociological fact, when Lukács' intention is clearly to completely overcome the fact/value dichotomy and when he comes closest to accepting a completely naturalist ethic. For me Lukács' greatest achievement is in the work of the middle period, for it is this combination of a naturalistic and non-naturalistic ethic which points most clearly to a viable contemporary Marxist and socialist ethic.

Two other points must be added before I begin my discussion of these stages. In the early half of the 19th century in Germany the debate over autonomous and nonautonomous ethics was often set by Hegel's own terminology, whereby *Moralität* was identified with autonomous ethics and *Sittlichkeit* with a nonautonomous ethics, based on existing practice. The problem with this was that *Moralität* was set up as a straw man, easy to knock down and second that *Sittlichkeit* in fact often contained elements of non-naturalism in it. A second point is that Lukács' understanding of this issue was colored, particularly in his early writings, by the neo-Kantian problematic of value, and their understanding of the fact/value dichotomy. In fact Hegel and Marx hardly ever discuss *Wert* in the sense that Lukács understood it. Thus even if one were to hold that Lukács was completely orthodox in his Hegelianism, there would still be the problem of defining orthodox Hegelianism on the issue of ethics and the further problem that Lukács approached the issue with conceptual tools that were not available to Hegel or Marx.[6]

In his 1918 essay on idealism Lukács affirmed the Kantian notion of the primacy of an ethics based on the autonomy of value. There, taking up the question of whether a Kantian and Fichtean opposition of fact to value has to be progressive or conservative, Lukács argues that it can be either. However, Hegelian philosophy does tend to be conservative because of its stress on the facts.[7] At the same time Lukács criticizes the idea that stressing transcendental values leads away from any concern with changing the facts, by recalling revolutionary and transcendental sects such as the Anabaptists. Indeed it was Lukács' view then, apparently, that Kantianism and Hegelianism may in some

cases complement each other. The ethical and inner concerns of the one are not completely opposed to the political and external concerns of the other. Indeed, external politics may allow the inner ethical soul to be transformed.[8] Nevertheless, for Lukács at this time the Hegelian tendency to give autonomy to politics is inherently conservative in that it tends to preserve the institution at all costs. In contrast the idealism of Kant and Fichte is in revolt "against existence as existence."[9] The importance of this text is not just that it so clearly demonstrates elements of anti-Hegelianism in the young Lukács' thought. It also shows that his anti-Hegelianism is inspired by a moral critique similar to that found in Thompson and, according to Goldmann, in Marcuse; indeed that it would have to be directed against some of Lukács' own later espousals of Hegelianism, but not against all of them. Again my argument is that it would be directed against the conservative interpretation of Hegel found in *The Young Hegel,* but not against the middle way between an ethic based on the autonomy of value and one based on a close intermingling of facts and values that will be delineated in *History and Class Consciousness* and is already foreshadowed in the idealism essay by the reference to the possibility of synthesizing Hegel and Kant and Fichte.

In the second logical period in Lukács' thoughts on facts and values, both a naturalistic and a non-naturalistic ethic are defended. The problem is that the two are not properly united but presented as disjunctive. Thus, in *The Theory of the Novel* the naturalistic ethic is found in Lukács' depiction of ancient archaic Greece, a world opposed to the restlessness of modern times where a realm of values is elevated over a realm of facts. In the Greek world

> man does not stand alone as the sole bearer of substantiality, ... What he should be is for him only a pedagogical question, an expression of the fact that he has not yet come home; it does not yet express his only, insurmountable relationship with the substance. Nor is there, within man himself, any compulsion to make the leap.

This compulsion to leap to self knowledge, opposed to the ability to simply find self knowledge in earlier times, is expressed by the Kantian philosophy whose "new spirit of destiny" would be

> folly to the Greeks! Kant's starry firmament now shines only in the dark night of pure cognition, ... the inner light affords evidence of security, or its illusion, only to the wanderer's next step. . . . And who can tell whether the fitness of the action to the essential nature of the subject . . really touches upon the essence, when the subject has become a phenomenon, . . . when his innermost and most particular essential nature appears to him only as a never-ceasing demand written upon the imaginary sky of that which 'should be'; when this

> innermost nature must emerge . . . within the subject . . . art . . . is no longer a copy.[10]

What could be more opposed to a Kantian ethic than this characterization of a harmonious society that transcends ethics, because it already has the harmony that ethics seeks? Yet there is another picture of life in *The Theory of the Novel,* one which evokes a Kantian ethic urging people to overcome their alienated situations. How to resolve this paradox? The Kantian ethic is, for Lukács, a necessity in modern times, something which shows the degeneracy of those times; but it is not an eternal necessity, as witness its lack in ancient times (we can leave aside the obvious question of how much Lukács has mythologized ancient Greece).[11]

Thus, *The Theory of the Novel* (1916) is a combination of naturalistic and non-naturalistic ethics; the idealism essay (1918) is a defence of non-naturalistic ethics; and *History and Class Consciousness* (1923) is again a defense of both naturalism and non-naturalism, but combined more organically than in *The Theory of the Novel.* A point that Lukács makes in the idealism essay may further explain this path from Kant to anti-Kant back to Kant again. He counterposes the different consequences of the ethical and aesthetic or contemplative attitudes. Taking this hint, we may say that although *The Theory of the Novel* at first presents an aesthetic vision of archaic Greece in which Kant's dichotomy between fact and value may be overcome, in reality in the modern period the distance between the two may not be bridged. That is why Lukács seems to accept the dichotomy between facts and values, and an ethics based on this dichotomy when discussing the modern period in *The Theory of the Novel* and throughout the idealism essay.[12] The important point to remember is that in the modern world one must accept the fact/value dichotomy in order to act. Why in the modern world? Because there acting requires being willing to break through the present meaningless factual state of the world. In contrast, acting in archaic Greece did not require an active will but a passive will, since meaning was found in the facts of the world rather than simply being posited there by human beings.

What happens, however in *History and Clas Consciousness,* to the principle that to act in the modern world one must accept some autonomy for value? A possibility is that (1) one can learn to act in another way, and (2) therefore one does not need a naturalistic ethic at all. This is how *History and Class Consciousness* is usually interpreted. (1) is certainly a collect interpretation. (2) is the disputed point. The problem is that although Lukács often asserts (2), he also often asserts points that are inconsistent with (2). I will hold that Lukács. original perception about needing distance between facts and values in order to act is present in *History and Class Consciousness.* Indeed I will argue that the blending of naturalistic and non-naturalistic ethics in *History and Class Conscioussness* represents a third approach to the relation between facts and values in which the dichotomy between them is lessened but not overcome.

My delineation of this middle ethical perspective is indebted to Michael Löwy's recent attempt to describe the political perspective of *History and Class*

Consciousness, as located between Lukács' leftism when he first joined the Hungarian Communist Party in 1918 and Lukács' gradual acceptance, in the latter half of the 20s, of a more conservative line. However, for Löwy, *History and Class Consciousness*, is not midway between the two political positions, but remained closer to the leftist period. It is with "Moses Hess" and Lukács' attack on avant garde art at the end of the '20s that Löwy sees the real beginnings of the move to conservatism.[13] The interesting point, however, is that often *History and Class Consciousness* is closer on the issue of the overcoming of the fact/value dichotomy to the later conservative works such as *The Young Hegel* than to the early works, including those of the leftist period. Yet, if Löwy is right, and I think he is, in political content it is closer to the leftist period than to the more conservative period. To explain this inconsistency we must either assume that the fact/value material in *History and Class Consciousness* is inconsistent with its political content or that the book contains two intermingled accounts of the relation between facts and values. I will uphold the second thesis.

I will distinguish between 6 parts of Lukács' argument. His fundamental overriding standpoint is that the *Sittlichkeit* theory is correct and that this means that the Kantian theory of autonomous ethics is wrong, as well as the Kantian theory, developed more explicit by the neo-Kantians, of the importance of separating facts and values. Along the way he makes the following 5 points: (1) that autonomous ethics should be supplanted by a teleological theory of historical progress; (2) that autonomous ethics leads to an unacceptable way of relating the subject and object. (3) that it leads to passivity; (4) that such an account is individualistic; and (5) that the Kantian theory of autonomous ethics and separation of facts from value does not allow any content for ethics.

Lukács' fundamental point (6) about the opposition between value and *Sittlichkeit* can only be dealt with after the other less encompassing points are analyzed. In section three I will suggest a way in which value and *Sittlichkeit*, autonomous and nonautonomous ethics, can be blended, and also that such a blending fits in with Lukács' standpoint in much of *History and Class Consciousness*. I will now begin with (1) Lukács' critique of value and autonomous ethics from the standpoint of teleology, and show how his argument is connected with his claims about (2) the subject/object relation and (3) passivity. I will then deal with the issues of (4) individuality and (5) lack of content, and finally turn, in section three, to the whole issue of value versus *Sittlichkeit*.

In the early version of "What is Orthodox Marxism?," as in the idealism essay, Lukács had argued that one must scorn the facts and oppose one's will to the facts, that this was the only way to avoid positivism. In the reworked version that appears in *History and Class Consciousness* Lukács argues that 'it is as impossible to impose our will on facts as to discover in the facts a moment giving direction to our will,' i.e., he opposes both the ethicist's scorn of facts and the positivist's worship of facts.[14] What happened between the two versions? Lukács substituted for the concept of morality, based on the autonomy of value, the notion of a teleological tendency which can change the facts toward human desires but is not dependent on either facts or desires. With

such a teleological tendency Lukács apparently thought that he could do without the autonomy of value, which he had often treated earlier anyway as a kind of transcendental desire to change the facts.

Thus, this is first an argument against autonomous value and then against *Moralität*, i.e. against a non-naturalistic ethic based on the autonomy of value. Even on its own terms, however, the argument only claims that teleology makes value unnecessary, not that value is inconsistent with teleology. Furthermore, value, as Rickert and the young Lukács understood, is not just a desire to change the facts. Thus Hegel's teleological critique of Kantian ethics becomes Lukács' self critique, which he uses to overcome his earlier moralism. But it is not clear that he succeeds. Lukács and Hegel both hold that properly understood the facts have within them the same potential to arrive at the goal, that the ethical would impose on the facts from without. Put another way they hold that the facts have a telos in them. Yet neither Hegel nor Lukács ever show convincingly that if one is going to accept the concept of the teleological as a guide to action, then one has to give up the idea of value as a guide to action. Indeed the structure of *History and Class Consciousness* not only leaves open the possibility that the concept of teleology can be supplemented by an ethic based on the autonomy of value, but in many ways seems to demand this. This is made clear by the way in which Lukács introduces his criticism of autonomous ethics.

When Lukács introduced his critique of the fact/value dichotomy in the section on reification in *History and Class Consciousness*, the book had come to a stop with the subject in capitalism faced with a reified world in which the objectivity of nature and society is out of tune with his subjectivity. Lukács' description of that reification does not, contrary to what some people seem to have thought, imply affirmation of teleology or denial of the autonomy of value. It does involve the ontological concept of the whole of society being out of control of the individual, but that concept does not imply teleology although it does depend on the concept of *Sittlichkeit*.[15] For one could imagine a society being out of control and not tending toward a higher stage. The question of teleology enters when Lukács asks how the individual who is reified can break that reification by participating in a telos moving toward liberation. Lukács acknowledges that he is asking the same question raised by the ethical tradition, which enjoins action as a method of breaking down the reified dichotomy between subject and object and thus of attaining unity between them. "But this unity is activity."[16] In other words the ethical tradition does exactly what Lukács himself and done at the end of *The Theory of the Novel:* oppose to the reified world a world of values which allows the subject to act. It is important, therefore, to remember,that Lukács has shown no evidence that the concepts of teleology and value are inconsistent. It is at this stage that Lukács introduces his second point, i.e. that the theory of value leads to a false conception of the relation of subject and object. This argument, in turn, is closely connected with Lukács' third point, i.e. that emphasis on autonomous value leads to passivity.

Lukács argues that the ethical solution is a paradox. It seems to allow one to break down the subject/object dichotomy, but then it reproduces it even more

strongly. Why? Because the very fact that the subject must overcome the subject/object dichotomy shows that there still is a dichotomy posed even in the solution to the problem.[17] At this point Lukács has not yet made the passivity argument. Indeed Lukács begins by admitting that those who stress value are interested in change and activity. The major problem with those who uphold the "ought", is not that they do not want to change reality, but that they admit that there is something to change in a meaningful existence the problem of the 'ought' would not arise." But the problem with this viewpoint is that is seems to retreat to the standpoint of *The Theory of the Novel* in that the superiority of a world where values are not opposed to facts lies in the fact that it already has abolished alienation:

> For precisely in the pure classical expression it received in the philosophy of Kant it remains true that the "ought" presupposes an existing reality to which the category of "ought" remains inapplicable in principle. Whenever the refusal of the subject simply to accept the empirically given existence takes the form of an "ought," this means that the immediately given empirical reality receives affirmation and consecration at the hands of philosophy: it is philosophically immortalized.[18]

From that standpoint the "ought" seems a failure because it has not changed reality. This argument is bad enough. It seems to allow Lukács the position of condemning as ineffective all those who have not yet attained their goals. But Lukács' conclusion that this ineffectivity leads to passivity and worship of the facts is even less warranted.

The striking thing about this criticism is that it brings against the "ought" exactly the arguments that in his essay on idealism Lukács had brought against the overcoming of the "ought": i.e. that it winds up worshipping the present. Indeed if Lukács' Fichtean scorn for the facticity of Hegelian philosophy was strong in the idealism essay, his Hegelian scorn for the facticity of Fichtean philosophy is even stronger here. But we must be dealing with a paradox. Lukács says that stress on values admits the importance of facts because in opposing the facts it admits that they exist. But Lukács would have to be Plotinus himself not to realize that the true self, potentially present in the teleological whole, must have some opposition from the false self, a problem that idealists other than Plotinus from Plato to Augustine have always grappled with. Yet according to his arguments against ethics, such opposition would imply deification of the false self just as admission that the world has not changed would imply deification of the world. As for Lukács' critique of the dualism of the fact/value dichotomy, the same charge can certainly be made against the dualism of the opposition between true and false self which is implied by any theory of alienation or reification.[19] Thus it should be noted that argument one, the teleology argument, suspect anyway, gives rise to arguments two and three, the subject/object and passivity arguments which, in addition to having the

problems of their origins are also problematic in themselves.

At any rate, Lukács continues his claims about subject/object relations by noting that for pure Kantian ethics there comes to be an absolute dichotomy between the world and the self so that the problem of human freedom becomes almost incapable of resolution.[20] When freedom is inner and divorced too much from the world, then it may be true that freedom can never realize itself. But to posit a self totally bound up with the world does not resolve the problem either. I am not saying that Lukács in *History and Class Consciousness* does bind the self totally to the world. Rather, I think that he achieves a synthesis between cutting the self and its values off from the world and indentifying the self with the world. Yet his critique of Kant sounds as though he is simply negating the theory of distance between self and the world and positing immediate identity between self and world; indeed, in "Moses Hess" and even more in *The Young Hegel* Lukács actually does what he only suggests here that he wants to do, namely to totally deny transcendent values and to identify the self with society.

Lukács' criticism that Kant's moral theory simply reproduces the concept of external and internal within the human subject is different from the criticisms we have been considering. It is not simply in need of relativization, but seems incompatible with *History and Class Consciousness* as a whole. For though this criticism may be consistent with the idea that the self actually exists in a state of harmony (the idealized archaic Greece of *The Theory of the Novel*), it is not consistent with the idea that the self is not actually in such harmony but only teleologically oriented in that direction. However, the whole structure of *History and Class Consciousness* depends on the idea that there is a dichotomy between the actual and the potential. Indeed Lukács' theory of alienation and reification depends on the possibility of such a dichotomy. Now even if for argument's sake we grant Lukács that the dichotomy between the actual and the possible does not have to be at least partially described in moral language (a highly doubtful proposition), still it certainly must be describable in terms of opposition between parts of the self.

Lukács' bad arguments do suggest some general problems with the self realization theory. In the self realization theory the dichotomy is no longer between a value out there, and a fact which is the self or in the self. Instead the dichotomy is between the potential and the actual self. However, the potential, it could be argued, is itself a value. The other way of arguing is that the potential self is simply located in history. Now it is obvious that the notion of finding the true self does have to involve a phylogenetic and ontogenetic recapturing of history. However, it is just not clear that is all there is to it. But if it is said that it is more than history, then the true self must be a value or identified partially by values, and we are half way back to Kantianism again. The problem with Lukács' argument here is that he does not understand this. Thus his arguments about subject/object fail as do his arguments about passivity.

It must be stated, though, that Lukács does seem implicitly aware of some of these problems in his characteriations of passivity. Thus, in the course of stressing that the "ought" ultimately involves the will caving in to the facts,

Lukács notes, nevertheless, that there is a sense in which the "ought" affirms the will in that "to aspire to Utopia is to affirm the will in what is philosophically the more objective and clearer form of the 'ought'." [21] This observation is important for its recognition that there is no absolute dichotomy between the stress on action provided by the teleological whole and that provided by the concept of values. Of course, Lukács is not explicitly admitting much here — only to the idea that the ethicist may have the same aim as the one who wants to insert the human being into a teleological process. He is not at all admitting that ethicism can achieve that aim, nor that the inserting of the human being into the teleological whole can itself be accomplished partly by ethical means. It is this latter point which he seems to be admitting when, returning to the theme of how to end reification, which had originally led to his ambiguous attack on ethics, Lukács says that the end of reification can be accomplished only by "constant and constantly renewed efforts to disrupt the reified structure of existence by concretely relating to . . . the total development", i.e. the teleological whole. Unlike that aspect of the thought of Hegel or Marx which stresses that such disruptions can only occur when the facts are right, Lukács then emphasizes that these disruptions can only occur when the proletariat is conscious of the larger issues. Such stress on consciousness seems inconsistent with a strict teleological theory. Consciousness here seems to play the role that value played for the neo-Kantians. Certainly Lukács is not just stressing consciousness of the facts, nor can he be stressing only consciousness of a teleological process. For neither facts nor teleological processes depend on consciousness, but he is talking about actions that do so depend. Lukács' stress on consciousness here thus implies that action is based on something more than facts or teleology: value. When Lukács adds that "what is crucial is that there should be an intention toward totality,"[22] he seems to be explicitly admitting, as he once did, that the path to the harmony of ancient Greece, the path to the proletariat becoming the identical subject/object of history, is an intention based not just on integrating facts and values, but also on autonomous values.

Let us sum up. I began by talking about Lukács' three arguments, (1) the teleology argument, (2) the subject/object argument, and (3) the passivity argument. We have seen how interwined they are, and we have seen the internal problems with the subject/object argument and the passivity argument. There are not as many internal problems in the teleology argument, but the major problem is that Lukács never shows that he has better claims for there being such a teleology than the Kantians have for their being a realm of autonomous value; second, he never really shows inconsistency between the two realms, and indeed asserts points, such as his theory of consciousness, which seem to entail a concept of autonomous value. All these points work together, as I will now show, to raise devastating problems for his teleological critique of ethics.

Again I must stress that although Lukács' solution to the problem of reification in here is different than in his earlier work, the structure of the argument in *History and Class Consciousness* is not new. *The Theory of the Novel* also assumed that there was a golden age when there was no ethics, and another age,

the modern, where autonomous ethics became necessary.[23] Here, as there, doesn't Lukács say that in order to end alienation we must act, the difference being that now we can act not because of value, but because of our participation in a teleological process? It is not enough, however, for Lukács to simply say that now he has overcome ethics through teleology: "the working class has no ideals to realize."[24] He must show it and this is rather hard for him to do given that his whole account of consciousness suggests that the objective teleological process of history must be accompanied by conscious acceptance of this teleological process; and the easiest way to analyse this conscious acceptance is as a value acceptance. Thus even if we accept Lukács' teleological assumptions his critique of value is suspect; without them it is of course even more suspect.

Of course a will to act based on the autonomy of value is not necessary for action if one is already in the state of harmony described in the first part of *The Theory of the Novel.* From that standpoint one can critique a non-naturalistic ethic based on the autonomy of value or on the elevation of the will. But the reified modern society described in *History and Class Consciousness* is not harmonious ancient Greece. Lukács wants that modern society to be struggled against. Lukács' admission that only action can give the unity which has been taken away by reification suggests that there is an elevation of the will in *History and Class Consciousness* and I suggest that, try as hard as he can, Lukács cannot avoid the ethical connotations of this elevation of the will.

Lukács himself, as we have seen, connects the issue of facts and values to the question of activity or passivity of the will when he attacks the passivity engendered by the moral attitude.[25] Yet this criticism is very strange since he also has given as a distinguishing feature of the philosophy of Kant and Fichte the fact that it is more activistic than Hegel's. In his polemic against Kant and Fichte in "Moses Hess" and in *The Young Hegel,* he argued that their elevation of the "ought" leads to too much opposition to reality, too much action, too little passivity. In the idealism essay he had made the same point but from an opposite perspective. Kant and Fichte were praised for not accepting passivity.[26] In short, Lukács contradicts himself on the question of whether it is accepting the fact/value dichotomy or rejecting it that leads to activism. He clings to his program in *History and Class Consciouness,* i.e., that he wants action without stressing values, but he cannot even answer his own earlier and later critiques of such a position.

In truth *History and Class Consciousness* is the meeting ground for seemingly opposed tendencies, on facts, values and ethics. Lukács is explicitly arguing that he has overcome Kantian moralism, but in fact there are elements of actionism and moralism in his own account. Thus, Lukács is trying to blend Kant on the one hand and Hegel on the other in a way that he himself does not make totally explicit. This blending emerges more clearly as he works out the details of his opposition of value and teleology. As we saw, one element of opposition is that what is posited as a value outside the fact in ethical philosophies becomes a possibility within the fact when the fact is placed within a teleological process. This allows one to look at facts not just

immediately but to see them as mediated by the tendencies of the teleological process. It must be recalled, however, that the way in which the teleological whole mediates particulars is different from the way that the reified whole, in which the individual is enveloped at the beginning of *History of Class Consciousness,* mediates particulars. Both mediations involve a distinction between what is immediately perceived and what is mediately true. Yet in the case of the reified whole both the mediate and the immediate are present, whereas in the case of the teleological whole, the immediate is present, but the mediate is only present as a possibility.

It is of the mediating ability of the teleological whole that Lukács is talking when he says that

> the category of mediation is a lever with which to overcome the mere immediacy of the empirical world and as such it is not something (subjective) foisted on to the objects from outside. It is no value judgment or 'ought' opposed to the 'is.' It is *rather the manifestation of their authentic objective structure.*[27]

Although Lukács asserts that the mediating process of the teleological whole is totally different from the "ought", there is some reason to doubt this. The doubt centers on the concept of possibility. The notion of possibilities creates a dilemma for a philosophy of the present. For if one wants to limit the concept of possibility to what is only very close to the immediate present, then one moves closer to positivism, a move which Lukács seems to have come close to making in *The Young Hegel,* and which he was concerned about both in his early writings and in his more radical days of the late '60s. However, if one stretches the concept of the possibilities of the present then there is the danger that one will wind up with utopias of the type that Lukács criticized in "Moses Hess".[28] Thus, if possibility is defined narrowly it becomes closer to the facts, if more broadly closer to values. Since possibilities are perceived broadly in *History of Class Consciousness* this suggests that they are closer to values. This fits in with the stress of consciousness which also implies values. Furthermore the logical connection between the two is that it is heightened consciousness which sees revolutionary possibilities more clearly or posits them more strikingly.

In *History of Class Consciousness* Lukács does not achieve an ethics based on the denial of the autonomy of value. It is only with *The Young Hegel* that autonomous values become not so much overcome as rejected. In *The Young Hegel* there is first, less and less stress on consciousness and even on the teleological process both of which, according to *History of Class Consciousness*, were the primary antidotes to the reified world of capitalism. Second there is fuller development of those criticisms of Kant that are indeed crucial for constructing a Marxist ethic, for example critique of the scholasticism and legalism that pervades too much of the Kantian system. Third, combined with *History of Class Consciousness*, Lukács' criticisms of (4) individuality, (5) lack of content, and finally (6) the excessively inner nature of ethics based on autonomous

value as opposed to an ethic based on outer *Sittlichkeit* are all stated more fully. I will now concentrate on these latter arguments both as they appear in *History of Class Consciousness* and *The Young Hegel*

As early as *The Theory of the Novel* Lukács had seen ethics as implying excessive individualism. Yet he had not accepted the essential individualism of ethics in the essay on idealism; and in *The Young Hegel* he has to admit an inconsistent critique, namely that Kantian ethics does not stress the individual enough. Even in *The Theory of the Novel* he seems to suggest the possibility of a non individualistic ethics.[29] In *The Young Hegel* Lukács continues the argument that the moral attitude is individualistic. However, more and more this point is made contradictory: e.g. when Lukács admits that at Berne Hegel was both a moralist and concerned with collectivity.[30] Of course this charge of individualism had always been one of Lukács' weakest points against morality anyway. Indeed we find Lukács simultaneously criticizing Kantian ethics for excessive individualism and for not being individualistic enough, as for example when he accuses Kant and Fichte for erecting an absolutistic morality, which he sees as part of a "desensualization process".[31]

However, the main problem with Lukács' account of individualism is that it simply mirrors the errors and confusions in Hegel's own account. Roughly, the problem is that. The deep problem that Hegel was dealing with in his writing on Kant concerned the relation between an ethics based on existing practice and one that is not. However, since Hegel found, in many formulations of autonomous ethics (a) ontological emphasis on the individual subject and (b) stress on interpretations of right, duty, justice, etc., which entailed elements of economic and political individualism, he therefore assumed for the most part that there was a necessary and not a contingent connection between an ethic not based on existing practices and individualism. This however ignores the possibility of a collective noninstitutional ethic. Furthermore, neither Hegel nor Lukács ever constructed an adequate argument for the essential individualism of autonomous ethics. However, a partial argument can be constructed for both (a) and (b). The closest thing to the former is found in the work of Lucien Goldmann and the closest thing to the latter in the debate over socialist ethics within and without Hegelian Marxism.[32]

Lukács' critique of the lack of content of Kantian ethics is also only partially convincing. The problem, however, is that Kant himself sometimes did give his ethics a content and indeed different contents.[33] This, of course, does not get Kant off the hook. One may say, with Hegel, that there is a problem with such an abstract notion of duty which can be interpreted so differently. In opposition to such abstraction, which has to utilize a content anyway, one might like to propose a philosophy like Hegel's which consciously thematizes the problem of content. The problem is that Lukács' and Hegel's principles of social reality, which they use to give a content to the abstract forms of duty, are themselves extremely variable. Thus, for Lukács, one year they center on the mass strike, another year on the Leninist Party, another year on the Popular Front. If Kant's ethical theories are too abstract and need a content, perhaps Hegel's and

Lukács' theories need some more abstraction in order to prevent them from just taking any moral content they want. Lukács' criticism, then, may be justified, but perhaps may be answered by anchoring Kant's moral philosophy somewhat more to the social world without thereby completely breaking down the dichotomy between facts and values.

Of all Lukács' criticisms, however, I do think that the lack of content argument has the most validity, next to the criticism of the excessively inner nature of Kant's ethics, and I will take up both in section three. For now I would just note that certainly in *History of Class Consciousness* Lukács does not attempt to resolve the question by taking the content of ethics simply from what is the case, but rather from what he thinks will, from a teleological perspective, be the case. Thus, the issue is displaced to the first one of teleology versus value. In contrast, in *The Young Hegel* he takes the content more from what is. This difference conforms to my basic logical reconstruction of Lukács' thought, whereby the first period presents a non-naturalistic ethic, *History of Class Consciousness* and the second period represent a non-naturalistic combined with a naturalistic ethic, and the third period, particularly *The Young Hegel*, opts for a more completely naturalistic ethic. The first is more conventionally left Hegelian, the second neither right nor left and the third tending toward a right Hegelianism in which the autonomy of value is gone.

This leads me to one of my central claims, which is that there is no easy answer to the issue of right, versus center, versus left Hegelianism as the basis of a Marxist ethic. It is not just a question of which is the best interpretation of Hegel, but rather that each option represents a tendency toward emphasizing an ethic based on the autonomy of value, or one based on a close intermingling of facts and values. There is no easy answer as to which is right, except that it seems obvious that it is almost impossible to simply adopt one or the other. They are two extremes of a spectrum, one of which tends to make ethics dependent on facts about human nature and human society, the other of which tends to make ethics more autonomous. In the Hegelian system the tension is represented by the directions of *Moralität* and *Sittlichkeit*. One problem, as we will see, is that Hegel often characterizes these two in such a way that it sounds like *Sittlichkeit* must be the solution, particularly by giving a narrowing reading to the concept of *Moralität*. However, I will argue against this narrow reading. Although *Moralität*, for example, often involves individuality, the moral does not; or at least he has not shown it to, and I will go on to hold that in fact it does not. Nor is the moral particularly tied to a narrow individualistic reading of duty. The moral and the *sittlich* can be seen as two modes of collective self development. I will also contend that the problem with many existing interpretations, including Lukács', is that they give no real decision procedure for choosing the right place between logically reconstructed notions of *Sittlichkeit* and *Moralität*, i.e., that none of the decision procedures work and, more strongly, that there are a number of reasons for why they cannot work unless a naturalistic and a non-naturalistic ethics are combined. The contrast between the practical results of *History of Class Consciousness* and *The Young Hegel* reveal this clearly.

All the new material on ethics in *The Young Hegel* basically leads Lukács to praise Hegel more and more for his political moderation, his middle political path. Much of the spirit of the book is encapsulated in Lukács' comment that

> The outstanding feature of Hegel's position was that even though he rejected the extreme left wing of the French Revolution right from the beginning, he nevertheless retained his faith in its *historical necessity* and to the very end of his life he regarded it as the very foundation of modern civil society.[34]

Of course Lukács is aware that Hegel's stress on necessity as opposed to Utopia can lead to reaction. Yet he seems unaware that the way in which he formulates Hegel's problem would of necessity lead to a conflict between stress on necessity and a progressive attitude.[35] Lukács sees Hegel's developing critique of the moral attitude, from 1799 to 1807 as leading to what he calls Hegel's philosophy of renonciliation.

> For the later Hegel 'reconciliation' is a category expressing the idea that the objective course of history is independent of the moral aspirations and evaluations of the men active within it. The various philosophies, ideologies, religions, etc., appear correspondingly as intellectual syntheses of a particular historical era. For this reason, Hegel rejects all purely moral evaluations of them. This is not to say that he abstains from any point of view. But his chief criterion is the progressive or reactionary nature of a particular period and not, as earlier on, its relation to an eternal, supra-historical morality. To this extent 'reconciliation' is an index of the great development in Hegel's historical sense.
>
> But the development is highly contradictory. For his use of the category also points to a reconciliation with the most regrograde tendencies of the past and present. In particular, it tacitly accepts the reactionary institutions of contemporary Germany and this leads to the abandonment of all conflict, and of all real criticism, especially with regard to Christianity. Hence, the historical and scientific advance on the moral indignation of his Berne Peirod exacts a great price in terms of his progressive outlook.[36]

Thus, Lukács is aware of the problem that reconciliation can be reactionary and not just moderate. But he seems to be unaware that by emptying the concept of reconciliation with social reality of all ethical content, he makes it very difficult for Hegel or anyone else to clearly demarcate the line between simple reconciliation and actual reaction. Certainly, Lukács did have a political

demarcation in mind between the two but the very connection of that political demarcation with his own situation in Moscow raises with renewed vigor the need for a moral as well as a pragmatic political demarcation between the tendency to reconciliation and the move to reaction. This seems doubly imperative in light of the fact that in *The Young Hegel* the political demarcation is often placed so far to the right. Hegel, for example, is praised for accepting Thermidor, Fichte condemned for opposing it and accused of being naive because he wanted to redistribute property. Although Lukács admits that Hegel may have been more conservative on this issue of property, still, for Lukács at this time, Hegel's very conservatism shows his superiority to Fichte. Fichte is even criticized because, unlike Hegel, he upheld the right of human beings to rebel.[37]

What happened? What is the relation between this version of Hegel and the version found in *History and Class Consciousness* and the relation of both to Lukács' earlier critique of Hegel's criticism of Kantian ethics. The usual flip way of treating this is just to say that Marx was a left Hegelian. However, Lukács and Goldmann have argued effectively against this standpoint. I would say that they have also shown that Marxism to be viable should not simply be left Hegelian, since this position leaves human activity in a vacuum and not adequately tied to historical reality. I would add that from an ethical perspective left Hegelianism defined in this way would lead to an extreme non-naturalism in ethics. However' in exposing this problem Lukács and Goldmann opened another which they were not adequately aware of, namely that if autonomous ethics is taken to be characteristic of left Hegelianism and if center Hegelianism completely rejects this position, then center Hegelianism of necessity becomes right Hegelianism. This can be taken as a dilemma or as a suggestion that Marxism must combine naturalistic and non-naturalistic ethics. Only the second approach allows us to understand the strengths and limits of Lukács' sixth and final critique of autonomous ethics, that it is too inward oriented. In section three I turn to this issue.

III

It must be kept in mind, that *History and Class Consciousness* and *The Young Hegel,* not only represent different interpretations of Hegeliam Marxism, but also different interpretations of cultural history, particularly German history, and I believe that the issue of uniting a non-natural and a natural ethics through uniting collective values and collective praxis, can benefit from both these elements of Lukács' thought. Seen from a cultural standpoint and particularly in the light of Lukács' role in the popular front as a defender of progressive aspects of German culture, *The Young Hegel* defends the enlightenment and those themes which see Marxism and Hegelianism as part of the enlightenment. It resolutely critiques romanticism and interpretations of Hegel and Marx that place them there. Although *History and Class Consciousness* is not a work of cultural history in the same sense, nevertheless in many ways it reflects Lukács' earlier attitude

to literature and culture, which, many scholars now agree, whether they defend this or not, placed Marxism within romanticism and utilized romantic themes. This opposition becomes more interesting if we add that the primary Hegelian and Marxist enlightenment theme that is picked out in *The Young Hegel* is philosophy of history and historical materialism. Indeed in his connection of Marx, Hegel, Smith and the earlier economists, Lukács develops an account of the historical continuity of historical materialism which, when added to his innovative work on the historical novel, produced around the same time as *The Young Hegel*, allow Lukács to be seen as one of the best delineators of the relation between the enlightenment as a whole and the tradition of materialist history, both economic and cultural. But there are striking anomalies in both of Lukács' accounts and in the relation between the accounts. First, his treatment of Kant is very strange. It does, however, speak to the issue of combining a collective value orientation with a collective praxis orientation.

Second, although the reversal from defense of a romantic Marxism to defense of an enlightenment Marxism might suggest that Lukács only provides grounds for continuing to separate Marxism, along the lines of Gouldner, into romantic and scientific Marxism, the fact that both versions of Marx are defended through the same Hegelian categories, albeit with different results in *History and Class Consciousness* and *The Young Hegel*, might suggest that there is some synthesis possible between the Marxism of materialist history, enlightenment themes, and the Marx of romanticism, consciousness and radical potentialities.[38] This perhaps lets the cat out of the bag for my ultimate aim. I believe that these two can be combined if the non-natural and the natural ethics of Marxism can be combined and that they must be combined for Marxist ethics to be viable. And combining them would mean combining the theory of base and superstructure, which leads in many of its formulations to a naturalistic ethic, with the theories of radical possibilities and the significance of consciousness for revolutionary change, which lead to a non-naturalistic ethic. The point is that they both lead to an ethic, whereas in most of the debates between the two camps the ethical dimension is not expressed. That is why, going back to my opening comments, E.P. Thompson can connect structuralism with Hegelian Marxism. In this connection there is nothing more important than the reassimilation of Kant and his concerns for collective social values and aspirations back into Hegel and Marx. Yet in both *History and Class Consciousness* and *The Young Hegel*, Kant is treated both inconsistently and shallowly: inconsistently because whereas in *History and Class Consciousness* he is seen as an enlightenment thinker who did not understand the revolution brought in by Hegelian philosophy with its stress on consciousness, in *The Young Hegel* the author of *What is Enlightenment* is treated either as a scholastic fogey or as a precursor to existentialism.[39]

The shallowness of Lukács' interpretation of Kant is shown by his basic presupposition that the inner in Kant is always individualistic. However, there is another way of talking about inner moral experience and I believe that Kant can also be approached in this way: namely that inner moral experience defines collective value aspirations which have not been manifested in the actually

existing structure of society, against collective values which have been. On this point Lucien Goldmann's discussion of Kant in *Immanuel Kant* and *the Hidden God* is immeasurably superior to Lukács (although Goldmann often falls back on Lukácsian formulation). For on Goldmann's account tragic thinkers like Kant are usually characterized precisely as moralists who are not individualists, but who uphold a collective value which has less chance of being manifested in the world than in the Marxian or Hegelian system where collective values are seen to be directly manifested in practice.[40] But it does seem that the reasons I have given for why there is room in *History and Class Consciousness* for an autonomous ethics apply with equal force here. For it is precisely in those sections of *History and Class Consciousness*, i.e. in Lukács' defense of revolutionary consciousness and radical possibilities, in which Lukács seems to need a philosophy of the autonomy of value (even as he denies it) that he also needs a philosophy of collective inner value orientation to be conjoined with a collective praxis based on actuality. There the possibility is raised of combining a romantic and an enlightenment ethic.

In contrast to the view espoused in *The Young Hegel*, for the early, romantic Lukács, the philosopher of revolt, the primacy of ethics, as found in Fichte or Kant, was part of the tradition of revolt, i.e. according to one interpretation, part of the tradition of romanticism.[41] For it seems as though the romantics, like the young Hegelians, try to create a self based on autonomy from facts and this is a revolt against existence as existence, but that then, romantics begin to worry about whether the self can develop in such a way or whether it has to be anchored to facts and tradition, a debate over what I have called the creation of the self versus the discovery of the self.[42] This debate is carried on in many aspects of romanticism ranging from English poetry to French painting to German philosophy. In English poetry, for example, many of the romantics wound up by submerging revolt in some sense of tradition. There is a similar dialectic in French painting from David to Delacroix. Moving to German literature one also finds this theme in Schiller's concerns over whether the self should be more bound or more structured. It is Charles Taylor's thesis that a concern to find a median point between expressiveness and autonomy, i.e. what I would call naturalism and non-naturalism, is found in Hegel and Marx.[43] I would like to suggest that the third ethical way offered by *History and Class Consciousness* combines expressiveness and autonomy by giving a new account of will and activity based on both value and *Sittlichkeit*. This synthesis was all the easier to make in that Hegel's nonvaluational theory of will and activity was originally an overreaction to Kant's overly valuational theory. On this account, both Kant's and Hegel's interpretation of will, activity, and ethics may be seen as part of the romantic debate over tradition and revolt. But obviously looked at this way enlightenment and romantic ethics combine, just as I would like to combine naturalism and non-naturalism, historical materialism and the theory of the self, collective social practice and collective social values. Lukács' attitude toward Kant is a key.

As we have seen, for the early Lukács Hegel was associated with

conservatism. The reason was that Kant and Fichte were seen to elevate the will, whereas Hegel had attempted on Lukács' view to reconcile the will with the facts, i.e. overcome the fact/value dichotomy. The young Lukács' analysis of Hegelianism and anti-Hegelianism is actually consolidated in *The Young Hegel* except that there Lukács' judgments of the two positions are reversed. Hegel is now praised for his antiromantic spirit of realism whereas Fichte is condemned for his romantic utopianism. In contrast *History and Class Consciousness* represents a third way between acceptance of a world of value absolutely set off against a world of facts and the total assimilation of facts and values.

Now it is certainly true that Kant radically separated fact from value and that Hegel attempted to bring them back together again. However, Hegel's attempt to overcome the fact/value dichotomy is partially a result of Kant's extreme overevaluation of it. Before Kant separated them so much who would have seen the urgency of getting them back together? The fact/value dichotomy would not be perceived as needing radical overcoming if someone had not given a sharp theoretical separation of facts and values in the first place.

What was unique in Kant's separation of fact from value? Here we must sharply separate what a neo-Kantian like Ernst Cassirer gets out of Kant and what a utopian Hegelian Marxist such as Ernst Bloch gets out of Kant.[44] We must differentiate between the Kant who comes out of the enlightenment and the Kant who comes out of romanticism. What do I mean by this distinction? For those who see Kant as an enlightenment thinker there must be stress on his idea of universalization or duty. For those who see him as a romantic the stress must be more on self-creation, i.e. the spirit of revolt. On my view these two interpretations are not necessarily opposed, although particularly if one emphasizes duty rather than universalization, it is easy to overemphasize the rigid, legalistic, individualistic side of Kant's thought. On the enlightenment interpretation Kant is great because he stresses the moral law. On the romantic interpretation Kant is great because he stresses the self-creation of the moral law. According to this romantic reading Kant is the thinker who attempts to radically impose significance on a universe that is otherwise devoid of meaning; and he accomplishes this by elevating not simply the autonomy of the moral law, but also the power of the will, the power of human beings to achieve self-creation through moral norms. On this reading Kant is part of a whole tradition of thinkers who claim that values are no longer simply given, who insist that human beings must create new values through the will. This is the standpoint of Rousseau, of Nietzsche, of Sorel and of Gramsci. It is also the tradition of the Young Lukács.[45]

The comparison of Rousseau, Nietzsche, Kant may sound strange to some, but once it is seen how both Rousseau and Nietzsche are asking for a new human being rather than simply for a new morality, then we can see how Kant's creation of a new realm of value plays structurally the same role as Rousseau's call for the creation of a new social, "general" will; or Nietzsche's call for the creation of a new individual will. This leads to an analysis of Lukács' opposition between inner ethics and outer practice.

The creation of a new universal will in Kant involves extending the concept of the individual will to include its relation with other wills. This new general will of reason is social but not necessarily observable in existing societies. Furthermore, Hegel's attempt to overcome the fact/value dichotomy, which usually involves placing human beings within actual existing society, also involves extending the individual will and person to include their relations with others. This interpretation reconstructs the argument between *Sittlichkeit* and *Moralität.* On the one hand, there is the historical method of extending the human will beyond the individual by emphasizing collective praxis. On the other hand there is the moral method of extending the human will beyond the individual so that a collective general will or will of reason is created which is not objectified in existing society. Put another way there is opposition between Kant who usually extends the individual will in an inner but collective direction, and Hegel who usually extends it in an outer and collective direction.

I would suggest, however, that already in Hegel the concept or extending the individual will through practice, although it is different from the Kantian concept of extending the individual will through value, nevertheless, unless it is to fall into a positivistic identification with actually existing society, must keep some aspect of the concept of extending the will through value too. On this account the fact/value dichotomy is not entirely overcome: this is the third way represented by *History and Class Consciousness.* Furthermore, one way of seeing the continuity in the thought of Kant, Hegel and Lukács is to realize that for none of them, at least at their best, is it ever a question of extending the individual will simply through such collective notions as duty or historical praxis, both of which are primarily enlightenment concepts. For all of them the extension of the individual will has an element of romanticism and non-naturalism in it, i.e. an element of revolt and self creation. The extended human will, the new human nature is not only discovered in history, as the enlightenment and enlightenment Marxists emphasize, but also created as romanticism and romantic Marxism stress. This new human will thus allows the combination of enlightenment, naturalistic and romantic non-naturalistic ethics.

Kany may have been one of the first to suggest, along with Rousseau, that one can will to have a human nature. It contrast it seems to have been the view of Leo Strauss, the arch antiromantic, that such a thing is impossible: either one has a human nature or else one wills individuality.[46] The young Lukács followed Kant. In *History and Class Consciousness* in contrast, Lukács seemed to follow Hegel in arguing that one does not simply will that one has a human nature, but rather that one appropriates a human nature created through existing social processes. For Lukács, willing to have a human nature was to accept the fact/value dichotomy, whereas appropriating a societally-created human nature was to overcome the distance between facts and values. One appropriates a human nature that has been externalized in society. According to this notion the foundation for growth of the self is already laid by the direction pointed to by reified human nature in society. What becomes important is to break that reification either by action or contemplation . But the telos toward change is

already present in the reification. And this puts limits on how far one can expand the inner collective will. For expansion of that will is limited by how much the inner collective will has already been objectified in existing society. However, it is precisely (a) in the theory of change and (b) in the question of how to come to consciousness of the relation between internal and external that Hegel fails or becomes ambiguous and where the Lukács of *History and Class Consciousness* has to add something which he later described in many ways, but basically was an actionistic element of a type not clearly found in Hegel. I hold that the process of change can only be illuminated by adding Kantian stress on the power of the inner collective will to the stress on the will's objectification in existing society, i.e. adding collective values to collective praxis.

According to the univocal expression of overcoming the fact/value dichotomy, liberation is simply the historical extension of the changing patterns of modern society at whatever pace these changes happen to take. To go beyond or to fall behind that pace is to fail to be in harmony with history, and thus, ultimately, with oneself. The problem with this account is that it is sometimes difficult to separate if from straightforwad right-wing Hegelianism. In contrast, according to the commonly accepted dichotomy between facts and values, liberation is a moral demand located outside of society. This is the account of liberation that Goldmann attributes to Marcuse and the left Hegelians. The problem with this interpretation is that it is sometimes difficult to separate it from the straightforward utopianism, advocated by E.P. Thompson or, sometimes, by Ernst Bloch. Finally, according to the third way delineated in *Historay and Class Consciousness,* liberation is lodged in the depths of society, but can only be brought to the surface as the result of an active creation by the will.[47]

Naturalism and non-naturalism, enlightenment and romanticism, all these themes found their way into Marxism, particularly Hegelian Marxism, and indeed seem jumbled when they are not approached ethically. But it was this combination of elements that allowed 20th century Hegelian Marxists to usually in practice opt for a synthesis of naturalistic and non-naturalistic ethics, even though to later interpreters and indeed to Hegelian Marxists themselves it might seem that the autonomy of value was being completely denied. Labels often remain, however, long after concepts have expanded or been broken down. The idea of a Marxism without values has attained mythical status, but the myth of the severance of Hegelian Marxism from the world of values has been particularly unfortunate because it has tended to create a dichotomy between Hegelian Marxists and their most natural allies.

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Notes

1. See E.P. Thompson, "Romanticism, Utopianism and Moralism", *The New Left Review* 99 (September-October, 1976). For Thompson's extended critique of Althusser from the same standpoint see *The Poverty of Theory* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1978).

2. See Lucien Goldmann, "Réflexions sur la pensée de Herbert Marcuse", *Marxisme et sciences humaines* (Paris: Gallimard, 1970); *Lukács et Heidegger* (Paris: Éditions Denöel, 1973). A clear statement of Marcuse's position is in Herbert Marcuse's *Reason and Revolution* (Boston: Beacon, 1960), p. 8. For an example of Bloch's position see Ernst Bloch, *A Philosophy of the Future* (New York: Herder and Herder, 1970).

3. For an equation of Hegelianism with utopianism see, for example, Gareth Stedman Jones, "The Marxism of the Early Lukács", *New Left Review* 70 (November-December, 1971). For the discussion in English of Marxist ethics see Allen Wood, "The Marxian critique of justice", Ziyad Humsami, "Marx on Distributive Justice", and Allen Wood, "Marx on Right and Justice, A Reply to Husami", all in *Marx, Justice, and History*, ed. Marshall Cohen, Thomas Nagel, and Thomas Scanlon (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980); *Marx and Morality*, ed. Kai, Nielson and Stephen Patten (special supplementary issue of Canadian Journal of Philosophy, 1982).

4. Leszek Kolakowski's critique of Lukács is in *Main Current of Marxism*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1978). The discussion between Habermas and Marcuse is in Telos 38 (Winter, 1978). For an example of the intertwining of Budapest school ethics and Habermas' work see György Markus, "Die Welt Menschlicher Objecte. Zum Problem der Konstitution in Marxismus", in *Arbeit, Handlung, Normativitat*, ed. Axel Honneth and Urs Jaeggi (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1980).

5. Michael Löwy, *Pour une sociologie des Intellectuels révolutionnaires: L'évolution politique de Lukács, 1909-1929* (Paris: P.U.F., 1976), has called attention to the further complication that the essays in *HCC* (Cambridge: M.I.T., 1971) themselves do not reflect a single viewpoint (pp. 202-203).

6. For Lukács and Neo-Kantianism see Hartmut Rosshoff, *Emil Lask als Lehrer von Georg Lukács* (Bonn: Bouvier Verlag, 1975); For a recent discussion of facts and values in Hegel see Jonathan Robinson, *Duty and Hypocrisy in Hegel's Phenomenology of Mind* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1977), reviewed by Robert Perkins in *Owl of Minerva*, vol. 10 1 (September, 1978); also see *Heger's Philosophie des Rechis*, ed. Dieter Henrich and Rolf Petch Horstmann (Kletf Cotta: Stuggart, 1982).

7. Georg Lukács, "Idéalisme conservateur et idéalisme progressiste" in Löwy, *Pour une sociologie*, p. 302.

8. *Ibid.*, p. 304. This sharp contrast between inner and outer is denied both in *HCC* and in the more complete overcoming of fact/value found after 1926. Nevertheless, the claim that stress on the inner and on the outer can be brought together seems to anticipate the doctrine of *HCC*.

9. *Ibid.*, p. 316. A comparison between this passage and the Gramsci of "The Revolution against *Capital*" is unavoidable. It also should be noted that Lukács refutes here the charge that Kantian ethics is formal by noting that its content is the free will (p. 306).

10. Georg Lukács, *The Theory of the Novel* (Cambridge: M.I.T., 1971), pp. 33, 36. In this work the Kantian philosophy is associated with the "productivity of the spirit", (p. 33) i.e. with stress on creating the self. For a further discussion of the concept of the productivity of the spirit in Lukács see Alberto Asor Rosa, "Der Junge Lukács — Theoretiker der Bürgerlichen Kunst", in *Lehrstück Lukács*, ed. Jutta Matzner (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1974).

11. See Löwy, *Pour une sociologie*, p. 201. *The Theory of the Novel*, pp. 144-153.

12. Löwy, *Pour une sociologie*, p. 167, sees the break between Lukács' November, 1918 article against Bolshevism and his January, 1918 article for Bolshevism as showing his rapid move against Kantianism. However, he also indicates that that very move to Bolshevism was ethical.

13. Löwy, *Pour une sociologie*, p. 228, sees the political shift beginning in 1926, whereas an antileninist might have located it in 1924 with Lenin or even in the final, party essays of *HCC*. Lukács talks of his recognition, after 1924, of political stabilization. See his preface to *HCC*, p. xxviii. Löwy's evidence for the leftism of *HCC* is partially indirect. He notes that it comes out more clearly in an article on literature, "Nathan und Tasso", written at the same time as *HCC* which contrasts Goethe's reconciliation with Lessing's opposition to empirical reality. Löwy contrasts this defense of Lessing against Goethe with Lukács' Moscow literary criticism when Goethe is defended for the very same thing for which he was condemned earlier (Löwy, p. 201-202). The ethics and the politics may have not have kept pace here. It may be that the third ethical way of *HCC* is more consistent with what Feher calls the ethical democracy of the 30's, than it is with the Syndicalism or Leninism of 1920-24. See Ferenc Feher, "Lukács in Weimar", *Telos* 39 (Spring, 1978).

14. *HCC*, pp. 5-10. See Löwy's discussion in *Pour une sociologie*, pp. 203-204 and James Schmidt, "Lukács' Concept of Proletarian Buldung", *Telos* 24 (Summer, 1975).

15. Against Althusser we can say that not all of Lukács' holistic method is teleological; in part his holistic method delineates the power of society over the individual independent of the question of goals.

16. Lukács, *HCC*, p. 123.

17. *Ibid.*, pp. 123-124.

18. *Ibid.*, pp. 160, 161.

19. *Ibid.*, p. 161.

20. Lukács, *The Young Hegel* (London: Merlin, 1975), p. 124.

21. *HCC*, p. 160.

22. *Ibid.*, pp. 197, 198.

23. See Note 11.

24. *HCC*, p. 177.

25. *HCC*, pp. 160, 191, 185-186.

26. Lukács, "Idealisme", pp. 13-14; Lukács, *The Young Hegel*, pp. 244-245.

27. *HCC*, p. 162. We should add that the definition of attributed consciousness in terms of the reified whole deduces what the class feels without using empirical methods such as questionnaires, whereas the definition of attributed consciousness in terms of the teleogical whole involves deducing what the class could feel if it could realize its potential.

28. Lukács, "Moses Hess and the Problems of Idealist Dialectics", in *Tactics and Ethics* (New York: Harper and Row, 1975), p. 188.

29. *The Theory of the Novel*, pp. 66, 48; *The Young Hegel*, p. 151.

30. *The Young Hegel*, p. 7.

31. *Ibid.*, p. 286. Lukács also notes that it was not at Berne that Hegel criticized stress on inner experience. For there Hegel simple started with stress on the collective. It was only in Frankfurt with the *Spirit of Christianity*, that Hegel began to examine the inner moral experience more fully and in the process to criticize Kant's overemphasis on it (pp. 6, 7, 147).

32. Lucien Goldmann, *The Hidden God* (New York: Humanities Press, 1964).

33. On this point see my "The Concept of Community in Kant's Architectonic", *Man and World*, Vol. 2, No. 314 (Summer-Fall, 1978), pp. 372-391.

34. *The Young Hegel*, p. 11. One is reminded here of Lukács' analysis of the middle way followed by the heroes of Scott's novels in *The Historical Novel* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1969), p. 36.

35. For a study of the relation between Burke and Hegel which indirectly sheds light on this conflict see J.F. Suter, "Burke, Hegel, and the French Revolution", in *Hegel's Political Philosophy*, ed. A.Z. Pelczynski (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1971).

36. *The Young Hegel*, p. 71.

37. *Ibid.*, pp. 285-294.

38. Alvin Gouldner, *The Two Marxisms* (New York: Seabury, 1980).

39. *The Young Hegel*, pp. xviii, 286.

40. Lucien Goldmann, *The Hidden God*.

41. The idea of romanticism as revolt is of course only one possible characterization of romanticism and is inevitably one-sided. Thus if, following Lukács in *The Young Hegel*, romanticism were characterized as individualism, and conservatism (p. 163 and throughout the book), then one is not likely to include Marxism within romanticism, at least not on the basis that both are traditions of revolt. Here the extreme conservatives are likely to help us. Did Irving Babbit denounce romanticism because of its individualism and conservatism? Did Demaistre and Debonald? Rather they denounced it because is stressed that values were created rather than discovered, a position which can but does not have to lead away from conservatism. Leo Strauss' work is anti-romantic because he opposed the attempt to collectively recreate norms which, for him with the growth of Machiavellism and Hobbism, could only be captured in an individualistic way. See Leo Strauss, *The Political Philosophy of Hobbes* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1963).

42. See the Introduction to my *Economy and Self. Philosophy and Economics from the Mercantilists to Marx* (Westport and London: Greenwood Press, 1979).

43. See Charles Taylor, *Hegel* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975). For a discussion of Lukács' relation to romanticism see Paul Breines, "Marxism, Romanticism and the Case of Georg Lukács", *Studies in Romanticism*, vol. 16, 4 (Fall, 1977). Breines has also suggested a connection between recent work on Lukács and English historians such as E. P. Thompson. Michael Ferber has discussed the issue of Marxism and romanticism recently in a review of books by Terry Eagleton and Raymond Williams in *Socialist Review* 46 (July-August, 1979). For relevant accounts of English and French romanticism, respectively, in poetry and painting, see Walter Jackson Bate, *From Classic to Romantic* (New York: Harper and Row, 1961) and Frederick

Antal, "Reflections on Classicism and Romanticism", in *Classicism and Romanticism* (New York: Harper and Row, 1973).

44. See Ernst Cassirer, *Rousseau, Kant and Goethe* (Princeton: Princeton, 1970); and Ernst Bloch, *A Philosophy of the Future*, (New York: Seabury), p. 29. To see where stress on Kant's theory of duty can lead see Ferenc Feher, "The Last Phase of Romantic Anti-Capitalism", *New German Critique*, No. 10, Winter, 1977, p. 145.

45. Antonio Gramsci, *History, Philosophy and Culture in the Young Gramsci* (St. Louis: Telos Press, 1975), pp. 16, 19, 21, Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Genealogy of Morals* (Garden City: Doubleday, 1956), pp. 189-190, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *The Social Contract* (New York: Hafner, 1947), p. 19.

46. Leo Strauss, *The Political Philosophy of Hobbes*, p. viii.

47. I believe that today a new such third way is being developed in, for example, Habermas' attempt to link ethics and historical materialism and Gyorgy Markus' linking of ethics and political economy. See Jürgen Habermas, *Communication and the Evolution of Society* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1979); Gyorgy Márkus, "Die Welt Menschlicher Objecte. Zum Problem der Konstitution in Marxismus".

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ELEMENTS OF A RADICAL THEORY OF PUBLIC LIFE: FROM TÖNNIES TO HABERMAS AND BEYOND II

John Keane

IX.

The Hypothetical, Abstract Subject

This discussion of the political implications of Habermas' theory of universal pragmatics has so far proposed that it is weakened by two conceptual problems: first, its reliance upon an inappropriate analogy between psychoanalytic therapy and public-political action; and, secondly, the incompatability between the premises of the theory of universal pragmatics and the Marxian theses on ideology. These difficulties, which Habermas himself has sensed, are threatening enough to the political implications of his project, the more so considering that they have in the meantime been reinforced and deepened by two additional problems.

Under pressure from the difficulties analyzed above, first, the theory of universal pragmatics has come more and more to suspend considération of the problem of deformed communication. Of course, Habermas would not deny the ubiquity of systematically distorted communication under late capitalist conditions. Neither is he unaware of the empirical importance of organised lying, open and concealed discord, and strategic action—the "grey areas", as he calls them, in actually existing patterns of communication.[117] Finally he is not unaware of the fact that the ability to competently speak and act is in part the outcome of a stage-like, crisis-ridden and extraordinarily dangerous process of ontogenesis, a learning process marked by the interplay of cognitive, linguistic and sexual-motivational elements.[118] Under the impact of the above-mentioned difficulties, nevertheless, the idea of a communicatively-competent public—whose *possibility* of realisation of the communication theory initially aimed to justify—is installed as a *premise* of its concern with the general and unavoidable presuppositions of communicative action. Communicative action which is guided (implicitly or explicitly) by the common conviction that the various claims to validity are being honoured is analyzed as if it were *the* fundamental form of communicative and strategic action.[119] The universal pragmatics comes

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to theoretically privilege "consensual action", communication in which speaking actors *already* co-operate on the mutually-acknowledged presupposition that their interactions are in accordance with the four validity claims. Habermas' explication of the logic of communicative action thereby *presumes* the existence of competently speaking and acting subjects who are (a) already in explicit agreement about the necessity to co-operatively reach mutual understanding; (b) already capable of distinguishing between the performative (i.e., illocutionary) and propositional aspects of their utterances; and who (c) already share a traditon and, therefore, a common "definition" of their situation.[120] It is true that Habermas regularly denies that this presumption reinstates the Kantian concept of the hypothetical, transcendental subject—a subject which is removed from all experience and which, upon that basis, accomplishes certain syntheses through its transcendental knowledge of concepts of objects in general. This denial is less than convincing. Contrary to its claims to overcome the classical separation of transcendental-formal and empirical analysis,[121] the research programme of the universal pragmatics evidently reasserts a misleading dualism: that between the a priori knowledge of hypothetically competent public speakers and, on the other hand, the a posteriori knowledge which could only be generated through inquiries into actually existing speech and action, inquiries which would ask how the operations of the basic institutions of late capitalist society interface with, or promote, autonomous speech and action. As a direct consequence of this dualism, hypothetically competent speaking and acting subjects are made to serve as a "postulate" (in Kant's sense) of the critical theory of universal pragmatics. A revised version of Kant's transcendental subject reappears in a new, though admittedly less individualistic guise. The competent subjects who are the focus of Habermas' communication theory are merely *hypothetical* subjects. Actually existing communication is analyzed *as if* its participants were already communicatively competent. The objection (of Dewey and others) that communicative competence and autonomous public life are not yet, is scotched; autonomous public life appears no longer to be conditional upon the self-organisation and agitation of marginalised political forces, upon their will to break existing forms of power, privilege and opinion-formation.

This difficulty, which arguably restricts the political potential of the theory of universal pragmatics, is deepened, secondly, by the fact that Habermas' hypothetically competent subjects are devoid of many empirical and historical qualities. Theoretically speaking, these subjects are highly artificial beings. The theory of universal pragmatics brackets—or simply fails to consider—a number of properties of public-political experience. With the aim of helping to resuscitate the political implications of Habermas' work, the remaining sections of this essay will briefly sketch and analyse several of these dimensions. No claims are made for the exhaustiveness of the following discussion. It is argued only that each of these properties of public-political action must be seen as "elements" having a rightful place in a radical theory of public life. The elements discussed here are four in number, and include: the "embodied" character of communicative action; rhetoric; the aesthetic dimensions of communication; and, finally, the purposive-rational aspects of "consensual" forms of action.

X.

Body Politics and Public Life

In the first place, it is evident that Habermas' communicatively competent subjects suffer from a definite analytic disembodiment. His account of communicative action misleadingly presumes that speaking actors are capable of raising themselves above and beyond their bodies. Bodily expressions and nonverbal actions are thought to play the role of silent, passive spectators in consensual action renewable through discussion oriented to reaching mutual agreement. It is forgotten that the capacity for genuine storytelling and convincing argumentation depends equally upon the expressive language of gestures. Public communication indeed always draws upon speaking actors' capacity to co-ordinate and interchange their speech-acts and bodily gestures. Within autonomous public spheres, this capacity is often developed to a very high degree. Communication is strikingly and sensuously "embodied". Through a kind of metacommunciation, eyes, arms, noses, shoulders and fingers effectively serve as mutually-activating signaling stations, which in turn supplement or contradict their associated utterances in a highly evocative and meaningful manner.[122] It is true that the universal pragmatics' failure to consider the bodily dimensions of communicative action is occasionally acknowledged by Habermas.[123] What is not admitted, however, is that this obfuscation is an effect of the universal pragmatics' dependence upon the theory of speech acts, notably as it has been formulated by Austin, Searle and Wunderlich. In its present formulations, speech act theory represses questions concerning the language of gesture. It does this by virtue of its almost exclusive focus upon the performative or illocutionary aspects of speech, that is, upon speech acts such as promising, which do something in saying something to others. Under the influence of such formulations, Habermas' more recent writings supress his earlier discussion of the bodily aspects of communicative action. Recognition of the embodiment of communication was evident, for example, in his early criticism of Dilthey's unsuccessful attempts to distinguish the logics of the natural and cultural sciences. While objecting to Dilthey's "monadological view of hermeneutics",[124] Habermas nevertheless concurred with his description of two primary, and normally interwoven forms of communicative action. These forms were said to include, first, "immediate lived experience" (*Erlebnis*) oriented by norms and "practical" knowledge and, secondly, non-verbal, bodily action experiential expression such as laughter or anger—which signifies unstated or otherwise unstatable intentions which are more or less meaningful to their authors and addressees.[125] Both forms of language-mediated activity, Habermas insisted, are marked by their "motivated", self-externalising capacities. The intercourse of everyday cultural life is therefore chronically dependent upon actors' learned abilities to make both their "immediate lived experience" *and* their bodily or "experiential" actions understandable to themselves and

others. In the case of relatively non-pathological communication at least, this intelligibility is enhanced by the fact that bodily actions are translatable into utterances, and utterances into bodily actions. Invoking the authority of the later Wittgenstein, Habermas argued that the language games of daily life cannot be analysed as if they obeyed the formally rigorous rules of a syntax or grammar.[126] It is not only that intentional and gestural actions and utterances are mutually irreducible "elements" of all communicative action, that speech, for example, cannot be understood as a mere "reflection" of the life world of institutionalised action and expression. The more decisive point is that within all communicative action, gestures, actions and utterances mutually interpret each other. Communication between speaking and acting subjects ordinarily moves, as it were, between the boundaries of monologue and the delicate silence of mime. This fact lends communicative action a self-reflexive quality. Speakers are able to incorporate within their utterances allusions to non-verbal life expressions, through which their speech can in turn be interpreted by others as meaningful. The language of gestures and actions can interpret utterances, Habermas correctly remarked, at the same time that speakers can "talk about actions and describe them. We can name expressions and even make language itself the medium of experiential expression, whether phonetically, by exploiting the expressiveness of intonation, or stylistically, by representing in language itself the relation of the subject to its linguistic objectivations."[127]

From the point of view of a theory of autonomous public life, it is regrettable that this early concern with the dialectic of body, utterance and action has largely receded from the horizons of Habermas' more recent accounts of communicative action. As has been suggested above, the universal pragmatics gives itself over to a numbed or disembodied account of the free and systematic communication of autonomous public life. There is a converse to this point, namely that the theory of universal pragmatics potentially misses the emancipatory potential of several social movements which have made the body, its symbolic representation and implication within late capitalist relations of power a theme of political action. Here mention can be made of (male) gay attempts at subverting patriarchal homophobia through the celebration of the male body as a love object, and feminist movements' concern with women's bodies as objects of patriarchal socialisation, adornment, surveillance and rape. These "body-political" movements can be interpreted as important attempts to reverse the contemporary bureaucratic administration and interrogation of the body. During the course of the modern civilising process, as Doerner and others have proposed, the bodies of the "unreasonable" ceased to be punished "in public" in the name of the Sovereign, as continued to be the case prior to the nineteenth century. This apparently "humane" reversal was achieved only insofar as bodies have come to be "policed" by networks of social and political institutions guided by expert professional knowledge.[128] In the phase of late capitalism life itself has come to be mobilised and administered by bureaucratic-professional means. The powers that be even pride themselves on their ability to put this life in order, that is, to normalise, sustain and multiply it by means of archipelagos of "carceral" institu-

tions. These archipelagos consist of prisons, factories, offices, asylums, schools and hospitals—each tending to resemble prisons in their mode of operation.

Whatever the plausibility of this thesis, concerning the normalising society, its implications are of fundamental importance to a theory of autonomous public life. In the classical past, it might be said, the species was conceived (by Aristotle, for example) as living beings endowed with the capacity to lead a political existence. The populations of late capitalist societies, by contrast, can be viewed as beings whose administered politics increasingly place their existence as living, embodied beings into question. The "progressive" effect of this interrogation and administration of bodies no doubt consists in its erosion of old assumptions about the body as a natural force external to influences of power and symbolically-mediated communication. This administration process nevertheless also calls into question populations' capacities to freely and publicly exercise their powers of labour, speech and bodily action. Autonomous public life is jeopardised by the fact that bodies tend to fall—though unevenly and certainly not without opposition—under the watchful eye of normalising bureaucratic control mechanisms. A radical theory of public life needs to render problematic this normalisation of daily life through the policing of bodies. Habermas' disembodied account of communicative action unfortunately leads away from this task.

XI.

The Problem of Rational Speech: Rhetoric

The restricted political potential of the theory of universal pragmatics is a consequence not only of its disembodied account of communication. The abstract-formalism of this account is also reinforced by Habermas' strong tendency to presume that communicatively competent actors employ their utterances in no other mode than that of soberly reaching understanding through "rational speech". Oriented to the achievement of a "rational consensus", these competent actors seem to eschew rhetorical speech and, secondly, appreciate (and produce) neither film nor theatre nor literature nor music. These rhetorical and aesthetic forms of communication, Habermas seems to imply, together stand in a subordinate relationship with respect to consensual speech. The general significance of what he elsewhere calls "symbolic action"—non-propositional, symbolically expressive modes of speaking and acting[129]—is seriously devalued. Symbolic action is understood as a derivative, parasitic form of consensual speech act; its presence within *all* forms of communication is thereby underestimated.

This point can be illustrated and defended with reference, firstly, to the rhetorical character of all communicative action. Habermas' devaluation of questions pertaining to rhetoric, it seems clear, is an effect of his inadequate explication of the *formal* aspects of ordinary language communication. It is true

that he repeats Searle's conviction that accounts of the formal dimensions of language are not incompatible with the analysis of communication as a rule-governed ensemble of speech acts.[130] Habermas also sometimes hints that language has a reality *sui generis*, a reality which persistently makes its mark upon speech acts. His early work on language, for example, expressed this point through the metaphor of the spider's web. Systems of linguistic representation, it was correctly argued, cannot be analysed as if they were the transparent and neutral product of resourceful, spider-like, monadic subjects. Language was rather viewed as "the web on whose threads the subjects hang and on which they first begin to make themselves into subjects."[131]

Habermas has more recently adopted the view that the formal-representational aspects of communication are always contingent upon their pragmatic employment in communication contexts. In his view, speaking actors *learn* the meaning of illocutionary speech acts through their role as participants within communicative action. They likewise *learn* the meaning of propositional sentences by adopting (again within an intersubjective context) the role of observers who report their experiences as propositions. Through this formula, Habermas questions the old Saussurean distinction between processes of speaking (*parole*) which are contingent upon language as structure (*langue*).[132] Habermas openly denies the validity of this distinction. In the first place, communicative interaction cannot be interpreted as mere *parole*, as always subordinated to the compulsory structuring effects of systems of anonymous, collective codes. In Habermas' view, subjects capable of speaking and acting can also deploy and transform the "formal-structural" properties of ordinary language in processes of communication. He insists, furthermore, that speech acts are not simply haphazard or contingent—as the *parole-langue* dualism presupposes. Their pragmatic aspects are rule-structured and are therefore not beyond the grasp of rigorous, formal analysis. Although performed by particular speakers concerned with particular states of affairs, acts of communication are nonetheless always structured immanently by validity claims. These validity rules are constitutive rules—they therefore exercise an "objective" influence over all speech acts.

This convincing censure of the *langue-parole* dualism nevertheless results in a considerable de-emphasis of the formal dimensions of language systems. The processes whereby meaningfully performed speech acts are systematically mediated or "preconstructed" by the formal relations between signifiers (images, sounds, utterances), processes which Saussure had sought to analyse through the category of *langue*, fall into obscurity. In the opinion of the theory of universal pragmatics, language is to be understood as a transparent and contingent system of signs. Language is a pellucid medium which facilitates speakers' attempts to effect a coherent, usually demarcated relationship between the "external world" of nature, their "social worlds", and their own particular "inner world". Language, in this view, is a *means* through which "facts" can be represented, normatively-regulated communicative relations established, and the singularity of speakers' subjectivity expressed.[133] Language by no means displays a "productivity" of its own. Habermas follows Searle in assuming the primacy of the

principle of expressibility. Whatever can be meant, it is said, can be uttered. It is therefore concluded that rule-governed, explicit speech acts are the fundamental units of communication. For any and every speech act which a speaker wants to produce, a suitable performative or propositional expression can be made available and, in turn, uttered meaningfully.[134] This not altogether unconvincing principle at the same time loses sight of the linguistic preconstruction of all subjective acts of communication. The crucial objection that the "objective form" of symbolic language always structures that which is "subjectively" spoken about is passed over in silence. The theory of universal pragmatics thus falls into a certain "subjectivism". It tends to analyse only the pragmatic aspects of communication. It thereby underemphasises what might be called the semantic productivity of any language of communicative action. This productivity (which is expressed in the commonplace distinction between what speakers mean and what they say) derives from those generative devices or "objective" rules which preside over processes of symbolic representation and, therefore, over both the performance of speech acts and their reception by audiences.

The rhetorical qualities of speech acts serve as a politically important illustration of this productivity. Contrary to Habermas' distinction between "symbolic action" and the "rational speech" of properly communicative action, rhetorical speech is a constitutive feature of *all* communicative action. Rhetoric is not restricted to expressive forms of speaking and acting, such as poetry or highly emotive forms of political oratory. With varying degrees of intensity, to be sure, all communication is marked by rhetorical characteristics which are generated by the play or tension within the chains of signs and utterances employed by speaking actors. No doubt, rhetoric *is* produced by speaking, sign-deploying actors, and only effects new meanings through the interpretive capacities of its addressees. Habermas correctly emphasises this point. The convincing "power" of rhetoric does not exist in itself, so to speak; a minimal hermeneutic must be exercised if rhetorical communication is to successfully effect meanings for speaking and acting subjects. The "productivity" of rhetorical speech, its capacity of making the probable more attractive, nevertheless also derives from the "design" or representational form of this speech itself. The more classical accounts of rhetoric are rather misleading on this point.[135] Contrary to Aristotle and others, rhetoric cannot be understood as "artificially stylised" or decorative speech which persuades (or repels) through its exaggerations and insincerities. Nor is the semantic productivity of rhetoric generated by the wilful introduction into communication of substitute signifiers which serve to "adorn" that communication through the invocation of resemblances. Rhetoric, on the contrary, is genuinely productive of new meanings for its interpreting audiences. This semantic productivity is generated by processes of "metaphorical twist" (Beardsley), by the bringing together of two or more formerly unrelated signifiers into a new relationship of identity. The rhetorical quality of speech acts flows precisely from this play of equivalence and difference, synonymity and antonymity within its chains of uttered signifiers. The inventiveness of highly rhetorical speech acts is only a limit case of this play of identity and difference. Their capacity to

persuade is greatly enhanced by their juxtaposition of formerly incompatible signifiers, whose new resemblance not only appears credible but also produces novel, hitherto unrecognised meanings. The potential "impertinence" of juxtaposing two or more signifiers (e.g. "gay power" or "property is theft") is overcome, with the novel consequence that the routinised interpretations of normally functioning communication is reinforced or ruptured. The "semantic dissonance" within the chains of signification of this rhetoric is effectively resolved. The particular case of rhetoric discussed here serves to illustrate a point of more general interest to a radical theory of public life. Contrary to Habermas, it must be reiterated that the "formal" effects of language can never be expunged from communicative action. Certainly, as Habermas pointed out against Dilthey, language always serves as a key medium of public-political action. Language can indeed be described as the intersubjective ground upon which all speaking actors tread as they intentionally articulate themselves in words, bodily expressions and actions. Under conditions of autonomous public life, as Habermas also observes, this linguistic ground frequently comes to have a more distinct reality for its speaking and acting "authors". By virtue of its semantically productive or rhetorical qualities, however, this ground is better described as a drifting terrain. Even within autonomous spheres of "public, unrestricted discussion free from domination," speaking actors continue to move through chronically ambiguous and slippery linguistic terrains. The formal "density" of these terrains can never be reduced to zero, as Habermas' theoretical defence of "rational speech" implies. Democratic public life can never take the form of an ideal speech situation wherein competent intersubjective communication is liberated from the dangers of being overtaken by the unforeseen, and unhindered by the formal or "objective" structures of linguistic communication itself. Public actors can never self-consciously bind, gag and rationally control their language of interaction. They are never able, in short, to achieve fully a transparent, rational consensus purged of ambiguity.

XII.

The Problem of Rational Speech II: Aesthetics

The universal pragmatics' privileging of "rational speech" and the corresponding devaluation of "symbolic action" produces a third fetter upon its political potential, namely, its bracketing of questions concerning politics and the "aesthetic" dimension of communicative action. It is not true that Habermas entirely ignores or neglects such questions. In his more recent writings, he speaks occasionally of "aesthetic forms of expression."[136] And especially in his reflections on Adorno and Benjamin's theses on "post-auratic" art [see essay two], he rightly observes that the administrative production of culture under late capital-

ist conditions is continually marked with unintended consequences which may be rich in democratic potential. The bureaucratic manufacture and distribution of commercialised art also produces threatening artistic countercultures. Their quest for "meaningful" or novel aesthetic experiences oftentimes provokes open criticism of the culture industry and its implication within the late capitalist political economy.

Whether or not these countercultures can facilitate the growth of radical movements and autonomous public spheres remains a rather obscure theme in Habermas' writings. This obscurity concerning the political potential of "post-auratic" art is not fortuitous, but is a consequence, rather, of the universal pragmatics' fetishism of rational, consensual speech. It can also be argued that this vagueness is an unforeseen consequence of the universal pragmatics'—admittedly justified—turn against Marcuse's "quantitative" model of repression and emancipation.[137] Marcuse, it will be recalled, typically contrasts the vision of sensuous tranquillity with the aggressive efficiency of daily life under late capitalist conditions. In opposition to the performance principle of bureaucratic capitalism, Marcuse speaks of liberated human beings coming into their own through the expression of their passions.[138] He defends the possibility of democratic socialism with a "biological" foundation; an individuated, pacified existence, a world freed from surplus, unfree labour and dominated only by peaceful Eros, is anticipated. In support of this possibility of a new "rationality of gratification"[139] in which reason and happiness merge, Marcuse insists that the poetic, erotic language of art has a privileged status. By defending (and preserving the memory of) desires which remain unfulfilled, the work of art flouts the immediacy of the existing reality principle. Both for its producers and its appreciative publics, art is the privileged medium of the sublimation of libidinal fantasies. Art is the formal expression of the imagination, of the psychic content of unconscious drives and wishes. It openly expresses the language of libidinal negations. It is the vehicle of The Great Refusal.[140]

To be sure, Marcuse admits that much bourgeois art exercises an "affirmative", depoliticising function. For example, literature's positing of the freedom and beauty of a "soul" frequently facilitates its readers' surrender to the misery and enslavement of a bureaucratic existence. The potentially rebellious beauty of art tends to become the comforting narcotic of a vulgar daily life; the *promesse de bonheur* of art can only be experienced as an inner freedom.[141] Marcuse nevertheless insists: neither great bourgeois art (such as that of Schiller or Goethe) nor certain tendencies within the avant-garde (e.g. surrealist art and literature of the two decades before World War II) can simply be indicted as apologies for established forms of existence. In spite of their ambivalent consequences, this kind of art remains a decisive moment in the struggle for the sensuous fulfilment of humanity and nature. The moment of truth of even so-called "bourgeois" art thus consists in its anticipation of a liberated future. The most important works of art and literature (Marcuse curiously ignores media such as film) promise a forthcoming era of instinctual gratification, whose possibility late capitalist society must either systematically suppress or "repressively desublimate". Col-

laborating with the subterranean longings and refusals of Eros, the aesthetic dimension is secretly committed to the emancipation of sensibility, imagination and anti-bureaucratic reason.

This defence of the aesthetic dimension, Habermas correctly surmises, is quite compatible with Marcuse's concern to synthesise an "anthropological" perspective with Marxist-theoretical categories. His theory of art and liberation consistently pre-supposes the existence of a species-instinctual "foundation" for peaceful solidarity among human beings. (This species-essence is specified by drawing initially upon Heidegger's existential ontology and, later, upon Freudian metapsychology). Under late capitalist conditions, this foundation—an immanently rebellious, unconscious nature—is hidden away, repressed or falsely sublimated. The primary task of radical politics, according to Marcuse, must therefore be the unfettering of sensuous nature. For this nature already strives for the pacification of existence. Living antagonistically on the margins of the present system of domination, and "older" than individual character structure and institutionalised relations of power, this nature is the enemy of the present and the ally of liberation. Habermas meets this provocative formulation with an equally bold and politically relevant reply. Marcuse's ontological approach, he insists, contains potentially authoritarian and anti-political implications. Certainly, these are not intended by Marcuse. Especially within his last works, there is great emphasis placed upon the importance of "political education" and "radical enlightenment."[142] Nevertheless, Marcuse's postulation of a "biological" foundation which serves as the Archimedean point from which radical politics can take its cue unwittingly leaves itself open to appropriation by self-appointed revolutionary vanguards—whose claims to knowledge of this foundation could in turn serve to justify action *on behalf* of others who are in the here and now evidently less enlightened about their instinctual endowments.[143] According to Habermas, the doctrine of instincts shortcircuits the *theoretical* and *political* problem of generating widespread public reflection upon existing patterns of distorted communication. Marcuse's critical appropriation of Freud is burdened, at the theoretical level, by a "chiliastic trust in a revitalising dynamic of instincts which works through history, finally breaks with history and leaves it behind as what then will appear as prehistory."[144] This rather naïve, chiliastic belief in a future marked by great happiness, universal prosperity and harmonious self-government derives from Marcuse's advocacy of a world governed by an Eros that "naturally" seeks tranquility and delight divorced from all egoistic interest. Habermas correctly insists that this formulation obscures the *political* insight that the genuinely democratic determination of needs could only ever proceed through public argumentation oriented to reaching consensus.

Habermas proceeds from this insistence to a more fundamental theoretical point. Marcuse's presumption that libidinal energy is the avowed enemy of existing relations of domination—his claim that "eros and power may well be contraries"[145]—forgets that such presumptions and even energy drives themselves are *ab ovo* formed within a communicative context. Within Marcuse's theory of liberation (to paraphrase Wittgenstein) the problem of language and

communication goes on holiday. In the view of Habermas' universal pragmatics, Marcuse's metatheory of instincts therefore cannot consistently account for its own possiblity. Such an account could only be generated discursively, that is, within a communicative, language-structured framework.[146] This is a crucial point: pleasure and desire have no objective reality "in themselves". Desire and pleasure cannot be intuitively apprehended, quantified empirically (as Marcuse's references to "basic" and "surplus" repression imply) or somehow known in all their beautiful objectivity. The body and its drives assert themselves, perhaps, in setting limits, the ultimate of which is death. But these limits always and everywhere operate entirely through systems of communicative action. Habermas correctly withdraws his earlier claim against Gadamer: he insists that there is no knowable subterranean reality beyond the realm of communication and its systems of symbolic representation.

This critique of Marcuse's "naturalisation" of public-political reason is unexceptionable. From the point of view of a radical theory of public life, however, this critique does entail at least one serious unintended consequence. Simply, Marcuse's privileging of art as a medium of social and political criticism is displaced, and questions concerning the relationship between autonomous public life and art fall into abeyance. Artistic movements' power to subvert the normalising effects of daily life, their capacity to erotically express the vision of a political life of common involvements, is by implication declared null and void. A converse consequence is of equal seriousness: this bracketing of questions concerning the relationship between art and public life, it can be argued, also by implication draws our attention away from what can be called (following Walter Benjamin[147]) the "aestheticisation" of politics under late capitalist conditions. Habermas' concentration upon consensual, rational communication, that is to say, seriously underestimates the "affirmative", depoliticising effects of the planned merger between "art" and late capitalist daily life.

It is precisely this merger of art and life which prompts the need to think *simultaneously* about questions of emancipatory art and autonomous public spheres. This need was of course first recognised by Benjamin. Echoing Tönnies' and Dewey's concern with the growth of state and corporate production of public opinion, Benjamin proposed that the defeat of pacifism and its revolutionary potential had been considerably aided by the state's strategies of manufacturing and deploying supplies of glory and militaristic idealism. It was Benjamin's thesis that post-World War I attempts to forget the lost war and its total "storms of steel" continued this celebration, even though no real enemy existed. The novelty of this celebration lay in its reliance upon the administrative harnessing of the "symbolic depths" of existence itself. This "post-war war effort" (*Nachkrieg*) by no means sustained itself upon the old-fashioned and withering phrases of rational-calculating militarism. In place of old-fashioned militarism, the imperialist forces of emergent Nazism now sought the administrative production and celebration of a more threatening heroism, one which claimed to express the vital inner impulses of solitary, responsible individuals. In Benjamin's view, this heroism could only serve to aesthetically legitimise the monstrous senselessness

of battles to come. Unless checked by revolution, strategies of war could permanently sustain themselves upon allegations about the collossal energies of life. War could be represented as sport, as "record-setting", as synonymous with taking a stance. German fascism, as Benjamin and others later stressed, did indeed develop this authoritarian merger of art and bureaucratic politics to the point of near techncial perfection.[148] Fascist "public life" became the site of official orchestrations of "heroic festivity" (Thomas Mann). In accordance with the Führer-principle, celebrations, artificially-created customs and folklore, staged ceremonies and party conventions formed a grandiosely erected stage—on the foundations of which the practice of systematic terror unfolded. Political life became a permanent and all-embracing work of art. Such administrative efforts to aestheticise political life continue right through to the present day. Certainly, the utilised means and the outcomes themselves are rather different. Under late capitalist conditions, nevertheless, it still cannot be admitted officially that politics has so few givens, so many dangerous possibilities and so few perfect situations, that no single leader or group of leaders has knowledge, skill and prudence sufficient for all situations. The heads of the body politic therefore continue to present themselves to their "publics" as characters charged with remedying the complexities and imperatives of political decision making. Relying upon new technologies of reproduction and drawing upon the pioneering efforts of those who manufacture the "beautiful illusions" of capitalist production and consumption, political authority typically casts itself as spotlighted performers. Mounting an elaborately-prepared stage, this authority seeks to transform politics into showbusiness, the art of seducing a public audience of spectators supposedly dispossessed of their critical faculties and collective power to speak and act. The *dramatis personae* appear in many and varied costumes. Their make-up is always expertly applied. They are at all times surrounded by a cast of thousands. Their lines are carefully rehearsed to elicit maximum audience approval (with perhaps an encore). The "populist" performers are reputed to lead down to earth, simple lives, or are known publicly to associate privately with hip media figures. Their more conservative counterparts present themselves as decent family men, or as stern nurses concerned only for the long-term health of their patients. One or two are even lucky enough to hail directly from Hollywood.

These examples of the aestheticisation of political life make it clear that nowadays the relationship between art and daily life is fundamentally a matter of politics. By contrast with earlier phases of the modern, bourgeois world, late capitalist systems integrate art and bureaucratic relations of power to an unprecedented degree. This development means that a theory of autonomous public life cannot simply bracket or ignore the importance of aesthetic modes of communication, as Habermas' universal pragmatics proposes. Nor can this theory sustain itself upon the old-fashioned demand to integrate or reunite art with everyday life. Forgetting that all late capitalist systems *already* effect this normalising integration, this demand may in fact unwittingly serve the existing conditions of depoliticisation. Accordingly, a theory of autonomous public life must acknowledge that "political art" cannot be conceived as the mere underling

of struggles for public life. Under late capitalist conditions, this theory must recognise that emancipatory art has been forced into more complex and subtle strategies. The indispensable functions of this art have evidently become many-sided, and especially include the "denaturalisation" of bureaucratic administration, the calling into question of the normalising art with which this administration collaborates and, even, finally, the criticism of autonomous public movements themselves.

XIII

Public Life as Consensual Communication?

It can be observed, finally, that Habermas' almost exclusive concern with consensual forms of communication also reinforces the abstract-formal character of the theory of universal pragmatics. This theoretical privileging of consensual action produces a deep silence about the possible relations, in public-political life at least, between consensual action and forms of purposive-rational action (such as civil disobedience) which are oriented to the successful attainment of political goals through the skilful organisation of appropriate means. This silence seems to be not entirely fortuitous. It evidently issues from three sources: the unsucessful analogy Habermas attempted to draw between the psychoanalytic therapy situation and public speaking and acting; the critical theory's continuing dependence [discussed in essay three] upon the fundamental distinction between the realms of necessity (work as purposive-rational action) and potential freedom (communication as unconstrained mutual recognition); and, finally, the strong tendency within recent versions of the theory of universal pragmatics to assume—for the purposes of analysis—that controversy, conflict and purposive-rational action must be granted an ancillary status, that the latter forms of activity can in general be analysed as *derivative* of speech acts governed by a mutual will to reach consensus.[149]

As a consequence of these presumptions, the theory of universal pragmatics gives off the impression—certainly not directly intended by Habermas—that purposive-rational action is best represented as "pre-political". To be sure, this impression operates for the most part at the analytic level. In his political writings, Habermas is acutely aware of the ubiquity of power struggles and the difficulties of institutionally securing action oriented to reaching mutual agreement. Under pressure from these three presumptions, however, the concept of "public, unrestricted discussion, free from domination" tends to become identical with consensual interaction. By virtue of its assumptions and silences, the universal pragmatics implicitly revives a dualism familiar from the time of Greek antiquity: that which contrasts the peace, deliberation and persuasion of the *polis*

with the extra-public realm, wherein "the strong did what they could, and the weak suffered what they must" (Thucydides). Unrestricted public discussion and action, it is inferred, does not properly extend beyond the boundaries of unbroken, intersubjective communication. This misleading inference carries two further implications, which are sometimes explicitly developed in Habermas' writings: first, that spheres of life properly guided by purposive-rational action (i.e. work) are to be permanently depoliticised [a strong prejudice of Habermas' early works, as argued in section five] and, conversely, that purposive-rational action has little rightful place within autonomous public spheres. To live a genuinely public life, according to this latter inference, consists in deciding everything exclusively through good-natured argument and deliberation oriented to reaching understanding. Not the skill and cunning of strategic and instrumental action, but words and persuasion is the distinguishing mark of public life.

Within his writings on ego development Habermas openly embraces this second inference.[150] Amending Kohlberg's theory of the stages of moral consciousness, he proposes that at the level of a universal ethics of speech (*Sprachethik*)—a level of "complete reciprocity"—competently speaking actors would realise "a good and just life". Having reached this highest stage of ego development, they could distinguish between heteronomy and autonomy, differentiate and choose between particular and general ethical principles and interpretations of needs and, in general, respect the dignity of others as "individuated persons"—all through consensual practical discourse. From the standpoint of a radical theory of public life, this *implied* eschatology of non-violent, consensual forms of communication is most inadequate. This is because it brackets the insight that public-political action, to employ Apel's term, must also be centrally concerned with dialectic-strategic rationality.[151] Public-political action is properly concerned with the *strategies* of reaching morally virtuous ends through processes of deliberation and action. In order to speak and act prudently, to engage in "good action", public beings must concern themselves with *both* means and ends. Habermas is no doubt aware of this point: but his failure to analyze this old (Aristotelean) insight deepens the abstractness of his acount of communication, and thereby leaves untreated two crucial political problems.

In the first place, it cannot be presumed that the coordinated "instrumentalisation" of the opponents of genuine public life—their constitution as "objects" to be controlled—is always and everywhere inadmissible. As has already been proposed above (section seven), the defence of autonomous public life cannot consistently cling to the illusion that the resistance of ruling groups to radical social movements can be overcome through speech acts oriented to reching understanding. Especially in the face of existing violations of public life (by military-political elites who threaten total annihilation through war, for instance), this presumption leaves itself open to the charge of *naïveté*. The emancipatory potential of the principle of modest reformism and restrained gradualism, it must be reaffirmed, cannot be assumed to apply everywhere and at all times. Post-modern public life will not necessarily be the cumulative result of

progressive evolution, of the peaceful "determinate negation" of late capitalist society and its institutionalised depoliticisation. The historical appearance of democratic, public life cannot be represented as a largely consensual process. The struggle for autonomous public life, as many of its defenders already understand, is synonymous with the desire for a genuinely different political order; this struggle is in certain respects a demand for a radical (as distinct from a modestly "determinate") negation of the present. Oppressed groups' choice to employ forms of instrumental and strategic action from below against their oppressors is bound up with this concern to "jump out" of the present stream of the historical continuum. These groups must no doubt acknowledge the tuth of the Weberian insight that those who rely upon force and other means of purposive-rational action necessarily contract with diabolical powers.[152] They must also recognise the validity of Weber's supplementary maxim: "in numerous instances the attainment of 'good' ends is bound to the fact that one must be willing to pay the price of using morally dubious means or at lest dangerous ones—and facing the possibility or even the probability of evil ramifications."[153] From the vantage point of theoretical defences of autonomous public life, it is indeed not always true that "evil" follows only from "evil" and "good" only from "good". Under certain conditions, theoretically-informed instrumental and strategic action *may* be vindicable, providing it prudently prepares the way for the realisation of democratic forms of life committed to the overcoming of heteronomy.

This point highlights a second problem left untreated by the theory of universal pragmatics. Habermas' failure to analyse the relationship between purposive-rational action and consensual public life, it can be argued, suppresses the point that hybrid forms of purposive-rational action—especially political disobedience—are a necessary condition of autonomous public life. Under post-modern conditions, no doubt, the defenders of public life would seek to maximise friendly argumentation. This public life would presuppose, on a vastly expanded scale, that speaking and acting subjects collectively recognise political life as a process of construction of mutual agreements and self-imposed obligations. In respect of this mutuality, as Hannah Arendt emphasises,[154] public life enhances the sheer joy of politicking. Public life can be a community-enhancing process, whose participants can experience a certain *joie de vivre* (and, of course, its opposite: tragedy). Mirth is not an embarrassing, diversionary path leading away from the royal road of rational politics. To act politically is not to adopt the posture of a *Schwindelfrei*. Political beings are not those whose sober maturity and communicative competence frees them from all spontaneity, eroticism and giddiness. Political action within autonomous public spheres can neither be described as a joyless sacrifice for higher "private" ends, nor as a solemn obligation due from every individual.

Thriving upon the playfulness of argumentation, public life deepens the joys (and disappointments) of persuading and being persuaded, of acting together through words and deeds. Under post-modern conditions, in sum, the freedom of publics, who would be from all walks of life, would consist in their self-gratifying determination to speak and act, to listen and be heard. Assured of their capacity

to share in public business and therefore to change or preserve the world through their own efforts, publics would develop a taste for this freedom, and could not be subjectively "happy" without it.

It is nevertheless true that autonomous public life could never be identical with joyful speech and action oriented to reaching mutual understanding. As Habermas' consensus theory of truth itself implies, the democratic formation and administration of public policy presupposes that agreements among publics can always legitimately be reinterpreted, called into question or unconditionally revoked. In respect of this negotiability condition, autonomous public life so to speak prepares itself against the semantic ambiguity (section X) and unintended consequences chronically associated with existing agreements. These agreements must always be understood as open-ended, as re-negotiable.

In cases of unsuccessful re-negotiation or simple disagreement, minorities might well temporarily agree to consent to majoritarian arguments. Yet minorities might also justly insist that their *refusal* to consent is a condition of the maintenance of the "good government" of public life itself. Especially under pressure from resistant and dogmatic majorities, their disobedient action might provide a legitimate challenge to long-standing agreements and institutions now deemed obsolete or restrictive upon public life. Such dissident action constitutes a mode of collective action which defied the distinction between consensual and purposive-rational forms of action. Issuing from a group's prior and mutual agreement about the need to change, restore or preserve the *status quo*, non-violent direct action can be seen as a form of voluntary association[155] which is in turn directed instrumentally against the action of others. This purposive-rational moment of disobedience—participants' switching to strategic action or their attempt to totally break off communication with others—cannot be deemed marginal within a theory of public life. Contrary to much contemporary liberal-democratic discourse,[156] disobedience can neither be analysed as an unthreatening symbolic act addressed merely to the "sense of justice" (Rawls) of others, nor as a militant, obstructive action which, by virtue of its threats to the polity must always be punished.

The theory and practice of disobedience, it must be stressed, remains crucial to any defence of public life. This is not merely or even primarily because skillfully organised campaigns of obstruction are capable of *effectively* securing changes in public policy. There is a more important, counterfactually-deduced reason. A political life structured through the principle of negotiated consent *implies* disobedience. The "right to disobey" constitutes a necessary condition of any voluntary political association. Any deviation from this maxim (and, indeed, any "disobedience" in favour of its subversion) would otherwise generate the possibility of authoritarian restrictions upon public discussion and association. Dissidence would be relegated to a merely hypothetical possibility, or to the status of a virtual prerogative, to be exercised by particular interests only on the condition that their disobedient actions would result naturally and properly in their punishment.

XIV

Conclusion

To the aforegoing discussion of several quandaries and silences within the theory of universal pragmatics can be added, finally, a few concluding remarks on its increasingly abstract-formal character. This abstract-formalism, which seriously thwarts the political potential of the theory is sensed by a growing number of commentators.[157] These critics have nevertheless usually failed to grasp that this abstract-formalism does not simply issue from Habermas' "insufficient" treatment of "concrete" political questions. As this essay has attempted to show in some detail, rather, the political impotence of the theory of universal pragmatics is a *necessary* effect of difficulties internal to its priorities and strategies of argumentation—its initially misleading comparison of therapy and political enlightenment; its inability to explicate a theory of distorted communication; and its conceptual privileging of abstractly-conceived, "consensual action".

Consequent upon these difficulties, or so it can be argued, the theory of universal pragmatics has been compelled to rely increasingly upon the strategy of "rational reconstruction".[158] Habermas explains that this strategy is neither identical with formal logic analysis nor empirical-analytic observation of the behaviour of law-like, "natural" events. By virtue of its self-reference to the domain of communication, rational reconstruction is a species of understanding [cf. Habermas' fundamental distinction between observation and understanding, outlined in section three]. To "rationally reconstruct" communicative action is to systematically analyse and explicate its underlying presuppositions. This involves defending the distinction between "deep" and "surface" structures of communication.[159] Guided by this distinction, reconstructive understanding seeks to penetrate the surface phenomena of communicative activity. It seeks to discover the rules that actually determine the production of these surface communicative phenomena. It therefore directs its enquiries toward the intuitive, patterned competencies of speaking and acting subjects. It seeks to mimetically describe and then explicate the deeper meaning and implications of the fact that speaking actors are always embedded within a rule-governed universe of symbolically-mediated communications.

Of course, as this essay has proposed, a central difficulty within such reconstructive interrogation is that it tends to presume that actually existing forms of communication are synonymous with abstractly-conceived, consensual action! It misleadingly supposes that it can articulate, in the form of "objective and explicit knowledge"[160], that which *hypothetically competent* subjects are assumed to already intuitively know how to do. As Apel has also pointed out, Habermas' version of communication theory seriously overlooks the possibility of subjects' *refusal* or *inability* to enter into action oriented to reaching understanding. In

view of this oversight, it is not surprising that the communication theory's quest for knowledge of the "rule consciousness of competent speakers" assumes the position of a will-o'-the-wisp. It holds fast to the unconvincing belief that it can gradually and successively discover what it is about by first developing exact arguments only with reference to hypothetical, "clear cases" of communicative action which are assumed to be *typical* of everyday life under late capitalist conditions. Misleadingly suspending consideration of all actually existing deviations from its "clear case" principles, it mistakenly believes these can later be cumulatively extended to so-called "borderline cases".[161].

Under the strain of this illusory reconstructivism, the political potential of the theory of universal pragmatics is seriously eroded. Habermas' long-standing insistence that the ultimate goal of critical theory is the political enlightenment of its addressees—the analysis and clarification of their needs and the positions they occupy within the contradictory systems of late capitalism—begins to languish. The "advocacy" role of his project is crippled. This is true in two interrelated senses. In the first place, the theories of universal pragmatics and late capitalism become disconnected from each other. This separation results in a suppression of Tönnies' and Dewey's earlier thesis that a critique of public life must be centrally concerned with the tendency for contemporary public life and opinion to be manufactured by organised powers bent on promoting their own particular interests. This disconnection of the theories of universal pragmatics and late capitalism also has the consequence of bracketing some earlier suggestive theses [analyzed in section two] concerning the political potential of the administrative and cultural contradiction of late capitalist systems. Caught up in its reconstructivism, the theory of universal pragmatics places such theses to one side. Questions about the extent to which the crisis tendencies of late capitalism serve as a precondition of the emergence of alternative public spheres fall into obscurity.

There is a second sense in which the reliance on rational reconstruction undermines Habermas' earlier advocacy of free and systematic communication. The theory of universal pragmatics, to speak plainly, tends more and more to express itself over the heads of its potential adherents. Problems pertinent to the struggle for autonomous public life are subjected to a request: *exeunt omnes*. The theory of universal pragmatics offers few insights into questions of practical struggle. Its account of the concept of communicative competence is vague and ungrounded. There is little consideration of concrete strategies which might facilitate a synthesis of existing opposition movements' sensed needs with new forms of public institutions. There is not even a clear indication of the groups to which the critical theory of communication is addressed.[162]

All late capitalist socities, it is true, are currently marked by the absence of powerful, unified and highly articulate opposition movements. These social formations nevertheless evidence, indeed generate, an array of important autonomous movements. In its present reconstructivist form, Habermas' theory of universal pragmatics seems far removed from these day to day concerns. This estrangement is only exacerbated by this theory's more recent penchant for

analysing three distinct "levels" of the relationship between theory and practice. These levels are said to include: first, researchers' elaboration of ideology-critical truth claims through discursive argumentation guided by the strategy of "rational reconstruction"; second, efforts at extending the "boundaries" of this argumentation, so as to include additional oppositional groups; and, third, attempts to deploy "in practice" or to "institutionalise" such discourse through prudent political struggle.[163] This typology no doubt has a certain analytic plausibility and political value. Under the weight of the critical theory's reconstructivism and abstract-formal concerns, however, its distinctions also obscure—to speak in old-fashioned terms—the possible mediations between theory and practice. As a consequence, Habermas' political prescriptions frequently rely on unhelpful truisms. "The enlightenment which produces radical understanding", Habermas typically observes, "is always political."[164] Under pressure from the critical theory's several internal difficulties, such prescriptions assume the status of a moralising imperative. Their efforts to defend the principle of discussion, free from domination as *possible* and *desirable* are considerably weakened.

It is true that the argumentation of the universal pragmatics turns our attention away from factually imposed, pseudo-consensuses to the possibility of genuine political agreements. It correctly emphasises that the authenticity of political agreements and compromises reached without violence depends upon both the competency of those who decide and the conditions under which their agreements and compromsies are reached. The theory of universal pragmatics therefore heightens our awareness of the patterns of bureaucratic exploitation and pseudo-communication within the contemporary situation. It reminds us also that politics is not necessarily synonymous with struggles between partial and conflicting interests oriented only by the logic of ruthlessness and profit, partisanship and the lust for dominion. Like the earlier arguments of Tönnies and Dewey, it strengthens hopes for a qualitatively different and better political order. Negatively speaking, it prompts further reflection upon the possibility of challenging heteronomous forms of power preserved through monopolies of the means of assertation, disputation and persuasion; more positively, it anticipates pluralistic and self-interrogating forms of life, through whose free and systematic communication speaking and acting subjects could enter into mutually binding commitments. Above all, its formulations serve to clarify and focus a range of difficult distinctions and problems pertaining to public life. The communication theory rightly emphasises, for example, that discussions of autonomous public life must seek to develop a theory of those mechanisms of "pseudo-communication" which serve to induce the servile dependency of speaking actors upon each other.

Granted these achievements, it is nonetheless evident that the excessively abstract-formal claims of the universal pragmatics are couched in the language of tragedy: they are beyond the reach of ordinary actors within the present. It is implied that these participants must act *as if* the conditions of autonomous public life had already been established. Those who struggle for public life seem no

longer to be engaged in discretionary action, in processes of self-invention through discussion, risk-taking and action within particular power situations. What is more, these actors are supposed to speak and interact in highly artificial ways: it is inferred that autonomous public spheres are properly devoid of body politics, art, rhetoric, festivity, and disobedience. In short, a range of substantive theoretical and political questions—from ideology and disobedience to those concerning art and rhetoric—remain undiscussed. It is to these kinds of central political questions that future discussions of the theory of public life must and will no doubt attend.

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Notes

117. *CES*, p. 3.

118. *KK*, pp. 118-231; *CES*, pp. 69-94; "Zur Einführing" in Jürgen Habermas et. al., *Entwicklung des Ichs* (Köln, 1977), pp. 9-30.

119. According to Habermas' more recent (and somewhat hyper-analytic) formulations (cf. *CES*, pp. 209-210, n.2), consensual action, in which interacting speakers explicitly and agreeably acknowledge the structuring of their communications by the four validity claims, is only one form of social action, which also includes (a) *communicative action* which is explicitly oriented to reaching understanding (verständigungsorientierten Handelns); (b) *discourse*, in which such agreement is temporarily suspended, even though participants retain their co-operative disposition toward each other; (c) *strategic action*, in which actors openly and explicitly adopt an unco-operative, instrumental orientation towards others; (d) *manipulative action*, through which the manipulators *deliberately* deceive others about their apparently communicative conduct; and (e) *systematically distorted communication*, in which participants typically deceive each other about their interactions.

120. *Ibid.*, pp. 4, 35-41, and 208, note 1.

121. *Ibid.*, pp. 24-5.

122. Of great relevance here is Walter Benjamin's allegation about the threatened art of embodied storytelling in "The Storyteller", *Illuminations* (London, 1973), p. 108, and his references (with Asja Lacis) to the "fastidiously specialized eroticism" of the Neapolitans, in "Naples",

Reflections (New York and London, 1978), p. 173.

123. "Toward a Theory of Communicative Competence", pp. 121-22; cf. *CES*, pp. 1 and 38 (a reference to propositionally differentiated gestures).

124. *KHI*, p. 146, and, more generally, chs. 7-8.

125. *Ibid.*, pp. 163ff. Note that Dilthey (following Nietzsche and Bergson) speaks of "experience" as "lived experience". This meaning is not identical with the empiricist sense of experience as *Erfahrung*.

126. *KHI*, p. 168; cf. also his discussions of Wittgenstein in *ZL*, pp. 220ff., and in *PPP*, pp. 141-6.

127. *KHI*, p. 168; cf. pp. 171, 172 and "Towards a Theory of Communicative Competence", p. 121. A similar point has been stressed by Erving Goffman, *The Presentation of the Self in Everyday Life* (Garden City, 1959), p. 2.

128. See especially: Klaus Doerner, *Madmen and the Bourgeoisie* (Oxford, 1981); Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality* (New York, 1978); *Discipline and Punish* (London, 1977); *Power/Knowledge* (Brighton, 1980); "Governmentality", *I and C*, 6 (Autumn, 1979), pp. 5-21; "War in the Filigree of Peace", *The Oxford Literary Review*, vol. 4, 2, pp. 15-19; and Jacques Donzelot, *The Policing of Families* (New York, 1979).

129. *CES*, p. 41.

130. John R. Searle, *Speech Acts*, *op. cit.*, pp 17-18; *CES*, pp. 5-6, 30-1, 46.

131. *ZL*, p. 220; cf. *CES*, pp. 67-8 and *KHI*, p. 157.

132. Ferdinand de Saussure, *Course in General Linguistics* (New York, 1966). According to Saussure, particular speakers produce utterances or messages (*parole*), but only inasmuch as they are already embedded within a primordial linguistic code or set of codes (*language*). Especially when extended to entities larger than the sentence, this dualism had the effect (among others) of bracketing speech act events in favour of a concern with synchronically co-ordinated systems of linguistic structures. By no means conceived as coterminous with "forms of life" (Wittgenstein), language is analysed as if it were a self-sufficient ensemble of inner relationships between signs.

133. Cf. *CES*, pp. 5, 67-8.

134. *Ibid.*, p. 40; cf. John R. Searle, *Speech Acts*, *op. cit.*, pp. 19-21, 68, 87-8.

135. Aristotle, "De Poetica", in *Introduction to Aristotle*, ed. Richard McKeon (Chicago and London, 1973), section 21. The movement to radically transform the classical tradition of theories of metonymy and rhetoric can be dated from the work of I.A. Richards, *The Philosophy of Rhetoric* (Oxford, 1936). Subsequent works include those of Max Black, *Models and Metaphors* (Ithaca, 1962); Monroe Beardsley, "Metaphor", *Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (New York, 1967), vol. 5, pp. 284-289; Colin Turbayne, *The Myth of Metaphor* (Columbia, South Carolina, 1970). I have drawn especially upon the "tension" theory of metaphor proposed by Paul Ricoeur in *Interpretation Theory: Discourse and the Surplus of Meaning* (Fort Worth, 1976), ch. 3 and *The Rule of Metaphor: Multi-Disciplinary Studies of the Creation of Meaning in Language* (London, 1978).

136. Cf. *CES*, p. 93; "A Reply to My Critics", p. 270.

137. See Herbert Marcuse, "On Hedonism", in *Negations: Essays in Critical Theory* (Boston, 1968); *Eros and Civilisation* (Boston, 1955); *GHM*, pp. 9-62; *An Essay on Liberation* (Boston, 1969), ch. 2; and "Psychic Thermidor and the Rebirth of Rebellious Subjectivity", *Berkeley Journal of* Sociology, vol. xxv (1980).

138. "Some Social Implications of Modern Technology" in *Studies in Philosophy and Social Science*, vol. 9 (1941), p. 438; cf. *An Essay on Liberation*, *op. cit.*, ch. 2.

139. *Eros and Civilisation*, *op. cit.*, p. 205.

140. "Preface", *Reason and Revolution* (Boston, 1960), p. x. This thesis first appears in his earliest work (on novels whose favoured protagonists are rebellious artists), *Der Deutsche Künstler-roman* (1922), in *Schriften, I* (Frankfurt am Main, 1978). It is repeated in many others, including *Eros and Civilisation*, *op. cit.*; *Counterrevolution and Revolt* (Boston, 1972), ch. 3; and *The Aesthetic Dimension* (Boston, 1978). In these works, Marcuse radicalises the thesis presented by Freud in "Formulations Regarding the Two Principles in Mental Functioning" [1911], in *A General Selection from the Works of Sigmund Freud*, ed. J. Rickman (Garden City, 1957), pp. 38-45. According to Freud, there exists a biological and psychological tie between the repressed instinctual energies, the pleasure principle (which, in the face of the dominant reality principle, continues to rule the repressed instincts), phantasy (the wish for immediate gratification), and art, which allows for the full play of erotic phantasies.

141. This is the (somewhat exceptional) theme of "The Affirmative Character of Culture", in *Negations*, *op. cit.*, pp. 88-103.

142. Cf. *Counterrevolution and Revolt*, *op. cit.*, p. 132, and "Theorie und Praxis", in *Zeit-Messungen* (Frankfurt, 1975), pp. 32-33: "When ideology itself, reason itself become means of domination which are reproduced by the individuals themselves, then the necessity exists for a *counter*-psychology, a *counter*-sociology, a *counter*-rationality, a *counter*-education."

143. This allegation informs the amusing exchange with Marcuse on the problem of environmental pollution in *GHM*, pp. 32-3, and underpins Habermas' more critical assessment of the student movement (and its alleged inclination to "free political activism from the painful hesitations of moral-practical reasoning" [Psychic Thermidor and the Rebirth of Rebellious Subjectivity", *op. cit.*, pp. 10-11]); cf. also *PH*, and the student response to his allegations about their "left-fascist" tendencies in *Die Linke antwortet Jürgen Habermas* (Frankfurt am Main, (1968).

144. "Psychic Thermidor and the Rebirth of Rebellious Subjectivity", *op. cit.*, p. 9. This chiliasm is evident in "Art as a Form of Reality", *New Left Review*, 74 (July-August, 1972), pp. 51-8, where Marcuse defends the Kantian concept of *interesseloses Wohlgefallen* (i.e., delight or pleasure divorced from all interest, desire, inclination).

145. *One Dimensional Man* (Boston, 1964), p. 235.

146. Cf. "Habermas Talking", p. 53, and "Psychic Thermidor and the Rebirth of Rebellious Subjectivity", *op. cit.*, p. 10: "If rebellious subjectivity had to owe its rebirth to something that is beyond—a too deeply corrupted—reason, it is hard to explain why some of us should at all be in a position to recognize this fact and to give reasons in defence of it." The trajectory of this argument parallels Michel Foucault's critique of the "repressive hypothesis" in *A History of Sexuality*, *op. cit.*

147. Walter Benjamin, "Theorien des deutschen Faschismus" (1930), in *Gesammelte Schriften*, vol. 3 (Frankfurt am Main, 1972), pp. 238-250.

148. "Epilogue: The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction", in *Illuminations*, *op. cit.*, 243-244. Compare Brecht's analysis of the theatrical aspects of the relationship between Hitler and the masses ("Über die Theatralik des Faschismus" in *Gesammelte Werke*, vol. xvi, [Frankfurt am Main, 1967], pp. 558-568) and, more recently: Martin Jürgens, "Der Staat als Kunstwerk. Bemerkungen zur Ästhetisierung der Politik", *Kursbuch*, 20 (1970), pp. 119-139, and Rainer Stollmann, "Fascist Politics as a Total Work of Art: Tendencies of the Aesthetization of Political Life in National Socialism", *New German Critique*, 14 (Spring, 1978), pp. 41-60.

149. *CES*, p. 1.

150. *Ibid.*, pp. 78ff, and *LC*, p. 95.

151. Karl-Otto Apel, "Types of Rationality Today", in Theodore F. Geraets (ed.) *Rationality Today* (Ottawa, 1979), pp. 336ff.

152. *From Max Weber*, p. 123.

153. *Ibid.*, p. 121. Compare Bertolt Brecht's well-known advice on the political complexities of the means-end relationship:

"You who will emerge from the flood
To which we have gone under
Remember
When you speak of our failings
The dark time too
Which you have escaped

For we went, changing countries oftener than our shoes
Through the wars of classes, despairing
When, there was injustice only, and no rebellion.

And yet we know:
Hatred, even of meanness
Contorts the features.
Anger, even against injustice
Makes the voice hoarse. Oh we
Who wanted to prepare the ground for friendliness
Could not ourselves be friendly"

"To Those Born Later", *Brecht: Poems 1913-1956.*

154. *On Revolution* (Harmondsworth, 1973), chs. 3, 6, and *Crises of the Republic* (New York, 1972), p. 203. This theme of "public joy" is also emphasised in Rousseau's account of public festivals in *Politics and the Arts. Letter to M. D'Alembert on the Theatre* (Ithaca, 1973), section xi. Free publics—Rousseau here offered his own Geneva as a paragon—could only flourish in a truly festive atmosphere. The public would assemble often, forming among themselves sweet, communicative bonds of pleasure. Public carnivals would thereby resemble the gathering of a big family (replete with the patriarchalism which Rousseau continually defended, thereby contradicting his claims on behalf of this public's universal accessibility). Before the eyes of the public, the young could fall in love and all could enter into cordial and passionate dalliances.

Authentic joy, Rousseau urged, could only ever be achieved as public joy: "Plant a stake crowned with flowers in the middle of a square; gather the people together there, and you will have a festival. Do better yet; let the spectators become an entertainment to themselves; make them actors themselves; do it so that each sees and loves himself in the others so that all will be better united" (p. 126). Stripped of its patriarchalism and romantic identitarianism, this old Rousseauean insight remains crucial: genuine political action always contains a moment of mirth.

155. Hannah Arendt, *Crises of the Republic, op. cit.*, pp. 49-102.

156. Cf John Rawls (*A Theory of Justice* [London, 1973], secs. 55, 57, 59), for whom civil disobedience, unlike "organized forcible resistance", serves merely to "warn and admonish" the sense of justice of the majority, who nevertheless retain the powers of inflicting legal/penal consequences upon those who dissent. For criticisms of contemporary liberalism as a self-contradictory discourse which analyses disobedience as both justified and punishable, see: Carole Pateman, *The Problem of Political Obligation* (Chichester, 1979), especially pp. 55-60, 161-2; Brian Barry, *The Liberal Theory of Justice* (Oxford, 1973), pp. 151-3; and G. J. Schochet, "The Morality of Resisting the Penalty", in V. Held et. al. (eds.), *Philosophy and Political Action* (Oxford, 1972).

157. Cf. the pertinent comments of David Held in "Crisis Tendencies Legitimation and the State", in John B. Thompson and David Held (eds.), *Habermas: Critical Debates* (London and Basingstoke, 1982), pp. 181-195.

158. This strategy explicitly draws upon the account of explicative discourse presented by H. Schnädelbach, *Reflexion und Diskurs* (Frankfurt am Main, 1977), pp. 277-336.

159. Cf. *CES*, pp. 24, 12 and 16, where rational reconstructions are said to "correspond precisely to the rules that are operatively effective in the object domain [of communication]—that is, to the rules that actually determine the production of surface structures".

160. *Ibid.*, p. 15.

161. *Cf. Ibid.*, pp. 13, 19, 213, note 41, and "A Reply to My Critics", p. 235. Habermas' adoption of the "clear case" principle draws upon D. Wunderlich, *Grundlagen der Linguistik* (Hamburg, 1974), p. 209, and John R. Searle, *Speech Acts, op. cit.*, pp. 55-56. K.O. Apel's reservations about this principle are expressed in "The *a priori* of the communication community and the foundations of ethics", in *Towards a Transformation of Philosophy*, trans. Glyn Adey and David Frisby (London, Boston and Henley, 1980), pp. 274-5, 296-7. Mary Hesse has similarly argued that the theory of universal pragmatics cannot generalise its propositions beyond its highly restricted and normatively chosen "clear case" examples, in *Revolutions and Reconstructions in the Philosophy of Science*, (Brighton, 1980), ch. 9.

162. Habermas indirectly acknowledges these aforementioned difficulties in "Neve soziale Bewegungen. Ein Exkurs", *Aesthetik und Kommunikation*, 45-6, 12 (1981) pp. 158-161.

163. *TP*, p. 32; *CES*, p. 209, note 2.

164. "Summation and Response", p. 128; cf., "Der Universalitätsanspruch der Hermeneutik", p. 158, and *TP*, p. 40: "in a process of enlightenment there can only be participants."

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THE IDÉOLOGUES REVISITED: IDEOLOGY, SCIENCE AND PERFECTIBILITY

Brian Head

The project of creating a language of rational concepts, as the basis for propagating a secular and liberal perspective on social institutions, reached its highest point in the late eighteenth century in the writings of the French idéologues. The problematic of the idéologues was that of the utilitarian social philosophy and linguistic rationalism of the late Enlightenment.[1] According to this perspective, a scientific understanding of human needs and human nature demonstrated that the social and political institutions of the *ancien régime* were incompatible with human reason and freedom. The philosophes and their intellectual descendants, the idéologues, elaborated a philosophy of social perfectibility in which progress was measured in terms of the diffusion of scientific knowledge and its embodiment in rational institutions. These institutions and doctrines were liberal insofar as they were designed to extend individuals' opportunities for satisfying their wants with minimal interference from their fellows or from public authorities. Thus the idéologues advocated representative government, a market-liberal economic system, freedom from censorship, and the rational reform of educational curricula.

Central to this project of social perfectibility was the concept of *idéologie*. This concept, denoting the science of the origin and elaboration of ideas, embodied the dual character of the project: on the negative side, the purging of 'irrational' ideas such as traditional metaphysics, theology, and custom-bound prejudices; and, on the positive side, the dissemination of empirical knowledge and rational morality. This paper discusses the original version of the theory of idéologie, as developed in particular by Destutt de Tracy.[2] The focus is on the political significance of the idéologues' theory of language; a focus justified not only by the intrinsic connection between language/knowledge and politics in the doctrines of the idéologues, but also justified by our own concerns in contemporary social and political theory with notions of communicative competence, undistorted communication, the public sphere, cultural hegemony, and so on. (The latter notions are not directly raised in the present discussion. However, the affinities between the project of the idéologues and that of certain contemporary theorists of language and social reform will not escape the attention of many readers.)

The argument of this paper is that the original theory of idéologie developed as a radical form of linguistic empiricism and sensationalism, harnessed to a rationalist conception of social science and a liberal conception of institution-building. The reform of language was intimately linked to the reform of

institutions; and the control of language/knowledge implied a new role for the idéologues themselves as policy advisors in the process of social reconstruction and as legitimators of the new social order. The 'scientific' reform of language was intended to lead towards a program of civic education and institutional change, wherein the secular intelligentsia sought to establish a new system of rational-legal authority founded on the social application of the science of ideas, idéologie. One difficulty with the idéologues' project was the tension between its elitism and its concern with democratic representation. Another difficulty lay in its failure to examine the social and economic bases of ideas, interests and everyday linguistic usages. Other problems arose from inconsistencies, internal to the theory of idéologie, between an idealist view of the subject — a legacy of the Cartesian *cogito* — and a materialist/empiricist philosophy of the origins of ideas. First, however, it is necessary to establish the meaning and purposes of the concept of idéologie.

The birth of idéologie

Destutt de Tracy and his colleagues in the Institut National assumed, in the light of Condillac's reworking of Lockean empiricism, that accurate knowledge of man and nature could only be guaranteed on the basis of a thorough understanding of man's intellectual operations — the substratum of all knowledge. The theory of idéologie served to provide this guarantee of scientific certitude: the science of the formation and expression of ideas was to become the logos of all the sciences.

Destutt de Tracy presented his colleagues in the Class of Moral and Political Sciences on 20 June 1796 with a problem of nomenclature: what would be the most appropriate name for a "new" science of ideas? Inspired by Lavoisier's and Condillac's concern with nomenclature and conceptual reform, Tracy was keen to find a suitable name for a science which, he claimed, "is so new that it does not yet have a name".[3] The birth of a new science evidently required a baptism; and the best place for this was amid that section of the Class devoted to *Analyse des sensations et des idées*, whose task was precisely the further development of this science. In seeking a new name, Tracy was trying to mark off the scientific study of ideas from the pre-scientific "metaphysics" of the past, just as it had been necessary for astronomy to separate itself from astrology.[4]

Condillac had been content to describe his analytical method as a form of *métaphysique*, albeit with the qualification that scientific or observational procedures should be used in the gathering and analysis of facts. Tracy regarded this term as quite misleading and discredited. The common meaning of *métaphysique*, said Tracy, is

> a science which treats the nature of beings, spirits *(esprits)*, different orders of intelligence, the origin of things and their first cause . . . Moreover, metaphysics strictly means something other than physics: yet the knowledge of the faculties of

> man, as Locke believed, is certainly a part — an important part — of physics, whatever (ultimate) cause one wants to ascribe to these faculties.[5]

Another possibility was the term *psycologie*, which Condillac had sometimes used along with Charles Bonnet. However, Tracy argued that psychology literally meant "science of the soul *(âme)*"; it would not only be presumptuous to claim a knowledge of such an entity, but it would give the false impression that the *savants* of the Institut were investigating first causes. On the contrary, insisted Tracy, "the goal of all your works is the knowledge of effects and their practical consequences".[6] What, then, was to be the name for this behavioural science to which Tracy and his colleagues were devoting their attention?

Tracy recommended his own neologism: "idéologie, ou la science des idées". Idéologie, he said, had a very clear etymological meaning, based on the Greek *eidos* and *logos*, and it made no presupposition about causes. Hence, it was a suitable word to express "the science of ideas which treats ideas or perceptions, and the faculty of thinking or perceiving".[7] This formulation of the content of idéologie was by no means neutral, however, Tracy had not only defined the content in behaviouralist terms as knowledge of "effects" and "consequences", but he had also imported a sensationalist epistemology by his equation of ideas with perceptions and of thinking with perceiving.

> This word has still another advantage — namely, that in giving the name idéologie to the science resulting from the analysis of sensations, you at once indicate the goal and the method; and if your doctrine is found to differ from that of certain other philosophers who pursue the same science, the reason is already given — namely, that you seek knowledge of man only through the analysis of his faculties; you agree to ignore everything which it does not uncover for you.[8]

Not only were the procedures and content of idéologie defined in terms of analysing sensations and intellectual faculties; but sharp limits were placed upon what was held to be knowable. Reliable knowledge, according to Tracy, must be derived from investigating the operations of the mind in forming and expressing ideas.

Science and idéologie

For the idéologues, the science of ideas was the fundamental science, necessary for certifying reliable knowledge in all the other sciences. Tracy's reasoning seems to be as follows: all knowledge, regardless of subject-matter, consists of ideas, and their accuracy depends on our capacity for making a series of precise judgements; knowledge of the processes by which errors arise and by which correct judgements may be formed, is the only basis available for

ensuring the reliability of knowledge. The primacy of idéologie over the other sciences arises from the fact that, in explaining the general operations of our intellectual faculties, it points out the methods for attaining certainty and avoiding error. Or, as Tracy succinctly wrote:

> knowledge of the human understanding is really the only science (*la science unique*); all the others, without exception, are only applications of this knowledge to the diverse objects of our curiosity, and it must be their guiding light.[9]

Tracy gave two main kinds of reasons for the primacy of idéologie — one relating to scientific method, and the other concerning the nature of human experience. The first argument is straightforward: he asserted that all the sciences require a guarantee of their truth content; that scientific methods of observation and analysis are the best procedural guarantees of reliable knowledge; that all the sciences should adopt such methods; and that idéologie is central because it clarifies and recommends the logic of scientific method and explanation.

The second argument, however, is more contentious and surprising. Here, Tracy argued that the science of ideas is fundamental to all our knowledge because the ideas of an individual are constitutive of his experience of the world and of his self.

> In fact, since nothing exists *for us* except through the ideas we have, since our ideas are our whole being, our very existence, the examination of the manner in which we perceive and combine them is alone able to show us in what consists our knowledge, what it encompasses, what are its limits, and what method we must follow in the pursuit of truths in every field.[10]

This doctrine of the primacy of ideas-as-experience is rather anomalous in what is otherwise a philosophy of monist materialism; indeed, the doctrine plays only a background role in Tracy's overall conception of idéologie and the human sciences. However, it suggests the overwhelming residual influence of the Cartesian *cogito* in French philosophy, and served to reinforce the idéologues' conception of the fundamental role of a secular intelligentsia in defining and policing the linguistic and social order.

Despite the ambitious scope of the theory of idéologie, the intention of the idéologues was not to summarize all existing knowledge about man and nature, but to recommend and demonstrate the superiority of a particular method of enquiry: *analyse*. According to this method, as elaborated by Condillac[11] (and adopted by Condorcet, Garat, and Tracy), all phenomena are explicable in terms of their location in an ordered progression from simple to complex facts; this approach is equally applicable to the study of animate and inanimate nature, and to mathematics. Any idea or concept can be "decomposed" by analysis into

its constituent simple ideas which are anchored in sense-experience. Analysis demonstrates how complex ideas are built up from simple elements.

The programmatic aspect of this doctrine implies that any ideas which cannot, in this way, be melted down and reconstituted on the basis of simple sense-experience must be expelled from scientific discourse as ambiguous or meaningless, and propositions based on such ideas are false or at least unprovable. Thus, Tracy asserted that *analyse* and *idéologie* are based upon scrupulous observation of the facts, drawing only those conclusions fully warranted by the evidence, and always preferring "absolute ignorance" to any claim which merely appears to be plausible.[12]

The study of the formation of ideas, based on observation of facts and the analysis of their relationships, was for Tracy *une science expérimentale*.[13] The implication was that there were two kinds of "knowledge" — that modelled on the physical sciences, and that which could hardly be called knowledge at all. Condillac had claimed that there was really only one *science* — the history of nature — which could be subdivided into two, interdependent, parts: that dealing with facts of experience (*physique*), and that dealing with abstractions or reasoning upon these facts.[14] Tracy, in similar fashion, claimed that there are two kinds of "truths", namely, those of "experience or fact", and those of "reasoning or deduction". The deductive or abstract truths, however, had no validity independently of the facts from which they were abstracted. Idéologie, like all positive sciences, required both types of truths. The scientific genius, wrote Tracy, is one who is able to "discover in the facts those important and very general truths which have not yet been detected — but it can never be a question of creating them out of his own head".[15] When idéologie and the human sciences had become more highly developed, he believed, they would be closer to the positive sciences of nature, especially physiology, than to any purely abstract science such as mathematics whose truths are entirely a deductive system abstracted from the objective world.[16]

The problem, in Tracy's conception, was to find a starting point for structuring "the facts" in accordance with the laws governing their interrelationships. Once such a secure starting point had been found, the rest of the scientific system would be unfolded in a series of rigorous deductions. If this were accomplished, the system of truths would be complete and entirely "certain". On the foundation of idéologie, the human sciences, according to Tracy, were capable of certainty in the same manner as the sciences of inanimate nature. A whole system of truths about man and society would follow:

> now that we are certain of the formation and filiation of our ideas, all that will be subsequently said — on the manner of expressing, combining and teaching these ideas, on regulating our sentiments and actions, and directing those of others — will be only the consequences of these preliminaries, and will rest on a constant and invariable base, consistent with the very nature of our being. Now these preliminaries constitute

> what is strictly designated as idéologie; and all the consequences derived from it are the object of grammar, logic, instruction, private morality, public morality (or the *art social*), education and legislation . . . We will go astray in all these sciences only to the extent that we lose sight of the fundamental observations on which they rest.[17]

The secure starting-point for idéologie, the fundamental building-block on which all the "ideological, moral and political sciences" rested, was sense-perception. Idéologie was therefore "a system of truths closely tied together, all stemming from this first indubitable fact, that we know nothing except through our sensations, and that all our ideas are the product of the various combinations we make from these sensations".[18]

Having assumed that the only fact of which one can initially be certain is one's own existence as an *être sensible*, the proposition that "man is a sentient being" became the *première vérité générale* from which Tracy elaborated his entire theory of man and society.[19] Tracy's disingenuous claim that his theories were devoid of presuppositions and that he had elaborated his idéologie purely by observing man's thinking processes,[20] is clearly misleading in the light of his commitment to a sensationalist paradigm of knowledge and a positivist conception of scientific method. The study of the human intelligence, as of the human body, was to be seen as part of natural history: hence Tracy's well-known claim that "idéologie is a part of zoology".[21]

Indeed, Tracy went beyond Locke, in asserting that sense perception and thinking were absolutely identical terms.[22] His purpose was to deny any independent reality to a mental or moral realm, and to assert a naturalistic monism of consciousness and physical environment. Thought (or perceiving/-sensing) consisted of four basic faculties or modes of operation: simple sensibility, memory, judgement and desire. "This manner of envisaging it in these (four) elements unveils for us the whole mechanism".[23] Where Condillac had shown that one faculty of the mind gave rise to the next in a generative manner, Tracy collapsed all such operations into aspects of sensibility, all being "the results of our organization".[24] The structure of the mind was stable and predictable owing to its uniform physiological foundation, but the *content* of ideas was largely determined by experience, education and environment.

The science of signs

In focussing their attention on the behavioural effects and operations of the mind, the idéologues took a special interest in the connections between thought and language, ideas and words, the signified and the sign. Here was a field where they expected idéologie to make great progress. Idéologie, as the *science des sciences*,[25] was directed towards the task of clarifying ideas, making concepts more precise, and thereby promoting scientific understanding of phenomena in every field. The priority of idéologie over the positive sciences of man and

nature depended on a view of language as a conventionalized set of signs expressing our ideas, and a view of scientific advance as dependent on clarifying concepts and rejecting those not validated by sense-experience. The scientific language of "elements" and "compounds" also had the eminent advantage, for the idéologues, of lending itself to what Gillispie has called "a naturalistic pedagogy".[26] Idéologie was seen to provide a grammar and syntax of nature, and a set of procedural rules for finding the basic elements (signs, concepts) of any language. The analysis of language was thus of critical importance for the idéologues, in their dual roles as both scientific observers and as educators of mankind.

A language, according to Destutt de Tracy, is a system of signs whose meanings have been fixed or formalized by the attribution of conventional meaning to each symbol.[27] Some languages or sign-systems are more specialized than others (algebraic notation, for example, or the symbols of chemistry), but all share certain characteristics. First, language is created and sustained as a social phenomenon: it is a kind of collective network through which individuals share experiences and perhaps even contribute to the enlargement of knowledge. Secondly, a mastery of language involves a mastery of knowledge, of which words are the signifiers. The problem was to ensure that the words actually designated precise and observable facts, and that general ideas were squarely based on such facts.

The analytical method of idéologie was invoked to perform this function — to ensure that the vocabulary and syntax of languages were consistent with the facts discovered by observation, and with a rigorous inter-relationship of concepts. As Gillispie has aptly remarked, the Baconian project of a renovation of learning became, in Condillac's work, identified with a "linguistic reform, redesignating words where necessary to make them speak facts, recombining them in a syntax of experience, lending reality to the expression used of the ancient atomists that theirs was an alphabet of nature".[28] The idéologues' model of language was no less atomistic and naturalistic. In the generation of ideas, claimed Tracy, a small number of basic elements, combined in various ways, produce "an almost infinite multitude of ideas, just as a small number of letters variously arranged suffice to represent those ideas. Here as elsewhere, nature shows a remarkable economy of means and profusion of effects".[29]

Ideological analysis was designed primarily to clarify our existing stock of ideas, eliminate vague concepts and false propositions, and provide criteria for rebuilding the human sciences. To establish idéologie as an empirical science, Tracy believed it necessary to overthrow "innatist" theories and to demonstrate instead the instrumental functions of language in satisfying human needs. It would then become possible to improve the capacity of a language to be a precise instrument for codifying, communicating and enlarging our knowledge.

The superiority of the human species over the animals consisted in the ability to use conventional and durable signs, giving permanent form to ideas, and enabling men to combine and multiply their ideas in a variety of ways in co-operation with their fellows. Signs were necessary to fix in one's memory the

meanings of and the relations between ideas. The use of consciously developed language set man apart from the beast, and made it possible for him to emerge from that historical stage where he was dominated by his immediate needs.[30] Language, the symbolic embodiment of rationality, was seen as the instrument of man's perfectibility. Having begun in total ignorance, the human species profited by shared experience and knowledge, and eventually reached a point where the desire to increase and propagate knowledge developed its own dynamic.[31]

> And so we are entirely the product of art (rather than nature), that is, of our work; and we resemble the natural man, or our original mode of existence, as little as an oak resembles an acorn or a chicken resembles an egg.[32]

If signs were the instruments of human progress and reason, it followed that an individual who was denied the opportunity to participate in a linguistic communication system would be unable to develop his mental capacities to more than an "animal" level. The idéologues, and before them the sensationalist philosophes (including Diderot, La Mettrie and Condillac), had taken this to be a clear refutation of any innate-ideas hypothesis. Two examples were of particular interest to them, and were widely discussed — the case of deaf-mutes, and the case of so-called "wolf children". The deaf-mute from birth, asserted Tracy, cannot share in advanced forms of communication; his intellectual capacities will therefore reach only a limited level, even though he may be helped by instruction in gestural language. The *enfant abandonné* was in a similar position: deprived of social interaction and advanced language skills, his intellect was seriously deficient.[33] (The example of *le sauvage de l'Aveyron*, captured in 1799, had provoked great interest among the idéologues including Philippe Pinel and Jean Itard.[34])

Language was the source of cultural progress, but there were certain inherent defects in the use of signs which prevented perfect communication, the implicit goal of idéologie. In the first place, there was the impossibility of guaranteeing that the same meaning was always given to a sign by different people. Tracy assumed that there is always a degree of uncertainty and vagueness in using conventional signs, especially in ordinary language where the sign system is more subject to individual variability in usage. Simple perceptions might be experienced in similar ways by every person owing to their identical organic faculties, but complex ideas allowed more possibilities of vagueness, error, or variability in meaning, and the intrusion of faulty memory. Language in use, therefore, was necessarily individualized and imprecise, owing to the improbability of each person attaching exactly the same meaning to the same words.[35]

Idéologie could do much to reduce the problem by showing how to avoid precipitate judgements, at least in those specialized languages known as systems of scientific knowledge. Fortunately, some defects in language were not

inherent in communication — some defects were caused by ignorance and by habitual errors of judgement which could be overcome by education and by correcting certain anomalies in the written language.[36]

Tracy came to reject Condillac's tendency to posit algebraic equations as the epitome of linguistic precision. Tracy's comparison of language and algebra throws light upon the limits of his project of conceptual reform, and the impossibility of a perfect language for expressing truths about man and society. Algebra was distinguished from ordinary language in being confined to precise quantitative units: providing one follows the rules, one always reaches a correct conclusion. But most of our ideas are not quantitative, and it would thus be mistaken to take algebra as a model for reforming ordinary langauge, whose signs and relationships can never have the simplicity and precision of quantitative signs. Algebraic signs are a particularly clear and limited group of precise symbols; ordinary language is relatively untidy and imprecise.

> Words are . . . formulae which depict in an abridged way the results of previous combinations and which relieve our memory of the obligation of having these combinations presented ceaselessly in all their details . . . (B)ut the results which these words express are not of a kind as simple or precise as those represented by algebraic symbols; and the modifications which we make them undergo in discourse . . . are much more varied and much less measurable than those undergone by algebraic symbols . . . (which) are all perceptible in numerical terms; those of words are not so, and that is an immense difference.[37]

In rejecting the model of algebra for a perfected language, Tracy rejected Condillac's notion that correct judgements are simply statements of identity between the two terms of the judgement. Tracy thereby unwittingly cast doubt upon the very possibility of a (deductivist) science of man, implicit in his earlier assumption that the human sciences could be brought to the same degree of certainty as the mathematical sciences.

Tracy was determined, above all, to show how the study of our intellectual faculties could throw light on the correct operation of our judgements. Given Tracy's view that language consists of signs and the combinations we make of them, the reform of language consists in making our signs (concepts) more precise, and in making the links between them more certain. His ultimate practical objective was a programme of "ideological" education which would "make correct judgements habitual".[38] This would be a substantial and long-term project of public instruction, which would never be completely successful, given the inherent defects of signs. However, some progress could be made.

> . . . a complete reform (of words and syntax) is almost impossible, for too many habits resist it. To change completely a usage which is tied at so many points to all our social institutions, would require a unanimous consent which cannot even be conjectured, and would be a real revolution in society. (But) . . . while letting this usage subsist, since it cannot be destroyed, it would be very useful to point out properly its defects, their causes and consequences, and to place alongside our existing written language a perfected model of what it should be.[39]

Tracy consistently argued against utopian images of a perfect language — such a language was a "chimera". Even if a genius could be found to invent it, it would not be widely adopted, and would immediately become disfigured by the conventional usages of spoken language and by the inherent weaknesses or limitations of our intellectual faculties.[40] A less ambitious series of reforms would attempt to improve spelling and pronunciation; make syntax follow more closely the "natural progression of ideas in deductions"; eliminate vague and euphemistic expressions; encourage the adoption of new terms wherever needed; formulate properly methodical nomenclatures in all the sciences; and correct our ideas by the discovery of new truths, especially in idéologie.[41] Tracy was clearly unconcerned here about the fate of purely literary works relying upon subtle images — he was far more concerned to promote a standardized language for the expression of scientific truths about man and society. The idéologues were also concerned to improve general levels of literacy and eliminate the regional dialects (*patois*) which obstructed a national language for the communication of information and education.[42]

Idéologie and social reform

The idéologues of the 1790s had placed great faith in the progressive consequences of conceptual reform; it was central to their conceptions of public instruction and the production of enlightened and virtuous citizens. This explains why the *écoles centrales*, created in the law of October 1795, included a course on *grammaire générale*, a subject which, according to Tracy, would demonstrate that "all languages have common rules which are derived from the nature of our intellectual faculties", and that this knowledge is necessary "not simply for the study of languages but is also the only solid basis of the moral and political sciences, (on which . . .) all citizens should have sound ideas".[43]

The science of language was intended to have important and beneficial consequences for social and moral behaviour. While great improvements could be made by linguistic and conceptual reforms introduced into the education system by enlightened teachers and administrators, the other side of the problem was to combat the sources of error and mystification which were

institutionalised in positions of authority. The doctrines of the Catholic Church (which the idéologues regarded as the greatest propagator of illusions and ignorance) had to be combatted, by excluding the Church from any formal association with the State or the education system; and by establishing secular, liberal and rational principles of morality and civil authority. Science, believed Tracy, would spell the demise of illusions about man and nature. All the "subtleties of the old theological metaphysics will vanish as soon as we specify the proper meaning of the word, to *exist*".[44] As soon as the unity of man and nature was fully appreciated, the influence of supernatural metaphysics would decline, and it would become possible to educate people in the ideological art of forming correct judgements about reality on the basis of observation.

The idéologues' desire for certainty in the human sciences may be understood as inherent in their view of science as control or mastery of the environment. In seeking a secular alternative to the "metaphysics" of the past, they found in positive science a model for theoretical knowledge and practical applications. A science of ideas and of society would be characterized not only by the empiricist methods of the natural sciences, but also by a central concern with public policy objectives. Science, man's rational mastery of nature and society, implied for the idéologues a technology of control over natural processes for the benefit of man, and the possibility of social reform directed towards objectives dictated by reason.[45]

This viewpoint was extremely ambiguous in regard to democratic control: it was perhaps more logical to support government by an élite ruling in the rational interests of the people than to support government directly controlled by the people. Scientism in social theory has often been linked with advocacy of a special role for the knowledge élite: the writings of Saint-Simon and Comte in the 1820s led to a technocratic conception of good government. The idéologues of the 1790s resisted technocracy because they were equally influenced by more traditional liberal conceptions of limited government, laissez-faire economics, the central importance of individual rights, and ultimately a belief that politics is about wants and not about objective interests. The element of elitism underlying the idéologues' theories of government and education was sustained by two related sources. One was their scientism, with its meritocratic concern to give authority and leadership to the knowledge élite. The second was an argument from prudence, claiming that the masses had insufficient understanding and experience of the public sphere to play any useful role: their direct involvement had usually had unfortunate consequences.

Tracy's conception of scientific certainty implied that once the truths about human capacities and needs were known, it would be possible to deduce a set of social institutions which were most suited to "human nature". Man's needs for sociality, for individual liberty, and for extending his rational control over his society and over nature, were held to be deducible from analysis of his basic faculties of thought and action. Representative government itself was justified in terms of its ability to meet the needs of civilized men for a free and secure existence. One of the problems with Tracy's approach was the inherently

slippery concept of "needs" in relation to a doctrine of human nature. How are needs defined? How do needs differ from interests, wants and passions? Even if these questions could be satisfactorily resolved, there was the second problem of establishing priorities, programmes and institutional frameworks to cater for such needs, and determining how far each type of need must be satisfied.

Tracy's theory of social science seemed to imply that public authorities should be involved in attempts to maximize the satisfactions of their citizens. However, Tracy contented himself with the view that government should provide only a rational framework of legislation and public instruction, beyond which it was the province of individuals to pursue their own satisfactions in accordance with their various talents and resources. Tracy's faith in scientific demonstration of truths about human nature sometimes led him towards a flirtation with the idea that there should be a progressive alliance of power and truth, government and education, politicians and *savants*. However, his recognition of the empirical diversity of men's opinions and desires, together with his appreciation of the abuses inherent in government control of censorship and propaganda, prevented him from urging this kind of educative autocracy.

Conclusions

Idéologie in its restricted meaning denoted a theory of signs or language, examining how simple units of sense-experience were variously transformed into complex and inter-related ideas. By uncovering the mechanisms of idea-formation and the operations of judgement, idéologie attempted to provide techniques for improving men's reason, for eliminating erroneous and "metaphysical" ideas, and ultimately for making men understand better the basis of rational institutions and moral rules. Empirical enquiry was not only seen as the most reliable method for describing and explaining social reality: it was also used to buttress a view of human nature and to lend scientific credibility to the political and educational practices desired by the idéologues.

Idéologie was an instrument for discriminating between truth and error in concepts; by extension, it became an instrument for distinguishing between practices which enhanced and those which harmed men's liberty and happiness in society. Civic instruction, in "ideological" terms, involved transmitting selected packages of concepts which showed men their interests as rational and free individuals. Thus, at the level of social and political theory, idéologie sought to propagate and actualise the Enlightenment ideals of reason and freedom, to destroy the sources of prejudice and traditional privilege, and to develop the policy sciences in law, government and education. The tension between elitism and representative government has been underlined in the previous discussion.

The idéologues' concern with education, and the leading role envisaged for *savants* and philosophes in social reconstruction, arose directly from their emphasis on the primacy of conceptual reform. The road to social progress was

seen to lie in successively influencing the ideas of all levels of society (beginning with the elites); obstacles and resistances were identified as ideational rather than as socio-economic. Like Condorcet, Tracy's view of history was that of man's gradual mastery of nature and social organization, understood as the unfolding of reason and social co-operation. Thus, Tracy's idéologie drew virtually no connections between systems of ideas and social groupings (whether classes, estates, occupations, regional groups, etc.); despite its materialist/sensationalist epistemology, the theory of idéologie contained no hint of a historical-materialist account of the relations between ideas and socio-economic forces. It was partly for this reason that Marx regarded the idéologues as naive liberal idealists. For Marx, Tracy's idéologie, far from providing a scientific account of the relationships between ideas, society and nature, was itself an example of liberal-individualist philosophy posing as social science — a philosophy advocating a rationalist and naturalistic perspective without understanding those historically evolving and contradictory socio-economic forces which alone could bring into existence a rational society.

All that Tracy and Marx had in common, apart from the mere word 'ideology', was a somewhat grand conception of social science as a body of explanatory laws governing social phenomena, useful in analysing the degree of human freedom and happiness under particular forms of social organization. But for Marx, the main obstacle to a free society was the power of the dominant economic class, whose power was typically disguised by prevailing social assumptions (ideologies) concerning the natural or necessary qualities of the existing social and political order. For Tracy, the survival of oppressive institutions was explained by ignorance and prejudice, reinforced by habits of everyday usage and by irrational educational curricula. Tracy's solution, conceptual and institutional reform, was posited in terms of a generalised reason inexorably influencing the policies of elites. However, the social conditions under which enlightened policies could be effectively implemented, were not addressed. Nor did the idéologues acknowledge the class interests which were at stake in the remodelling of economic and political institutions.

These silences may be explained largely in terms of the idéologues' highly individualistic conception of social relations, typical of liberal and utilitarian philosophy. On the one hand, this facilitated their tendency to divide society into two ideational groups (rational/enlightened *versus* irrational/prejudiced) rather than into socio-economic interests, and enabled them to posit a unifying human interest in reason. On the other hand, their individualistic perspective on the acquisition of ideas and on the constitution of the self through such ideas, directed attention away from the social construction of language and from the social conditions under which individualism itself could be sustained.

Finally, the project of the rational reconstruction of language/knowledge and thence society was undermined by Tracy's recognition that perfectibility in the reform of ideas was ultimately an idealist utopia, flying in the face of the necessary ambiguities and distortions of everyday linguistic practices. The quest for precision, and above all the rational *control* of the meaning of key

concepts, remained central to the idéologues' educative program, but they remained unable to specify the social conditions and interests which lay at the foundation of their ideological project.

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Notes

1. For recent studies of their work, see S. Moravia, *Il pensiero degli idéologues*, Firenze: La nuova Italia editrice, 1974; and G. Gusdorf, *La conscience révolutionnaire: les idéologues*, Paris: Payot, 1978. For detailed studies of particular idéologues, see E. Kennedy, *A Philosophe in the Age of Revolution: Destutt de Tracy and the Origins of 'Ideology'*, Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 1978; M. Staum, *Cabanis: Enlightenment and Medical Philosophy in the French Revolution*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980; P. Bastid, *Benjamin Constant et sa doctrine*, 2 vols., Paris: Armand Colin, 1966. The present paper draws on my doctoral dissertation: *The Political and Philosophical Thought of Destutt de Tracy*, University of London, 1979.

2. See E. Kennedy, "Ideology from Destutt de Tracy to Marx", *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 40 (3), July 1979, pp. 353-368; B.W. Head, "The origin of idéologue and idéologie", *Studies on Voltaire and the Eighteenth Century*, vol. 183, 1980, pp. 257-264.

3. A.L.C. Destutt de Tracy, "Mémoire sur la faculté de penser", *Mémoires de l'Institut National, Classe des Sciences morales et politiques*, vol. I Paris, 1798, p. 322.

4. *Ibid.*, p. 323.

5. *Ibid.*, pp. 322-3.

6. *Ibid.*, p. 324.

7. *Ibid.*, p. 325.

8. *Ibid.*, p. 325.

9. *Ibid.*, p. 286.

10. *Ibid.*, p. 286 (emphasis added).

11. See especially abbé de Condillac, *Essai sur l'origine des connoissances humaines* (1746), in *Oeuvres philosophiques*, ed. G. Le Roy, Paris, 1947, vol. I.

12. Tracy, "Mémoire sur la faculté de penser", p. 386.

13. *Ibid.*, p. 349.

14. Condillac, *De l'Art de raisonner* (1755), in *Oeuvres philosophiques*, vol. I, p. 619.

15. Tracy, "Mémoire sur la faculté de penser", pp. 384, 377-8.

16. *Ibid.*, pp. 389-390.
17. Destutt de Tracy, *Éléments d'idéologie* (1801), reprint of 3rd ed. 1817, Paris, 1970, pp. 212-3.
18. Tracy, "Mémoire sur la faculté de penser", p. 317.
19. *Ibid.*, p. 389.
20. Destutt de Tracy, *Logique*, Paris, 1805, p. 424.
21. Tracy, *Éléments d'idéologie*, p. xiii.
22. *Ibid.*, pp. 24-5.
23. Tracy, "Mémoire sur la faculté de penser", p. 327.
24. Tracy, *Éléments d'idéologie*, p. 53.
25. Destutt de Tracy, *Grammaire* (1803), reprint of 2nd ed. 1817, Paris, 1970, p. ix.
26. C.C. Gillispie, *The Edge of Objectivity*, Princeton, 1959, p. 203.
27. Tracy, *Logique*, p. 504.
28. Gillispie, *The Edge of Objectivity*, p. 169.
29. Tracy, "Mémoire sur la faculté de penser", p. 327.
30. Tracy, *Éléments d'idéologie*, p. 294.
31. *Ibid.*, pp. 297-8.
32. *Ibid.*, p. 289.
33. *Ibid.*, pp. 292-3; "Mémoire sur la faculté de penser", pp. 402-3, 408-10.
34. See L. Malson, *Wolf Children*, London, 1972, and H. Lane, *The Wild Boy of Aveyron*, London, 1977.
35. Tracy, *Éléments d'idéologie*, pp. 379, 383, 386; *Logique*, pp. 57-8.
36. *Éléments d'idéologie*, p. 387; *Logique*, pp. 166f.
37. *Éléments d'idéologie*, p. 342n.
38. Tracy, "Mémoire sur la faculté de penser", pp. 442-3.
39. Tracy, *Grammaire*, pp. 359-60.
40. *Grammaire*, pp. 369-80; "Mémoire sur la faculté de penser", pp. 415-6.
41. *Grammaire*, pp. 382-9; "Mémoire sur la faculté de penser", pp. 414, 417.

42. See M. Lyons, "Politics and Patois: the linguistic policy of the French Revolution", *Aust. J. of French Studies*, 18(3), September 1981, pp. 264-281; P. Higonnet, "The politics of linguistic terrorism and grammatical hegemony during the French Revolution", *Social History*, 5 (1), January 1980, pp. 41-69.

43. Tracy, *Éléments d'idéologie*, pp. xxiii-iv.

44. Destutt de Tracy, "Dissertation sur quelques questions d'idéologie", in *Mémoires de l'Institut national*, Classe des sciences morales et politiques, vol. III, Paris, 1801, p. 514.

45. This theme is explored in B.W. Head, "The origins of *la science sociale* in France, 1770-1800", *Aust. J. of French Studies*, 19(2), May 1982, pp. 115-132.

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IDEOLOGY AND THE CRITIQUE OF DOMINATION II*

John B. Thompson

II

Constructive Proposals

The critical discussions of the previous part prepare the way for a more constructive contribution. Drawing upon the criticisms which I have made of other authors, I shall attempt to sketch the contours of an alternative approach to the analysis of ideology. I undertake this attempt with few pretensions: what follows is merely a sketch, rough and incomplete, of an approach which has yet to be filled out and put to use.[43] My aim is not so much to resolve specific problems, but rather to identify some open issues. I shall locate these issues within three general areas of concern. First, there is the task of conceptualising ideology. I shall pursue this task on the assumption that ideology must be conceptualised within the framework of a general social theory, a theory which explores, among other things, the relations between action, institutions, power and domination. The second general area of concern is that of methodology. Here my reflections will be guided by the desire to elaborate a systematic interpretative theory which incorporates the dimensions of social and discursive analysis. The third area in which relevant issues arise is the area of epistemology. The analysis of ideology cannot evade, I believe, questions of critique and justification. I shall confront these questions by seeking to clarify, in a tentative and exploratory way, the notion of truth and the conditions under which claims to truth can be sustained. In this part of the essay I shall no longer restrict my discussion to material in English, but shall draw freely upon the contributions of French and German authors. Hopefully it will become clear that, while these authors have had an influence on recent work in English, their contributions have more value than some of that work would suggest.

Conceptualisation of ideology

The concept of ideology cannot be considered in isolation, but must be situated within the framework of a general social theory. That particular conceptions of ideology are affected by general theoretical assumptions is evident from the contributions discussed in the first part of the essay. Seliger's conception of ideologies as action-oriented sets of beliefs is closely connected to his pluralistic view of Western politics, a view which tends to play down the institutional and structural conditions of political action. The contribution of Hirst, on the other hand, preserves the deterministic emphasis of Althusser, insofar as he conceives of subjects as 'supports' of processes — including

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processes of calculation — which already exist in advance. What is missing from the theoretical frameworks of Seliger and Hirst is, among other things, a satisfactory account of the relation between action and social structure: each author accentuates one aspect at the expense of the other, and each aspect is dealt with inadequately in the work of both. The importance of grasping the interplay of action and structure in the everyday reproduction of social life has been demonstrated most clearly by Anthony Giddens.[44] Rejecting the reductionist tendencies of 'interpretative sociologies', on the one hand, and of functionalism and structuralism, on the other, Giddens elaborates a *theory of structuration* which seeks to integrate an account of action with an analysis of institutions and social structure. 'Structure', according to Giddens, may be conceived as the 'rules and resources' which are implicitly drawn upon by actors in their everyday activity and which are thereby reproduced, most often unintentionally. While this conception is highly provocative, it nevertheless suffers, in my opinion, from certain limitations. For 'structural properties' are apparently defined by each and every 'rule' which actors employ, and there would seem to be no grounds intrinsic to this conception for regarding some rules as more fundamental than others. Moreover, as soon as one turns to a more concrete analysis of the social world, Giddens's conception of structure as rules and resources appears to be inadequate, if not altogether irrelevant.[45] While wishing to sustain his attempt to develop a theory of structuration, it seems to me necessary to alter the specific terms of his account.

It is my view that the relation between action and structure must be conceived of by distinguishing three levels of abstraction.[46] On each of these levels I shall draw two further distinctions; and I shall allude to — although here I cannot pursue — the multiple ways in which these levels are linked. The first and most immediate level is that of *action*, whereby agents participate and intervene in the social world. Action as a flow of activity, monitored by agents capable of accounting for what they are doing, can be distinguished from particular actions, such as hitting, frowning, switching-on-the-light, which may be regarded as events describable in various ways. The second level of abstraction is that of *social institutions*. *Specific* institutions may be viewed as constellations of social relations, together with the reservoirs of material resources which are associated with them; *sedimented* institutions are those configurations which persist in various specific forms. Thus one is concerned with a specific institution when one inquires into the authority relations and capital resources which constitute, for example, the University of London, whereas one is concerned with a sedimented institution when one studies the university system as such. The third and most abstract level is that of *social structure*. I propose to conceive of social structure as a series of elements and their interrelations which conjointly define the conditions for the persistence of a social formation and the limits for the variation of its component institutions. Two categories of structural elements may be distinguished. On the one hand, there are those elements which must be present in any society, since they represent necessary conditions for the persistence of social life as such. On the

other hand, there are those elements which are necessary conditions, not for the persistence of social life as such, but for the continuation of a particular *type* of society. So whereas production may be a necessary feature of any society, production by means of capital and wage-labour is not; and it is the interrelations between the latter elements which define the institutions of a society as capitalistic. Agents acting within an institutional context apply flexible 'schemata' which provide guidelines for coping with new and unanticipated situations. So long as agents do not flout such guidelines in a way which propels institutions beyond the limiting conditions, then their action may be said to reproduce social structure. However, one cannot preclude the possibility that these conditions may be exceeded by the cumulative consequences of collective action, a possibility which underlines the essentially creative and transformative character of action.

Each of the three levels in the relation between action and structure realises an aspect of the phenomenon of *power*. At the level of action and in the most general sense, 'power' is the ability to act in pursuit of one's aims and interests: an agent has the *power to act*, the power to intervene in the sequence of events and to alter their course. In the sociologically relevant sense of 'power', however, the power to act must be related to the institutional site from which it derives. 'Power', at the institutional level, is a capacity which *enables* or *empowers* some agents to make decisions, pursue ends or realise interests; it empowers them in such a way that, without this institutionally endowed capacity, they would not have been able to carry out the relevant course. Power as an institutionally endowed capacity is *limited* by the structural conditions which circumscribe the range of institutional variation: thus the distribution of power in a capitalistic enterprise is 'structured by' the relation between wage-labour and capital. When the relations of power established at the institutional level are *systematically asymmetrical*, then the situation may be described as one of *domination*. Relations of power are 'systematically asymmetrical' when particular agents or groups of agents are institutionally endowed with power in a way which excludes, and to some significant degree remains inaccessible to, other agents or groups of agents, irrespective of the basis upon which such exclusion is carried out. Among the instances of domination which are of particular importance are those which are structured by the conditions which limit institutional variation. In capitalist societies the fundamental limiting conditions are specified by the capital/wage-labour relation, which secures systematically asymmetrical relations between classes at the level of the enterprise. It would be a serious mistake to assume, however, that the relation between the classes is the only important instance of domination in capitalist societies. As many authors have rightly emphasised, relations of domination subsist between nation-states, between ethnic groups and between the sexes which cannot be reduced to class domination.[47] A satisfactory analysis of domination and exploitation in contemporary societies would — without minimising the importance of class — have to give considerable attention to the interrelated phenomena of racism, sexism and the system of nation-states.

The analysis of power and domination, situated within the context of an account of the relation between action and structure, provides the backcloth against which I want to reconsider the problem of ideology. Throughout the first part of this essay I emphasised the way in which contemporary theorists conceive of ideology in a *neutral* sense, regarding it as a system of symbols or beliefs which pertain, in some way, to social action or political practice. Whether Seliger's 'inclusive conception' of ideology as action-oriented sets of beliefs, or Gouldner's formulation of ideology in terms of public projects advocated by rational discourse, or Hirst's view of ideology as a system of ideas which can be employed in political calculation: in each case ideology bears no intrinsic connection to the problem of domination and the critique of domination. It is this aspect of many contemporary theories of ideology which I wish to reject. I wish to maintain, on the contrary, that *to study ideology is to study the ways in which meaning (signification) serves to sustain relations of domination.* Among the many ways in which ideology operates, three may be cited as central. In the first place, relations of domination may be sustained by being represented as *legitimate*. Every system of domination, observed Weber, seeks to cultivate a belief in its legitimacy, by appealing either to rational, traditional or charismatic grounds;[48] and such an appeal, it should be noted, is generally expressed in *language*. A second way in which ideology operates is by means of *dissimulation*. Relations of domination which serve the interests of some at the expense of others may be concealed, denied or 'blocked' in various ways; and these ways — often overlapping, seldom intentional — may conceal themselves by their very efficacy, presenting themselves as something other than what they are.[49] A third way in which ideology operates is by means of *reification*, that is, by representing a transitory, historical state of affairs as if it were permanent, natural, outside of time. 'To re-establish the dimension of society "without history" at the heart of historical society': that, argues Lefort in a remarkable essay, is the role of ideology.[50] These three modes by which ideology operates — legitimation, dissimulation and reification — should not be regarded as either exhaustive or mutually exclusive. There may be other *modus operandi* which are vitally important in certain circumstances and which would have to be elucidated through theoretical and empirical analysis; and in many cases the various modes intersect and overlap, such that reification legitimates and legitimation dissimulates. These qualifications do not, however, vitiate the importance of formulating a clear conception of ideology and of distinguishing the principal modalities through which it operates.

The analysis of ideology is fundamentally concerned with *language*, for language is the principal medium of the meaning (signification) which serves to sustain relations of domination. Speaking a language is a way of acting, emphasised Austin and others; what they forgot to add is that ways of acting are infused with forms of power. The utterance of the simplest expression is an intervention in the world, more or less effective, more or less endowed with institutional authority. 'Language is not only an instrument of communication or even of knowledge', writes Bourdieu, 'but also an instrument of power. One

seeks not only to be understood but also to be believed, obeyed, respected, distinguished.'[51] It is important to stress, moreover, that forms of power infuse *the meaning of what is said* as well as the saying of it. 'The meaning of what is said', this cryptic, complex notion which seems everywhere to elude a satisfactory analysis: no claim can be made to offer such an analysis here. Suffice it to observe that the meaning of an expression is an essentially open, shifting, indeterminate phenomenon, often framed in rhetorical figures and always susceptible to change. Even a simple declarative sentence like 'The book is blue' is a metonymic construction, since it is not the book but its surface which is blue. As Castoriadis crisply remarks, *'tout langage est abus de langage'*.[52] Of course, expressions do have a use in everyday life, they function more or less univocally, that is, as univocal *suffisamment quant à l'usage*. But the univocity secured by this *quant à* is limited and problematic; the closure is transitory and provisional, always open to disruption, contestation and change. Let me express this point in Wittgensteinian terms: if it is supposed that the meaning of an expression may be analysed, at least partially, in terms of the criteria of justified assertion, then it must be added that such criteria are subject to systematic differentiation and manipulation, so that what counts as 'justified assertion' is essentially open to dispute. What may have seemed like a sphere of effective *consensus* must in many cases be seen as a realm of actual or potential *conflict*. Hence the meaning of what is said — what is *asserted* in spoken or written discourse as well as that *about which* one speaks or writes — is infused with forms of power; different individuals or groups have a differential capacity *to make a meaning stick*. It is the infusion of meaning with power that lends language so freely to the operations of ideology. Relations of domination are sustained by a *mobilisation of meaning* which legitimates, dissimulates or reifies an existing state of affairs; and meaning can be mobilised because it is an essentially open, shifting, indeterminate phenomenon. When we are told by Menachem Begin that the movement of thousands of troops and hundreds of tanks into Lebanon is not an 'invasion' because Israel has no plan to annex Lebanese territory,[53] or when the *Sun* reminds us that a proposed strike by the train drivers' union ASLEF may smash their own industry but will 'never break us', since, 'as the battle for the Falklands demonstrated so clearly, NOBODY can break this nation',[54] then it is not difficult to appreciate the ease which which, and the extent to which, meaning may be mobilised in the service of power and domination.

Methodology of interpretation

The link between language and ideology provides the touchstone for the elaboration of a systematic methodology of interpretation. In characterising this methodology as one of 'interpretation', I wish to call attention to two fundamental considerations. The first consideration has to do with the inescapable situation of that which forms the object of interpretation: *discourse* — that is, language realised in speech or in writing — *is already an interpretation*. Events, actions and expressions are constantly interpreted and understood by

lay actors in everyday life, who routinely employ interpretative procedures in making sense of themselves and others. To undertake an analysis of discourse is to produce an interpretation of an interpretation, to re-interpret a pre-interpreted domain. This peculiar situation of the object of interpretation — a situation which reappears in all forms of social analysis — is a manifestation of what has been called the 'hermeneutical circle'; and here we may agree with Heidegger that 'what is decisive is not to get out of the circle but to come into it in the right way'.[55] The second consideration to which I want to call attention concerns *the creative character of the interpretative process*. The analysis of discourse can never be merely an analysis: it must also be a synthetic construction, a creative projection, of a possible meaning. This constructive, creative aspect of interpretation is often neglected or suppressed by those who practice some form of 'discourse analysis', as can be shown, I believe, through a careful examination of their work.[56] Without wishing to deny the importance of formal methods of analysis in the study of social phenomena, it is my view that such methods could never be more than a limited and preliminary stage of a more comprehensive interpretative theory.

I should like to propose an interpretative methodology which is both tailored to the task of analysing ideology and capable of incorporating formal or 'explanatory' methods. To study ideology, I suggested above, is to study the ways in which meaning (signification) serves to sustain relations of domination. Meaning, domination: two concepts from different domains, from different orders of inquiry. How can the interrelation of meaning and domination be studied in a systematic way, without committing some sort of category mistake or falling into a facile eclecticism? I shall take as my model the provocative idea of a 'depth hermeneutics' elaborated by, among others, Paul Ricoeur.[57] While critical of the exhaustive claims of some forms of 'structuralist analysis', Ricoeur is not blind to their achievements. When dealing with a domain which is constituted as much by force as by meaning, or when analysing an artifact which displays a distinctive pattern through which something is said, it is both possible and advisable to mediate the process of interpretation by employing 'objectifying techniques'. 'Interpretation' and 'explanation' are not necessarily exclusive terms, but rather may be treated as complementary moments in a comprehensive interpretative theory, as mutually supportive steps along 'a unique *hermeneutical arc*'.[58] While concurring with the overall emphasis of Ricoeur's work, my specific proposals will diverge significantly from his account. For in his reaction against the excesses of 'historicism', Ricoeur tends to underplay the importance of social and historical circumstances in the interpretation of a work. The text and its analogues are autonomous, insists Ricoeur; but it seems to me that this autonomy is limited in important ways and that our interpretation of a work may be profoundly affected by an inquiry into the social-historical conditions of its production. Nowhere is this counter-emphasis more important than in the attempt to elaborate a methodology for the analysis of ideology. To suppose that the study of the discursive forms in which ideology is expressed could be detached from the social-historical conditions of

discursive production would be to lose sight of the relations of domination in virtue of which discourse is *ideological*.

The depth-interpretative procedure which I want to propose may be divided into three principal phases. It must be emphasised that this division is an analytic one; I am not suggesting that the phases must be regarded as discrete stages of a sequential method, but merely that they can be seen as thematically distinct dimensions of a complex interpretative process. The first phase of the process may be described as the dimension of *social analysis*. It is to the credit of theorists like Gouldner to have stressed the importance of situating ideology within a social-historical context, even if the details of this author's account are questionable in many respects. *The study of ideology is inseparable from the social-historical analysis of the forms of domination which meaning serves to sustain.* In accordance with my earlier discussion of the relation between action and structure, I should like to specify three levels at which such a social-historical analysis might proceed. First, at the level of action, an attempt must be made to identify the contexts of action and interaction within which agents pursue their aims. The realisation of discourse is situationally specific: expressions are uttered or inscribed by particular agents at a certain time in determinate settings. As authors such as Goffman and Bourdieu have brought out so well, the spatio-temporal *location* of action and interaction is a vital part of social analysis.[59] A second level of social analysis is concerned with institutions. As constellations of social relations and reservoirs of material resources, specific institutions form a relatively stable framework for action and interaction; they do not determine action but *generate* it in the sense of establishing, loosely and tentatively, the parameters of permissible conduct. Institutions are the loci of power and the crystallisation of relations of domination. A reconstruction of institutions — both in their specific and sedimented forms, both in their organisational aspects and their spatio-temporal features — is therefore an essential contribution to the analysis of ideology. Of particular interest in this regard is the reconstruction of the institutional *media* by which discourse is transmitted, a reconstruction for which Gouldner, among many others, has offered some insightful remarks.[60] At a third level of social analysis, one would be concerned, not with institutions as such, but with the structural elements which condition or *structurate* institutions. The relation between wage-labour and capital 'structurates' the institution of General Motors, for example, in the sense that it specifies certain conditions for the persistence of the institution, conditions which the institution cannot exceed without a change of structural type. The reconstruction of structural elements is an essential aspect of social analysis, for it is these elements which underpin some of the most important relations of domination at the institutional level.

The second phase of the depth-interpretative procedure may be described as the dimension of *discursive analysis*. The forms of discourse which express ideology must be viewed, not only as socially and historically situated practices, but also as *linguistic constructions which display an articulated structure*. Forms of discourse are situated practices *and* something more, precisely because they are

linguistic constructions which claim to say something. To undertake a discursive analysis (in the sense here defined) is to study these linguistic constructions with a view towards explicating their role in the operation of ideology. I shall make no pretension to lay out in detail the appropriate method for such a study, as if methodological precepts could be specified *a priori* and in isolation from actual research. I shall limit myself to a series of suggestions which draw heavily upon the ongoing investigations of others. Let me distinguish, once again, three levels at which forms of discourse may be studied *qua* linguistic constructions and with a view towards explicating their ideological features. First, forms of discourse may be studied as *narratives* which display a certain logic or 'actantial structure'. The term 'actantial structure' is borrowed from Greimas, whose methods of structural analysis — so far largely unknown in the English-speaking world — have been applied in an imaginative way to political discourse.[61] Such an analysis may facilitate the explication of ideological features because ideology, insofar as it seeks to sustain relations of domination by representing them as legitimate, tends to assume a narrative form. Stories are told which glorify those in power and seek to justify the *status quo*: there is, as Barthes observed, a profound connection between ideology and myth.[62] A second level of discursive analysis may be concerned with the *argumentative structure* of discourse. Forms of discourse, as supra-sentential linguistic constructions, comprise explanations and chains of reasoning which may be reconstructed and made explicit in various ways.[63] Such reconstructions may help to illuminate the ideological features of discourse by bringing out, not only their procedures of legitimation, but also their strategies of dissimulation. To conceal relations of domination and simultaneously to conceal the process of concealment is a risky, conflict-laden undertaking, prone to contradiction and contortion. The analysis of argumentative structure may highlight the dissimulating function of ideology by mapping out the contradictions and inconsistencies, the silences and *lapsus*, which characterise the texture of a discourse. At a third level, discursive analysis may focus on *syntactic structure*. Authors such as Roger Fowler, Robert Hodge, Gunther Kress and Tony Trew have rightly called attention to a series of syntactic devices which play a vital role in discourse.[64] In particular, the study of nominalisation, passivisation, the use of pronouns and the structure of tense may provide an initial access to processes of reification within language. Representing processes as things, deleting agency and constituting time as an eternal extension of the present tense: all of these are so many syntactic ways to re-establish the dimension of society 'without history' at the heart of historical society.

I now want to turn to the third and final phase of the depth-interpretative procedure, a phase that may properly be called *interpretation*. However rigorous and systematic the methods of discursive analysis may be, they can never abolish the need for a creative construction of meaning, that is, for an interpretative explication of what is said. An interpretative explication may be mediated by the analytical methods, which may efface the superficial form of a discourse; but interpretative explication always goes beyond the methods of

formal analysis, projecting a possible meaning which is always risky and open to dispute. In explicating what is said, the process of interpretation transcends the closure of discourse treated as a construction displaying an articulated structure. *Discourse says something about something*, and it is this transcending character which must be grasped. At this point it may be helpful to introduce the idea of *split reference*, employed with great imagination by Ricoeur.[65] The inscription of discourse in writing, observes Ricoeur, involves a suspension of ostensive denotation and the realisation of a second order reference, that is, a reference to other aspects of experience or being which cannot be disclosed in a directly ostensive way. Let me adapt this intriguing idea to the specific task of studying ideology through an analysis of the forms of discourse in which it is expressed. The mobilisation of meaning in order to sustain relations of domination commonly involves, I want to suggest, a splitting of the referential domain. The terms of a discourse carry out their ideological role by explicitly referring to one thing and implicitly referring to another, by entangling these multiple referents in a way which serves to sustain relations of domination. Recall the vivid image described by Barthes of a saluting Negro in uniform on the cover of *Paris-Match*, an image which signifies not merely a particular individual but also the general context of French imperialism.[66] To interpret discourse *qua* ideology is to *construct* a meaning which unfolds the referential dimension of discourse, which specifies the multiple referents and shows how their entanglement serves to sustain relations of domination. Reconnecting discourse to the relations of domination which it serves to sustain: such is the task of interpretation. Mediated by the discursive analysis of linguistic constructions and the social analysis of the conditions of discursive production, the interpretation of ideology is necessarily a form of depth hermeneutics. How such a form of depth hermeneutics may be linked to a moment of critique, and how such a critique may facilitate the *self*-understanding of the subjects whose interpretations are the object of interpretation, are questions which I shall broach below.

Before turning to the final cluster of questions, however, I should like to render these abstract methodological remarks more concrete by focusing on a specific example. In an important study conducted during the 1970s, Michel Pêcheux and his associates examined the ambiguities contained in a report by the socialist Sicco Mansholt.[67] The Report, published at a time when French political life was animated by the possibility of radical social change through an alliance between the Socialist and Communist Parties, advocated rigorous economic planning and a reorientation of economic goals in order to overcome the current crises in capitalist societies. Pêcheux et al. propose to study the ambiguous political character of the Mansholt Report by analysing, not the Report itself, but rather two corpora which were generated in the following way. An extract from the Report was presented to two groups of young technicians from similar backgrounds. One group was told that the text was the work of left-wing militants, while the other group was led to believe that the text had been produced by right-wing Giscardians. The members of each group were asked to

read the text and to write a short summary, thus generating a 'right corpus' and a 'left corpus'. Pêcheux et al. then submit the two corpora to a series of analyses which comprise what they call *analyse automatique du discours*. These analyses break up each corpus into a plurality of 'semantic domains' and map out the relations between these domains. In this way the authors seek to uncover some of the contradictions at work in each corpus and the tensions between the two corpora, contradictions and tensions which reflect the ambiguous texture of the Mansholt Report. Here I shall not undertake to criticise the details of the method developed by Pêcheux et al., nor the way in which it was applied in the case concerned. I wish simply to call attention to the specific *limits* within which this method operates, limits which define the method as *one possible phase of a more comprehensive interpretative theory*. The method developed by Pêcheux et al. is one version — a very sophisticated version — of what I previously called 'discursive analysis'. It is a method which does not preclude but rather presupposes the other two phases of the depth-interpretative procedure, the phases of social analysis and of interpretation proper. It presupposes social analysis because it requires an account of the social-historical conditions under which the Mansholt Report was produced, as well as a specification of the circumstances under which the corpora were generated. It presupposes interpretation because, as Pêcheux et al. admit, the results of the method do not 'speak for themselves' but must be 'interpreted'. Thus, in the study of the Mansholt Report, we are told that the presence of terms like 'the government' and 'the state' in the right corpus (R), as contrasted with expressions like 'it is necessary' and 'one must' in the left corpus (L), indicates 'the *domination* of R over L, insofar as the same signifier ("radical reforms") *encompasses two referents which tend to be antagonistic*: on the one hand a bourgeois solution which "manages the crisis", on the other hand the possible beginnings of a revolutionary transformation'.[68] But what is this 'indication', if not an *interpretation* which goes well beyond the construction of patterns of substitution, which seeks to unfold the referential dimension of discourse, which aims to elucidate the ways in which meaning serves to sustain relations of domination? The method developed by Pêcheux et al., so far from demonstrating the irrelevance of hermeneutics as these authors aggressively claim, attests to the centrality and unsurpassability of the hermeneutical process.

Critique and justification

I now want to turn to the third and final cluster of issues which arise in connection with the analysis of ideology. These issues are of an epistemological character: the analysis of ideology raises complex problems of justification and truth. That such problems cannot be adequately stated, let alone resolved, by simply opposing ideology to science is a view which I have expressed above. The concept of ideology may have emerged in conjunction with the idea of a science of society, as Gouldner seeks to show; but ideology cannot be viewed as failed science, as the hapless half of an inseparable pair. For the concept of ideology also emerged in conjunction with the critique of domination, and it is *this* link —

as I have argued throughout this essay — which must be taken as basic. It cannot be assumed, moreover, that there is some stable relation between ideology construed in terms of domination, on the one hand, and the alleged opposition between science and ideology, on the other. Whatever difficulties there may be in the writings of Marcuse and other authors of the Frankfurt School, these thinkers have rightly stressed that under certain historical circumstances *science may become ideological*. Hence the epistemological problems raised by the analysis of ideology cannot be resolved by a presumptuous appeal to science, including the 'science' of historical materialism. It is my view that one can progress with these problems only if one is prepared to engage in a reflection of a genuinely epistemological sort, a reflection which is attuned to the question of critique and guided by the concept of truth.

In undertaking an epistemological reflection on the problems raised by the analysis of ideology, I shall draw heavily upon the work of Jürgen Habermas.[69] While defending a version of historical materialism, Habermas has done more than any other contemporary thinker to free historical materialism from the dogmatism of received tradition and the moral bankruptcy of a doctrine which has been used to justify the most oppressive regimes. 'Both *revolutionary self-confidence* and *theoretical self-certainty* are gone',[70] so that practice must be stripped of false certitude and handed over to the deliberations of responsible subjects. To hand practice over to the deliberations of responsible subjects is not, moreover, an unfortunate option, imposed by the contingencies of historical circumstance. On the contrary, one of the most interesting features of Habermas's recent work is his attempt to demonstrate that the claims to truth and correctness which are implicitly raised in everyday speech demand to be 'made good' or 'redeemed' through argumentation among the subjects concerned under conditions freed from asymmetrical relations of power. Such conditions, counterfactually projected and reconstructible through an analysis of the competencies required for successful communication, define what Habermas calls an 'ideal speech situation'. His view is that *if* a consensus concerning problematic claims to truth or correctness *were* attained through argumentation under the conditions of ideal speech, then such a consensus *would* be rational and *would* resolve the problematic claim. I believe that there is much in this view which is commendable, but I do not want to suggest that it is free from difficulties. Habermas's analyses of truth and correctness, his argument for the presupposition of the ideal speech situation and his characterisation of the latter: all of these aspects leave much to be desired.[71] In the following discussion I shall therefore diverge substantially from the account offered by Habermas, even if it is Habermas's account which provides the *pierre de touche* for my proposals.

Let me begin by returning to the link between ideology and the question of critique. To study ideology, I maintained, is to study the ways in which meaning serves to sustain relations of domination; and I sketched a methodological procedure which combines social analysis and discursive analysis in order to mediate a depth interpretation of ideological discourse. This complex methodo-

logical procedure raises epistemological problems on several levels. Here, for the sake of simplicity, I shall focus on the final phase of the procedure and ask: what is the link between depth interpretation and critique? It is important to distinguish between two forms of critique which are relevant in this regard. First, as a construction of meaning and a formulation of what is said in a discourse, an interpretation raises a claim to truth which calls for recognition. An interpretation is an intervention, risky and conflict-laden; it makes a claim about something which may diverge from other views and which, *if true*, may provide a standpoint for criticising other views, including the views of the subjects whose discourse is the object of interpretation. Critique guided by the truth of an interpretation must be distinguished from a second form of critique, closely related to the first. An interpretation that explicates the ways in which meaning serves to sustain relations of domination may render possible a critique, not only of other views (interpretations), but also of the relations of domination which meaning serves to sustain. It is in this sense that *the analysis of ideology bears an internal connection to the critique of domination*. But this connection, while internal, is not immediate. To analyse a form of discourse as ideological, to explicate the ways in which meaning serves to sustain relations of domination, even to establish that a particular interpretation is true: all of these achievements would greatly facilitate and profoundly affect a critical reflection on relations of domination, but they would not *as such* demonstrate that those relations were *unjust*. However close be the connection between truth and justice — and the connection is, I believe, a close one — it is important to recognise the difference between inquiring into the truth of a statement, on the one hand, and deliberating on the justice of a particular social arrangement, on the other.

To inquire into the truth of a statement presupposes that we have some operative idea of truth. It is a common tendency among philosophers to analyse this idea in terms of a relation of correspondence: simply put, to say that a sentence is true is to say that it corresponds to a fact. It seems to me, however, that this apparently plausible account is less than satisfactory, not only because it has proved exceedingly difficult to say anything interesting either about the relation of correspondence or about the nature of the facts to which true sentences are supposed to correspond, but also because it is hard to see how anything *could* be said about this relation which was itself *true*. In view of these difficulties, it seems to me advisable to set aside the correspondence theory and to search for an alternative analysis which would capture our intuitions about truth. When we say that a statement is true, we lay ourselves on the line; we make a claim which could, we suppose, be defended or *justified* in some way. It is clear that truth cannot be simply equated with justified assertion or 'warranted assertability', as Habermas, following Dewey, once maintained. For it is easy to imagine cases in which the assertion of a statement is justified and yet the statement itself is false. A prospective English holidaymaker may have good grounds for maintaining that it is sunny in Spain, but the truth of this statement is dependent upon what is happening in Spain and not upon the grounds that

the prospective holidaymaker has. What this observation shows, however, is not that truth bears no connection to justification, but rather, first, that the justification for the assertion of a statement is not necessarily identical with the justification for the assertion that a statement is true; and second, that the justification for the assertion that a statement is true must be regarded as a *limiting notion*: that is, it refers to the justification that *could* be obtained under idealised conditions. 'We speak as if there were such things as epistemically ideal conditions', remarks Putnam in a recent book, 'and we call a statement "true" if it would be justified under such conditions.'[72] How are we to characterise these epistemically ideal conditions which seem implicated in our notion of truth? It seems to me that these idealised conditions could be explicated — at least partially although perhaps not perennially — in terms of the suspension of asymmetrical relations of power. Such a suspension would specify some of the *formal conditions* under which the truth of a statement *could* be ascertained. But these formal conditions do not pre-empt the *specific criteria* which may be invoked in seeking to establish the truth of a statement. It is important to recognise that the criteria invoked may be of differing statuses and may vary from one epistemic field to another. While the 'pragmatic criterion' of prediction and control has been filtered out from the history of the natural sciences, it does not follow that the same criterion must be adopted in other disciplines.[73] On the contrary, the thesis that I want to maintain is that the crucial criterion which operates in conjunction with the depth-hermeneutical procedure is provided by a *principle of self-reflection*. For the interpretations generated by this procedure are about an object domain which consists, among other things, of subjects capable of reflection; and for such interpretations to be *true* they would have to be justified — by means of whatever evidence deemed to be necessary under the formal conditions of argumentation — in the eyes of the subjects about whom they are made. Such interpretations would provide subjects with a clarification of their conditions of action and would thus bear, in this specific sense, an internal relation to practice.

An inquiry into the truth of a statement may prepare the way for, but is not identical with, a deliberation on the justice of a particular social arrangement. It may prepare the way for such a deliberation insofar as it clarifies the conditions of action for the actors themselves, who alone can bear the responsibility of deciding whether the social arrangements in which they live, or for which they are prepared to struggle, are just. It is not identical with such a deliberation because the questions which are being pursued, and the considerations which are adduced as relevant, are different in the two cases. When deliberating on the justice of a particular social arrangement we are concerned, not with the adequacy of the evidence that can be adduced to support a claim to truth, but rather with the extent to which that social arrangement is capable of satisfying the legitimate needs and desires of the subjects affected by it. As with truth, so too with justice: it must be conceived in terms of the justification that could be provided under idealised conditions of argumentation; but the object of justification and the terms of argumentation are different

in each case. The distinctiveness of a deliberation on justice is brought out well by that heuristic device which Habermas calls the 'model of the suppression of generalisable interests'. A critical theory can inquire into the institutionalised power relations of a society, he submits, by comparing the existing normative structures with a hypothetical system of norms that would be formed discursively. Such a 'counterfactually projected reconstruction' may be guided by the following question:

> how would the members of a social system, at a given stage in the development of productive forces, have collectively and bindingly interpreted their needs (and which norms would they have accepted as justified) if they could and would have decided on organization of social intercourse through discursive will-formation, with adequate knowledge of the limiting conditions and functional imperatives of their society?[74]

There are aspects of this suggestive passage which are problematic and obscure — *who*, for example, would 'the members' be if they were placed under the hypothetical conditions of rational discourse, and which needs and norms could ever be expected to elicit collective recognition and consent?[75] Yet however intractable these problems may be, it seems to me that Habermas is right to adopt an approach to the question of justice which endows the subject with a crucial role, while acknowledging that, given actual circumstances in which asymmetrical relations of power prevail, this role must be counterfactually conceived. The development of this idea is one of the most urgent and important tasks in social theory today.

In drawing this section to a close, I should like to consider an objection that may be raised against the type of analysis which I have offered. To regard truth and justice as limiting notions, it may be said, is simply to render them *irrelevant* to the study of actual societies and forms of discourse. For what is the use of a notion that depends upon conditions which do not obtain here and now, indeed which might never obtain so long as human beings are inclined to embroil themselves in relations of domination? I do not believe, however, that this attitude of renunciation is well-founded. A limiting notion is not irrelevant for being a limit: it is a goal which can be approximated and which, in the process of approximation, can call our attention to certain factors at the expense of others. Thus, to analyse truth in terms of the evidence that *would* suffice to justify a particular claim, or to analyse justice in terms of the needs and desires which *would* be satisfied by a particular arrangement, underlines the importance of searching for evidence and seeking to articulate needs and desires, as well as striving to defend or defeat a claim through argumentation and debate. There are, in other words, *empirical indicators* that may be employed in argumentation and it simply will not do to suggest, *à la* Hindess and Hirst, that the only way in which a theoretical discourse can be assessed is in terms of its own internal

consistency. But it must be stressed that these empirical indicators are *only* indicators and not conclusive grounds; they retain a hypothetical status which could only be confirmed or confuted by a rational argumentation and deliberation among the subjects concerned. And this epistemological gap is not, in my opinion, an undesirable result. For it attests to the deep and ineliminable link between theory and practice in that sphere of social inquiry where *subjects* capable of action and reflection are among the *objects* of investigation.

Conclusion

In this essay I have conducted a critical analysis of some recent work in English on the theory of ideology. I have argued that, while recent theorists offer insights which are worthy of being sustained, nevertheless their contributions suffer from many faults. My principal concern was to show that the conceptions of ideology advocated by Seliger, Gouldner and Hirst are stripped of any critical edge, so that the link between ideology and the critique of domination is attenuated or altogether destroyed. I have also tried to show that such theorists have not paid sufficient attention to the relation between ideology and language. It is important to consider these two themes — ideology and the analysis of language or 'discourse' — in conjunction with one another, precisely because the study of ideology must be seen, at least in part, as the study of language in the social world.

The critical discussion of Seliger, Gouldner and Hirst provided the basis for a series of constructive remarks. These remarks — admittedly sketchy, tentative, incomplete — were offered with the aim of elaborating an alternative approach to the study of ideology which draws together theoretical and methodological considerations. Ideology must be conceptualised, I maintained, within the framework of a general social theory, one which explores the relation between action and structure and gives a central role to the concept of power. To study ideology, within such a framework, is to study the ways in which meaning (signification) serves to sustain relations of domination. An inquiry into the interrelation of meaning and power may be seen, I suggested, as a form of depth hermeneutics. Mediated by the discursive analysis of linguistic constructions and the social analysis of the conditions of discursive production, the depth interpretation of ideology issues in a projection of meaning that unfolds the referential dimension of discourse and connects it with the relations of domination which meaning serves to sustain. As such, the study of ideology bears a close connection to the critique of domination. It raises complex problems of justification which can only be resolved by engaging in an epistemological reflection, a reflection focused on the concepts of truth and justice and sensitive to the peculiar constitution of the social world.

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Notes

43. This approach will be pursued in my forthcoming book, *Language and Ideology*, to be published by Macmillan.

44. See especially Anthony Giddens, *New Rules of Sociological Method: A Positive Critique of Interpretative Sociologies* (London, Hutchinson, 1976); and *Central Problems in Social Theory: Action, Structure and Contradiction in Social Analysis* (London, Macmillan, 1979).

45. See, for example, the analyses offered by Giddens in his recent book, *A Contemporary Critique of Historical Materialism, vol. 1: Power, Property and the State* (London, Macmillan, 1981). I have developed this criticism of Giddens's theory of structuration in my review of the latter volume; see 'Rethinking history: for and against Marx', *Philosophy of the Social Sciences*, forthcoming.

46. For a more detailed discussion of this and other issues raised in the second part of this essay, see my *Critical Hermeneutics: A Study in the Thought of Paul Ricoeur and Jürgen Habermas* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1981).

47. This point is forcefully stated by Anthony Giddens in *A Contemporary Critique of Historical Materialism*, ch. 10.

48. Cf. Max Weber, *Economy and Society: An Outline of Interpretive Sociology*, ed. Guenther Roth and Claus Wittich (Berkeley, University of California Press, 1978), vol. 1, chs. 1 and 3.

49. For an insightful discussion of the ways in which understanding may be 'blocked' or 'limited', see Paul Willis, *Learning to Labour: How Working Class Kids Get Working Class Jobs* (Westmead, Hants., Saxon House, 1977).

50. Claude Lefort, 'The genesis of ideology in modern societies' (my translation).

51. Pierre Bourdieu, 'L'économie des échanges linguistiques', *Langue Française*, 34 (mai 1977), p. 20.

52. Cornelius Castoriadis, *L'Institution imaginaire de la société* (Paris, Seuil, 1975), p. 469.

53. Menachem Begin, in an interview on American television which is reported in the *Guardian* (22 June 1982). According to Begin, 'you invade a land when you want to conquer it, or annex it, or at least conquer part of it. We don't covet even one inch.' This convenient account may be compared with the *OED* definition of 'invasion': an entrance or incursion with armed force; a hostile inroad'.

54. Editorial comment in the *Sun* (30 June 1982), p. 6.

55. Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, trans. John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson (Oxford, Basil Blackwell, 1978), p. 195.

56. I defend this claim in my manuscript on 'Theories of ideology and methods of discourse analysis' (forthcoming).

57. See especially Paul Ricoeur, *Hermeneutics and the Human Sciences: Essays on Language, Action and Interpretation*, ed. and trans. John B. Thompson (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1981); see also Ricoeur's critical essays on structuralism in *The Conflict of Interpretations: Essays in Hermeneutics*, ed. Don Ihde (Evanston, Northwestern University Press, 1974); and his brilliant study of psychoanalysis, *Freud and Philosophy: An Essay on Interpretation*, trans. Denis Savage (New Haven, Yale University Press, 1970).

58. Paul Ricoeur, 'What is a text? Explanation and understanding', in *Hermeneutics and the Human Sciences*, p. 161.

59. Cf. Erving Goffman, *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* (Harmondsworth, Middlesex, Penguin, 1959); and Pierre Bourdieu, *Outline of a Theory of Practice*, trans. Richard Nice (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1977).

60. 'Media studies' is a subject in its own right; among the recent publications of particular interest are the two volumes by the Glasgow University Media Group, *Bad News* (London, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1976); and *More Bad News* (London, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1980).

61. The main elements of Greimas's method are presented in A.J. Greimas, *Sémantique structurale: recherche de méthode* (Paris, Larousse, 1966); and *Du sens: essais sémiotiques (Paris, Seuil, 1970)*. The method has been applied to political discourse by Yves Delahaye in *La Frontière et le texte: pour une sémiotique des relations internationales* (Paris, Payot, 1977); and *L'Europe sous les mots: le texte et la déchirure* (Paris, Payot, 1979). See also the monumental study by Jean-Pierre Faye, *Langages totalitaires: critique de la raison/l'économie narrative* (Paris, Hermann, 1973).

62. Cf. Roland Barthes, *Mythologies*, trans. Annette Lavers (St. Albans, Herts., Paladin, 1973).

63. For an example of the analysis of argumentative structure, see Pierre Lascoumes, Ghislaine Moreau-Capdevielle and Georges Vignaux, 'Il y a parmi nous des monstres', *Communications*, 28 (1978), pp. 127-63. For a more theoretical discussion, see Georges Vignaux, *L'Argumentation* (Genève, Droz, 1977).

64. See Roger Fowler, Bob Hodge, Gunther Kress and Tony Trew, *Language and Control* (London, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1979); and Gunther Kress and Robert Hodge, *Language as Ideology* (London, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1979). I discuss this material in 'Theories of ideology and methods of discourse analysis' (forthcoming).

65. See especially Paul Ricoeur, *The Rule of Metaphor: Multi-disciplinary Studies of the Creation of Meaning in Language*, trans. Robert Czerny (London, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1978), chs. 7 and 8.

66. Cf. Roland Barthes, *Mythologies*, p. 116.

67. This study, conducted by Michel Pêcheux, Paul Henry, Jean-Pierre Poitou and Claudine Haroche, was published under the title 'Un exemple d'ambiguïté idéologique: le rapport Mansholt', *Technologies, Idéologies et Pratiques*, vol. 1, no. 2 (avril-juin 1979), pp. 3-83. For a detailed discussion of this example and of the method employed, see my essay on the work of Pêcheux, cited in note 5.

68. Michel Pêcheux et al., 'Un exemple d'ambiguïté idéologique', p. 69.

69. See especially Jürgen Habermas, *Theory and Practice*, trans. J. Viertel (London, Heinemann, 1974); 'Wahrheitstheorien', in *Wirklichkeit und Reflexion: Walter Schulz zum 60. Geburtstag*, ed. H. Fahrenbach (Pfüllingen, Neske, 1973), pp. 211-65; and *Legitimation Crisis*, trans. Thomas McCarthy (London, Heinemann, 1976).

70. Jürgen Habermas, 'A reply to my critics', in *Habermas: Critical Debates*, ed. John B. Thompson and David Held (London, Macmillan, 1982), p. 222.

71. I have discussed some of these difficulties in my essay on 'Universal pragmatics', in *Habermas: Critical Debates*, pp. 116-33; see also my essay on 'Rationality and social rationalisation: An assessment of Habermas's theory of communicative action', *Sociology* (1983).

72. Hilary Putnam, *Reason, Truth and History* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1981), p. 55.

73. See the important essay by Mary Hesse, 'Theory and value in the social sciences', in *Action and Interpretation: Studies in the Philosophy of the Social Sciences*, ed. Christopher Hookway and Philip Pettit (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1978), pp. 1-16.

74. Jürgen Habermas, *Legitimation Crisis*, p. 113.

75. For an examination of these and other issues, see Steven Lukes, 'Of gods and demons: Habermas and practical reason', in *Habermas: Critical Debates*, pp. 134-48; and my *Critical Hermeneutics*, ch. 5.

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THE POLITICS OF WESTERN MARXISM: REFLECTIONS*

Russell Jacoby

The "Politics of Western Marxism" sounds redundant, as if Marxism itself does not imply a politics. Yet today any reflections on Marxism must recognize its fractured condition; political, philosophical and economic pieces do not fit together. National forms of Marxism offer contending versions of basic events and texts. Marxist scholarship itself has long succumbed to the intellectual division of labor, fragmenting into fields, subfields and sometimes boutiques. Marxist psychoanalysts and Marxist economists cannot communicate; a common vocabulary and experience belong to the past.

Marxism has emphatically devolved into a plural, Marxisms, with scores of warring varieties; many are poisonous. To admit this does not damn the whole Marxist enterprise. Liberal capitalism tolerated, and tolerates, slavery, apartheid, authoritarianism and global starvation, and few suggest that these suffice to junk it.

Yet the regular misdeeds of Marxism cannot be written off as inevitable but deplorable; nor can they be neatly attributed to a hostile environment or billed against all Marxists, a Rosa Luxemburg as well as a Joseph Stalin. At the very least they require a careful sifting of the distinct strands of Marxism. Marx's remark that "history" does nothing — it is particular individuals in particular circumstances who act — must be applied to Marxism itself. "Marxism" does nothing; it is particular Marxists who act in particular circumstances.

Nevertheless, microscopic studies of malignant forms of Marxism may forget the larger issues. Politics cannot be isolated and delivered to appropriate experts, as if politics were of no concern to the Marxist philosophers or sociologists. A political project belongs to the heart and soul of Marxism; and if it is continually adjourned, ignored or relegated to specialists, even the smallest Marxist field suffers. The malaise that afflicts much Western Marxist scholarship derives from the loss of political vitality.

This is not an individual failing or the failing of many individuals. Radical politics seem stalled; they belong to the past or only fleetingly to the present. The sporadic politics of nuclear freeze or ecology do not sustain a Marxist academic superstructure. Yet without a living contact with radical politics, Marxist studies turn arid. Scholars elaborate the relationship of Marx to Hegel or advance post-structural textual methods, but without a political echo, even the participants begin to wonder: what is the point?

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* These reflections are based on my book, *Dialectic of Defeat: Contours of Western Marxism* (New York and London: Cambridge University Press, 1981) and a paper delivered to a Vancouver symposium in Spring 1983 sponsored by the *Canadian Journal of Political and Social Theory.*

This reality cannot be revoked at will; and Western Marxism itself offers no ten-day course to a more satisfying and political Marxism. Indeed theoretical guardians of rigorous Marxism have regularly charged that Western Marxists — T. W. Adorno or Herbert Marcuse — fled from practical politics into romanticism, utopianism and other infantile disorders. Perhaps this charge can be turned upside down; for today the tradition of narrow political Marxism does not even offer a compelling politic. Politics without philosophy, perhaps without utopianism, takes its revenge by reducing politics to hucksterism. "We sold the World Revolution like vacuum cleaners," recalled Arthur Koestler of his Communist Party canvassing days.

The utopianism of Western Marxism proves closer to the political realities, and perhaps popular and secret longings, than the no-nonsense of scientific Marxism, which is petrified in a double sense: it has calcified into dogma and it is frightened of emancipation. Even the editors of *New Left Review*, who have done so much both to introduce (to the Anglo-American world) and to elegantly write off Western Marxism, have recently reconsidered their position. "The resources of that utopianism [of the early Marx and early socialists] will need to be drawn upon and developed again," they write, "if socialism is to confront with any realism the universal threat of a military explosion that would annihilate every class." They suggest that the "romantic" moment of Marxism will have to be re-evaluated. "This task, involving as it does a rethinking of values as well of analyses, has lain largely neglected these past years. *New Left Review* shared that neglect, perhaps in its case with more responsibility than others bore." [1]

In the last years of the 19th century, Western Marxism began assuming an identity by diverging from the dominant orthodox Marxism. Italian theorists, who remained drenched in a Hegelian tradition, did much of the philosophical spadework. Returning to Feuerbach and the early Marx, Giovanni Gentile, Rodolfo Mondolfo and Antonio Labriola challenged a positivist Marxism; and they revived concepts of subjectivity and philosophical critique. While Lukács is usually named as the first to broach the issue of Engels' distortion of Marx, the credit belongs to the Italian socialists. Indeed if discrete ideas can be plotted, it seems likely that Lukács picked up this heretical idea from his Hungarian teacher, Ervin Szabó, who had already discussed it. Szabó, a syndicalist, corresponded with another syndicalist, Georges Sorel, who also criticized Engels' Marxism. Finally, Sorel maintained a long association with Benedetto Croce and Gentile, where the discussion of Engels seems to have originated.

The philosophical allegiances of Western Marxism to Hegel, subjectivity and the critique of ideology seem to lack political impact; yet in the flush of the Russian Revolution they infused 'left' Communism, the premiere challenge to orthodox Leninism. Philosophy informed the political idiom. In these years a political *and* philosophical Western Marxism coalesced both to address the distinct imperatives of Western Europe and to resist the universal claims of Soviet Marxism. Dutch 'leftists' such as Hermann Gorter and Anton Pannekoek became prominent theoretical leaders of this project. As Gorter explained, this

was not mysterious. Insofar as Western Marxism responded to the realities of mature capitalism, it was natural that intellectuals of the oldest bourgeois nation — Holland — should pioneer in its elaboration.

Western Marxism is the Marxism of advanced capitalism; this cannot be overstated. The first Western Marxists claimed that Soviet Marxism, a Marxism of pre-capitalism, minimized the cultural specificity of Western Europe. Gorter's "open letter" to Lenin charged that the realities of a Russian agrarian population undercut the Soviet appreciation of bourgeois hegemony. Similarly, Rosa Luxemburg noted that the authoritarian discipline that Lenin prescribed for the proletariat was in the West the disease, not the cure. For the Soviet Marxists industrialization and a disciplined work force belonged to the future.

Regardless of its theoretical coherency, Western Marxism did not obtain any political victories. The success of orthodox Leninism and the defeat of Western dissenters color 20th century Marxism. After the early 1920s Western Marxism contracts into a small cluster of marginal intellectuals, mavericks and journals. On the other hand, orthodox Marxism posts revolutions in Russia and China, and is represented by political parties in the West. The record speaks for itself.

Or does it? These facts must not be celebrated as commands of history. Little has more warped Marxism than its victory fetish. Historical losers are not automatically blessed by virtue of their defeat: nor are victors annointed by their success. Victory and defeat register a constellation of political forces; they are facts, not judgements. Marxists, least of all, should be unimpressed by the brutal facts of political power. Obviously, who or what party came to power is important, but it is only one of many issues; the victorious programs or theories do not imply universal truths. That a Victor Serge died forgotten in a Mexico City taxicab tells us nothing about the quality of his Marxism. Nor that another Marxist chaired a vast Communist Party confer truth to his theories.

Success is the opium of Marxists; and the habit is difficult to break. From the German Social Democrats of pre-World War I to the Russian and Chinese Revolutions, the bright light of success has dazzled generations of Marxists; it even infiltrates scholarly discourse. Statements by Marxists at leading universities inevitably receive more attention than statements by Marxists at community colleges. If this is reasonable, it is the reason of power; personal success transfers to theories the supposition of truth; lack of success suggests deficient theorizing. These associations, rarely articulated and regularly made, confound power and veracity.

To strip Marxism of its fetish of power and victory requires an historical eye sceptical of success. The reexamination must acknowledge what Marxists rehearse and ignore: vast disjunctions in the social conditions preclude universal theories. The legions of Maoists have long ago dissipated, but the lesson should not be lost. Maoism, a theory of national and peasant revolution, offered precious little to Marxists of advanced industrial society. When Maoists of New York and Paris knocked their heads against the walls, they broke their heads, not the walls.

Yet the shadows that today fall upon Marxism are not simply dispelled by reconsidering the defeated; nor can the shadows be outrun. Advances in Marxist semiotics or post-structuralism may forget to elucidate the ills that have plagued the basic theory. To be sure, critics of Marxism are always in abundance, perhaps today more than ever. Many of the most searching critics are in fact ex-Marxists; Ignazio Silone once quipped that the final struggle will be between the communists and the ex-communists. Before ignoring these critics of Marxism, it should be recalled that at the end of his life Marx carefully studied Bakunin's vituperative attack on Marxism. The task for the present might be put this way: to extract the moment of truth from the critique of Marxism.

"The Gulag is not a blunder or an accident," Bernard-Henri Lévy has written, "not a simple wound or aftereffect of Stalinism; but [it is] the necessary corollary of a socialism which can only actualize homogeneity by driving the forces of heterogeneity back to its fringes, which can aim for the universal only by confining its rebels." [2] If exaggerating, Levy perceives the Marxist distrust of individual differences. Marxism loves systems, and suspects the unsystematic, the individual. Nor is this simply a philosophical preference; Marxism embraces economic rationalization. Here the ambivalent relationship of Marxism to capitalism surfaces. A Marxist socialism succeeds and "negates" capitalism; but elegant discussions of the Hegelian "negation" fail to do justice to the messy reality and its imperatives.

Marxists themselves have interpreted these imperatives in accord with their own economic situation. To industrialize and complete the work of capitalism comprised the first task for Marxists of the "underdeveloped" nations. For the Marxists of the "advanced" countries the task is less to complete than to restructure the economic relations. These two projects rarely converge.

Brecht once charged that Max Horkheimer feared that the masses might become too well-fed and well-sheltered. Brecht's misunderstanding is common (and in his case, willful). Within the "affluent" countries themselves, the urgent needs of the poor and unemployed damn theories of the culture industry to the chitchat of intellectuals. Nevertheless the either/or must be resisted; the point is not play philosophy against economics, culture against work or the psyche against production, as if the former dissolves into the latter. "It is ridiculous," wrote the master dialectician T. W. Adorno, "to reproach chewing gum for diminishing the propensity for metaphysics, but it could probably be shown that Wrigley's profits and his Chicago palace have their roots in the social function of reconciling people to bad conditions and thus diverting them from criticism. It is not that chewing gum undermines metaphysics but that it *is* metaphysics — this is what must be made clear." [3]

Nevertheless, since the Russian Revolution the identification of Marxism with a costly industrialization is virtually complete; that the "successful" revolutions have only occured in the pre- and semi-industrialized nations depleted Marxism of visions beyond enlarged production. For too many Marxists plans to industrialize displace dreams of emancipation, and, often enough, the dreams become nightmares. The imperative to rapidly attain a

communist society cripples Marxism. "Our country's place in history will be assured," the Khmer Rouge leadership declared. "We will be the first nation to create a completely communist society without wasting time on intermediate steps." Wilfred Burchett has estimated the toll: "Enough documentation does exist to confirm that crimes almost without parallel in history were committed against their own people by the Khmer Rouge leadership." He calculates several million lives were lost, and adds, "All the people I had known during a quarter of century of regular contact with Cambodia have been killed." [4]

Marxists must cease to worship at the alter of productivity, science and power; and the human and psychological contours of emancipation must be more than habitually acknowledged and ignored. Without the closest scrutiny, the colonialization of human needs within capitalism damns its successor, socialism, to mimicy. As Harry Madoff, who is grounded in an empirical Marxism distant from utopian speculation, recently stated, "A necessary condition for a truly communist society is a total departure from the culture of capitalism and consumerism. This would mean a *wholly* new approach to the design of cities and villages, transportation, location of industry, technology and much more. Above all, the new culture would have to be grounded in a view of people's needs and a way of life that would be consistent with the maintenance of a cooperative and egalitarian society." [5]

The status of the proletariat itself requires rethinking, as André Gorz has provocatively argued in his *Farewell to the Working Class (Adieux au Prolétariat)*. Nor is he alone. "Today, a hundred years after Marx's death, it is impossible to make out a reasonable case for the view which has been for so long at the very heart of Marxism, i.e. that the proletariat in the advanced capitalist countries is destined to be the agent of revolutionary change." [6] This is not the revisionist Gorz but the orthodox Paul Sweezy.

Gorz's *Farewell* is a good guide through the thicket of dead Marxist concepts. His language recalls Marcuse's *One Dimensional Man*, now 20 years old. "The negation of capital's negation of the worker has not taken place: there is no affirmation. We are left in a one-dimensional universe. In its struggle with capital, the proletariat takes on the identity capital has given it." [7] Or in more prosaic terms, "Capitalist development had endowed the collective worker with a structure that makes it impossible for real, flesh-and-blood workers either to recognize themselves in it, to identify with it or or to internalize it as their own reality and potential power." [8]

Gorz represents what might be called 'the counter-culture after the decline.' With few illusions, and less optimism, he suggests that liberation depends on enlarging the sphere of individual autonomy; and he associates himself with the ideas of Ivan Illich to partially detach individuals from a 'high-tech' consumer society. "There is therefore no point . . . in seeking to identify with laws imminent in historical development. We are not going anywhere: History has no meaning . . . No longer can we give ourselves to a transcendent cause, expecting that it will repay our suffering . . . We must, however, be clear about what we desire. The logic of capital has brought us to the threshold of liberation. But it

can only be crossed at the price of a radical break, in which productionism is replaced by a different rationality."[9] Freedom cannot arise out of the "material process" but only out of "free subjectivity."

Is this possible? Can the individual escape society or is the individual defined by resistance to society? The goal of "partial" freedom may be the key. We have entered the period of partial struggles; these contain universal implications such as nuclear disarmament, but in themselves they do not promise to revolutionize society. At best they obtain partial gains, a preservation of neighbourhood or a temporary halt in armaments. They provide breathing spaces, essential when the oxygen is running low.

These efforts suggest that one of the oldest chestnuts in the Marxist fire must be retrieved, the relationship of reform and revolution. Inasmuch as the scenario of revolution — the storming of the gates — no longer applies to the advanced industrial societies; and insofar as revolutionary forces are not within sight, then the radical impulses within reform must be restudied. Here the Western Marxist legacy is richest. Political victory does not exhaust, even define, revolution; rather the revolutionary impulses must inform tactics, as well as the lives of participants.

Although they have not denied its truth, Western Marxists from Lukács to Sartre have neglected political economy. Nevertheless, a Marxist political economy sustains much of their work. Indeed it has been argued that the most abstract of the Western Marxists, T. W. Adorno, remained orthodox in his allegiance to a Marxist political economy. For instance, his letters to Walter Benjamin, on the latter's Arcades project, often sound like an orthodox Marxist berating an erring revisionist. "The *specific* commodity character of the 19th century, in other words, the industrial production of commodities, would have to be worked out much more clearly and materially," he lectured Benjamin.[10]

Yet the political implications of the economic truths of Western Marxism remain vague. The crisis of capitalism can also lead to barbarism, not only revolution. This would hardly be news to Marx or Rosa Luxemburg. This theoretical possibility, however, became the dark reality for 20th century Marxists. Gorz argues that capitalism engenders not an "authentic" working class, but a "non-class" gravitates to authoritarianism as well as socialism. The truths of political economy are mute; they lead in too many political directions. This justifies a philosophical, a cultural or a psychoanalytic Marxism.

If political economy is mute, intellectuals are not. A striking change in the last twenty-five years is the proliferation of Marxist books, studies and journals. In the 1950s perhaps a handful of professors in North America publically identified with Marsixm; new students did not emerge. Today just a survey of Marxist literature in several fields — see Bertell Ollman's *The Left Academy* — takes hundred of pages. Each discipline can boast journals, books and professors. The renaissance of Western Marxism itself is rooted in this new wave of students and professors.

The growth of Marxist studies promises to cure an ill that has plagued the left, especially in the United States, the loss of its history. The left in the United

States has been unable to maintain a tradition and a literature. Since it must regularly relearn Marxism, it has remained vulnerable to demoralization and repression. No Marxist culture has been transmitted accross generations which would help to avoid mistakes as well as to survive periods of retreat. The depth and breadth of Marxist studies in the university suggest that this will no longer be the case. Despite an unreceptive wider culture, Marxism will subsist in the academies; and when the social conditions unfreeze, a viable Marxist can intervene.

Perhaps. While the quantitative and qualitative growth of Marxist studies cannot be denied, a price in academization has been paid. Marxism threatens to become a series of academic fiefdoms almost indistinguishable from non-Marxist specialities. The problem is not the formation of a theoretical Marxism which is distant from praxis, as if we need a revival of textbook or agit-prop Marxism. The issue is that this theoretical Marxism has become technical, directed solely at colleagues; it has surrendered a public forum.

The price can be glimpsed in the transition from Marcuse to Habermas or C. Wright Mills (or Paul Baran) to more recent Marxist sociologists. The language and reference points have shifted. Although few would argue that Marcuse was easy to read, he as well as a Mills, a Sweezy, an Isaac Deutscher, and a generation of Western Marxists, wrote for an educated public. More recent Marxists in almost all fields — literary studies, philosophy of social science, sociology of world systems — turn their backs on outsiders. The point is not the value of the work, although this also can be questioned, but its insularity. It would be a final irony of Western Marxism. After decades on the margins of Marxism, it begins flourishing in the universities; and just as it is poised to enter a public arena an indecipherable lingo bewitches its tongue.

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Notes

1. *New Left Review* Foreword to Edward Thompson, et al, *Exterminism and Cold War*, London: Verso Editions, pp. viii-ix.
2. Bernard-Henri Levy, *Barbarism with a Human Face*, New York: Harper & Row, 1980, p. 158.
3. T.W. Adorno, *Prisms*, trans. by S. & S. Weber, London: Neville Spearman, 1967, p. 109.
4. Wilfred Burchett, *The China Cambodia Vietnam Triangle*, Chicago: Vanguard Books, 1981, pp. 109, 3.
5. Harry Magdoff, "The Meaning of Work," *Monthly Review*, 34:5 (October, 1982), p. 14.
6. Paul Sweezy, "Marxism and Revolution 100 years after Marx," *Monthly Review*, 34:10 (March, 1983), p. 6.
7. André Gorz, *Farewell to the Working Class*, Boston, South End Press, 1982, p. 39.
8. *Ibid.*, p. 29.
9. *Ibid.*, pp. 73-4.
10. T.W. Adorno to Walter Benjamin (2 August, 1935) in Ernst Bloch, et al, *Aesthetics and Politics*, London: NLB, 1977, p. 114.

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BOURGEOIS CULTURAL IDEOLOGY

Terry Eagleton

Pamela McCallum: *Literature and method: Towards a critique of I.A. Richards, T.S. Eliot and F.R. Leavis.* Gill and Macmillan, 270pp.

Taken together, the three cultural theorists who form the subject of this excellent critique represent a rich repository of bourgeois literary wisdom — one which came into being in a period of severe socio-cultural crisis (the 1920s and '30s), and which conventional cultural thought has still in some ways not surpassed. If it has not, however, it is less because of the profundity of these critics, than because, as Pamela McCallum argues, their work displays in various forms the symptoms of an historical and intellectual impasse.

That impasse, to summarise Professor McCallum's closely-knit argument much too hastily, is one between consciousness and society: more particularly, between an industrial capitalist society recognised by each of these thinkers as spiritually devastated, and the various styles of transcendental consciousness they offer as a response to this alienated condition. Unable to transcend the limits of a very English empiricism in their actual critique of their society, Richards, Eliot and Leavis are consequently driven into disconnected, idealist solutions to the historical ills they identify. This curious amalgam of empiricism and idealism (one without which, one might claim, no major bourgeois ideology has managed to survive for long) is traced back by this book to a central contradiction in the liberal bourgeois heritage, between a sourly disillusioned, appetitive empiricism on the one hand (Hobbes, Bentham), and a richer but always ineffectual liberal humanism on the other (Mill, T.H. Green). Trapped in this static polarity, bourgeois cultural ideology is forced to cobble together a range of always disintegrating solutions to the problem which is itself, pressed into a series of complex intellectual acrobatics whose course this study deftly charts.

Professor McCallum's treatment of I.A. Richards is to my mind the most interesting section of her book. Richards has received surprisingly little sustained attention of late, and has much of a 'period' feel about him; so it is illuminating to read of the influence on his thought of the psychologist G.F. Stout, or to map his doomed attempts to reconcile an essentially behaviouristic theory of mind (and hence of poetry) with those more 'creative', humanistic elements of bourgeois thought he discovered in Coleridge. Taking her cue from an apposite quotation from Georg Lukács, Professor McCallum notes the combination in Richards of an atomistic empiricism with a purely formal, empty network of rational laws. The handling of Eliot is, perhaps not surprisingly, rather less original; it is difficult to know how seriously to take a thinker whose

particular form of transcendentalism lay in nostalgia for a mainly rural society governed by great families and a handful of intellectuals somewhat like himself. Leavis, deeply influential in England though much less so in America, is altogether a tougher nut to crack, superbly sharp as many of his insights were; in the end, as this book argues, he was left with little but a form of critical consciousness sublimely uncontaminated by the very historical conditions it analysed, and so effectively marooned with its own self-validating spiritual absolutes.

What is lacking to all three critics, as Professor McCallum acutely argues, is any adequate concept of totalisation. Culture in their hands tends instantly to fall apart into a range of stubbornly discrete particulars on the one hand, and a set of purely formal laws or elusive spiritual essences on the other. It is no wonder, then, that this book's epigram is Kant's celebrated warning against empty thoughts and blind intuitions. But before others are too brusquely lambasted for their failure to achieve such totalisation, one or two awkward questions arise. Professor McCallum judges these thinkers, rightly in my view, from the standpoint of a dialectical thought at once processual and relational; yet there is nothing materialist about such thought in itself, and indeed this study, though its implicit politics are clearly Marxist, is in effect a good deal more Hegelian. There is little, for example, about the concrete politics of these thinkers, though this, in the light of what seems acceptable as a doctoral thesis at Cambridge these days, is perhaps hardly surprising. Francis Mulhern's seminal study of *Scrutiny* receives, no doubt in some anxiety of influence, a single passing mention. Nor is it at all clear that the concept of 'totality' is without its severe problems. Indeed, it can well be argued that such central concepts of it as we have been traditionally offered, not least within the Marxist-Hegelian heritage from which this study emerges, have themselves been guilty of essentialism and covert transcendentalism.

Given these limits, Professor McCallum has produced a powerful, eloquent piece of work which represents a valuable contribution to the study of the English cultural formation. It relies a little too heavily, perhaps, on some unargued Marxist humanism, which would view the full development of human 'capacities' as an unquestioned goal in itself. Whether this includes the undoubted capacity to murder, exploit and appropriate is, as usual with such left-humanism, left obscure. The book is for the most part lucidly enough written, though there are spots of computerese ('mediated reciprocities and interactions of a diachronic relational process . . . '; what is a *non*-diachronic process?), and 'method' and 'methodology' are occasionally used as synonyms, which in British English at least they are certainly not. Such quibbles irritably vented, the final word should be one of praise for the intellectual rigour, judiciousness of judgement and tenaciousness of commitment which distinguish this valuable study.

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CYNICISM

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Peter Sloterdijk. *Kritik der zynischen Vernunft.* Frankfurt/Main Suhrkamp Verlag, Neue Folge, Band 99, 1983; 2 Volumes, 954 pp.

If Oscar Wilde's judgment of our world is valid, as expressed in his definition of "cynicism" (as) "merely the art of seeing things as they are instead of as they ought to be", then philosophy and critical theory have been inadequate in making us understand and cope with this world. The enormity of the dangers confronting our civilization on all sides, putting into question the very survival of mankind, the hopeless fumbling and blindness of our leaders of every political persuasion in face of imminent disaster, and the massive stupidity and gullibility to be found among the electorates of democracies, make the concepts devised by philosophers to analyse these phenomena appear insufficient. Thus, ideas such as the "legitimation crisis", the "banality of evil", "radical evil", "the gnostic dreamworld", the "general crisis of capitalism" end even the concept of nihilism are all still too rooted in theologies of hope and human power and in projecting images of how the world should be. They do not explain sufficiently how these crises arose, because they do not match the cynicism of events with a realism of concepts. In part they are based on assumptions about the subject of human history and the efficacy of human willing which also underlie the very mechanisms that have brought us to this turning point in the history of the planet. Thereby they unwittingly add to, rather than diminish, our problems.

The crisis of our culture is simultaneously the crisis of philosophy as critical theory. Given this state of affairs, Walter Benjamin believed that our age had entered the twilight of critique because events are too close to our skins to permit us the distance necessary for a critical judgment of them. Nostra res agitur. Unless one contents oneself with a positivistic affirmation of things as they are or their ideological obfuscation, one is better to remain silent, for the moment of verbal negation has passed. Nevertheless, Peter Sloterdijk's exhilarating and profound recent book on the structures of cynical reason seems to throw a flash of illumination into this twilight of critique and culture. It achieves what one would have no longer believed possible, that is to adorn the dying tree of philosophy with new foliage.

Sloterdijk quotes with approval Benjamin's contention that the events in which we are implicated are so burning as to deny us the very possibility of a

standpoint outside them. Hence one cannot achieve an impartial vision. In this state of affairs, Sloterdijk holds that it is nevertheless possible to continue the project of critical theory, not by assuming a free and objective perspective, but from a perspective which expresses the burning pain that events impose on us. Thus, all subjectivities are concerned in the a-priori of suffering which permits us, if not an impartial, at least a common perspective. Suffering implies a knowledge of the world which needs to find its voice in a theory. Critique is possible insofar as pain tells us what is true and what is false, provided that too much suffering has not destroyed our sensibilities. This attitude which underlies the author's analysis of cynicism is hence not at the same "height" assumed by traditional philosophy in the spirit of the Socrates canonized by the various Platonisms and by Christianty. Rather, it is an attitude of closest proximity to events, a micrology which takes its inspiration from that other Socrates, the *mainoumenos,* or mad and raving Socrates whose myth is associated with the figure of Diogenes.

Sloterdijk is careful to distinguish the philosophical movement of the ancient kynics from the modern concept of cynicism. While the two are inextricably linked — their separation dates only from the beginning of the last century — their inner affinity as well as their profound contradictions are as such highly revealing of the nature of our culture. In this regard Sloterdijk bases his analysis on an excellent earlier work on the figure of Diogemes the Kynic and modern cynicism, Heinrich Niehues-Pröbsting's *Der Kynismus des Diogenes und der Begriff des Zynismus* (München: Wilhelm Fink Verlag, 1979). Cynicism is a name that characterises the terrible moral ambiguity of all aspects of life in this age of nihilism. It is connected to the ancient philosophy of Kynism, which represents a different aspect of the Socratic impulse, by way of a cultural filiation and transformation which might itself be termed cynical.

Kynism, normally associated with the figures of Antisthenes and Diogenes, was a movement of philosophical critique inspired by Socrates and continuing and surpassing his ironical attacks on the way of life of the polis. It was a plebeian philosophy linking elements of what later would be called dialectical materialism with existentialism in an attack on the perversions of the social order and its idealistic distortions. It continued the demand of Socrates that philosophy be lived and embodied rather than merely theorised, by developing a way of arguing philosophically by means of gestures and satirical and physical demonstrations. Thus it provided a means of incorporating those elements of human nature that by virtue of their position "below" had been repressed and defined away from "above" by the dogmatically hardened idealisms of the Socratic impulse centered around the canonized Socrates. It was the plebeian antithesis to the aristocratic philosophy of the masters of the schools, which invoked repressed nature against repressive conventions and thus insured the public return of the repressed. In publicising repressed elements by means of animalistic gestures, it achieved a style of argument that was based on the unity in one act of a mode of demonstration with a mode of universalisation. It thus became an artistic rival to the theoretical mode of the idealistic Socratic

discourse, by imitating the semantic system of art as unity of demonstration and universalisation.

The critical impulse thus created chiefly by the figure of Diogenes radiated out and resurged throughout the history of Western civilization in the forms of satire and critiques that undermined the dogmatic fixations and fraudulent pretensions of the closed world of merely theoretical discourse. As a kynic impulse it was always associated with the standpoints of the excluded, the repressed and forgotten, pitting the antithesis from "below" against the ideological affirmations from "above". When, however, the effort of the kynic impulse to say the naked truth and to forego the universal pretension that the emperor wore clothes was adopted by the lords and masters as a position of defense, then it became cynicism. Cynicism is the kynic impulse which has changed sides. It arises when the standpoint of the "above" also engages in truthtelling, in saying things as they really are, without renouncing in practice its repression and distortion of the whole. Cynicism is the honesty of oppressive masters who for a comment talk out of school and adopt the impudence of the slaves as a strategy of oppression.

The drive for truth as demonstrated by the proverbial boldness of the kynics expressed and embodied the real energies of the repressed strata of society. Thereby a reality is created which can only be fought but cannot be denied. It implies an ability to say no to the unnatural conditions of life created by repressive orders. It is an affirmation of freedom from below. The same kind of bold truthtelling by the powerful, by contrast, becomes the cynical antithesis to the idealisms and ideologies that mask political reality. "The cynical master lifts his mask for a moment, smiles at his weak opponent — and continues to suppress him. C'est la vie. Noblesse oblige. We must have order... It is not David who challenges Goliath, but the Goliathes of all times — from the arrogant Assyrian kings to modern bureaucrats — who show to brave but hopeless Davids just where up and down are located; it is cynicism in the service of the public." (p. 222) In this sense cynicism is enlightened false consciousness.

False consciousness that is enlightened implies a simultaneous affirmation and denial of fundamental values. Truths are acknowledged theoretically and denied practically. This schizoid structure of consciousness was once reserved to "great statesmen... who were free enough to become cynics, so as to play coolly with means and ends... Today every fonctionaire and backbencher is as versed in this as Talleyrand, Metternich and Bismark put together." (pp. 224-225). Today we live in times in which "basic values" have become indistinguishable from subterfuges. The servant of order

> is quite capable of doing with his right hand what the left hand would never permit... he is functionally an agent of capital, but intentionally a democrat; in regard to the system a fonctionaire of reification but in his life-world a self-realiser; objectively a carrier of destruction, subjectively a pacifist; in himself the unchainer of catastrophes, but for himself harmlessness itself. Everything is possible with schizoids.

> In this world of clever instinctive conformists the body of the enlightened servant of order says no to the constraints imposed by his mind, and the mind negates the manner in which the body purchases itself its comfortable self-preservation. This mixture is our moral status quo. (p. 225)

The all-pervasiveness of enlightened false consciousness is the result of the corruption of the resurgences in Western history of the kynic impulses. The class structures have been flexible enough to absorb the kynic energies and integrate them into mixtures of truth and falsehood. Historically, most resurgences of the kynic impulse have been linked to the rise to power of the bourgeoisie. In its pre-power phase the bourgeoisie adopted Kynism as a successful strategy. After assuming power, bourgeois intellectuals transformed Kynism into cynicism. Sloterdijk traces this movement form kynism to cynicism in the theory and practice of early bourgeois art as well as in the eight stages of enlightenment philosophy.

Modern art, as beginning in the Renaissance and revived in the period of the *sturm und drang* strove to incorporate the sensuous totality of man. Both in theory and practice artists in these periods saw themselves as upholders and vindicators of a world of wholeness in the midst of self-division and disunity in the political realm. Unfortunately, the sensuous totality of man remained confined to the realm of beautiful seeming, and all attempts to translate the beautiful into actuality were fictionalised. Thus the arising of a Bohemian subculture and a simultaneous movement toward art for art's sake was able to contain and render harmless the explosive potential of early bourgeois art.

Similarly, the kynic critiques of the established order in the various stages of enlightenment were transformed into cynical affirmations. Sloterdijk distinguishes eight such stages or waves of critique beginning with the critique of revelation in Lessing's philosophical analysis of the sacred Christian texts which undercuts the claim that these texts constitute the absolute word of transcendence. This critique was followed by the critique of religious illusions which unmasks the various attempts to define the undefinable as naive projections of imminent images into transcendence. Despite both of these critiques, organised religions with their claims to absolute and revealed knowledge simply continue to exist. They have even been strengthened, in so far as the tools of critical analysis developed by enlightened philosophers have been accepted among the instruments of faith. "Perhaps religion is indeed an incurable ontological psychosis (Ricoeur), and the Furies of displacing critique must tire before the eternal recurrance of the displaced." (p. 83)

The critiques of revelation and religion were followed by the more encompassing critique of metaphysics as a whole in the work of Kant. It resulted in a consciousness which recognises the equivalence and undecidability of all metaphysical alternatives. Nevertheless, modern consciousness is "famished for the unattainable" and continues to postulate transcendent realms despite their having been unmasked as illusions.

Marx's critique, the fourth stage of enlightenment, goes beyond all previous efforts, in that it aims at an "integral critique of heads" as such. Guided by a realistic vision of the processes of labour in society, Marx analyses every form of consciousness as a function of the social process. Yet Marx also believed that one form of consciousness, that of the proletariat, would be exempt from the universality of reification and would be able to constitute itself as the emancipatory consciousness of an historical subject destined to liberate mankind. This theory shows the fundamental ambiguity, the "rupture epistemologique" in Marx between a theory of emancipation and a theory of universal mystification. In the former, the accent lies on the dialectics of liberation, in the latter the emphasis is on the processes of reification of consciousness, the "necessarily false consciousness" reflecting the processes of capital formation. According to Sloterdijk, the break in Marx between an early "humanistic" phase and a later "scientific" phase, is really a shift from a kynic impulse to a cynical technology of rule. This has resulted in the consequence that Marxism has become the functional lie of a system that uses the moment of truth in Marx as a means of ideological hardening. Its practitioners lie in saying the truth, thus continuing the rupture in Marx to the extent that socialism, once a language of hope, has become a means for stopping critical thinking.

Marx's theory of ideology prefigured this cynical rafinesse of present socialist systems. Indeed, it was a dialectical mixture between kynic and cynical elements, a theory of emancipation and power from its very beginning. It promised itself power by thinking the subject of theory as a function of social development. Thus it aimed at "controlling" history through an act of self-reification. By making itself into an instrument of the presumed future it believed to make the future into its own instrument. Marx was capable of this dialectical feat, because "his left half resembles Danton, his right reminds one of Bismarck. Like Hegel, who carried within himself a similar double nature of revolutionary and statesman, he is one of the greatest dialectical thinkers"... (pp. 187-88).

The fifth stage of the enlightenment, the critique of moral semblance, is associated prominently with the philosophy of Nietzsche, although its roots go back to the sayings of the great founders of religion. This critique goes from an unmasking of double standards in morality to an inversion of seeming and being and finally to the reduction of morality to a realistic primary motive. These three strategies in unmasking the hypocrisy of pretended morality and the reality of ressentiment behind the semblance of compassion, unfortunately end with Nietsche's philosophy of the will of power. This "discovery" of a presumed primal motive behind all moral semblance has provided the impetus for one of the most striking inversions of the kynic impulse into a cynical philosophy of power. The concept of the power will has found its resonance among the Christian imperialists of the 19th and 20th centuries who saw in it a licence for their drive for power. It enabled them to unite political brutality and philosophical subtlety in one continuum.

The next two stages of enlightenment, the critique of transparency of the self

and the critique of naturalistic semblance have left their mark on modern culture both by providing emancipatory potential as well as potential for naively refined cynicisms. The former, the critique by Freud and others, has destroyed the illusion that every self knows itself best by introducing the concept of unconscious mental structures. The psychoanalytic method of deciphering consciousness has laid bare an enormous potential for liberation. But it has simultaneously led to a fixation of neurotic structures and to an inflation of infantilism. It has provided a refuge for emotional coldness that hides behind an analytical mask, as well as the possibility that the regression practiced in the service of the ego may remain regression enjoyed for its own sake. The latter, the critique of naturalistic semblance, associated chiefly with the work of Rousseau, has led to the unmasking of the fiction of an "evil" and brutal nature, a nature "red in tooth and claw" as merely a projection of a particular social order into the natural. But by tracing human ills to victimizations by class society it has itself provided enormous cynical potential.It has thus provided a haven for self-exculpation and indirect aggressivity that permits the type of the permanent victim to hide his aggression behind his victimization. Its worst cynical form is the condescension with which professional liberators of society regard its victims. By treating them as victims they not only deprive them of a remnant of dignity but also claim to rule them on the basis of their greater insight.

The last stage of enlightenment critique, the critique of private semblance, is especially important not only because it is a critique which presently has not yet done its work of undermining illusory structures, but also because it touches upon the very foundations of the structures of cynicism, namely the schizoid ego. It is a critique which questions the very existence of self or ego. The belief that the self is like a thing, distinct from the body, hides the most subtle and most pervasive form of reification. It is at the basis of all attempts of a consciousness that aims at power over things. It is the subject of the will to power as will to will. The disease that is called modern culture originates in an attempt by a "self" to set itself up as a thing over and apart from the processes of nature. While every concrete consciousness is a set of historically and socially pre-programmed schemata of perception, forms of judgment and logical thinking, and is as such comprehensive as a distinct entity, it is a reflexive illusion when these schemata come to think of themselves as having existence like an object in space-time. All attempts at affirming identity become reflexively hardened narcissisms, the most glaring examples of which are the "tank-egos" that maintain the present military-industrial complex. A removal of this illusion, hardened into a separate "self" by millenia of programmations, would result in the realisation that literally there is nobody there. Cynicism may be understood as an attempt to prevent the dissolution of this illusion which may be subjectively feared as the annihilation of "self". Sloterdijk believes that the way in which in the *Odyssee* Odysseus escapes the wrath of the cyclops is as superb statement about the problem of the self. These passages are so illuminating that they deserve to be quoted at some length:

> The search for 'identity' seems one of the deepest unconscious programmizations, so deeply hidden that it escapes even the most attentive reflection. We all have programmed in us a formal *someone* as the carrier of our social identifications. *He* guarantees everywhere the precedence of the alien over the own; where ego seems to be, there always have already been others before me, in order to automatize me through my socializations. Our true self-experience is original *no-one-ness* which remains buried in this world beneath tabu and panic. At bottom no life has a name. The self-conscious *no-one* in us . . . is the living source of freedom. This living *no-one* is the one who remembers the energetic paradises underneath all personalities, despite the horrors of socialization. Its form of life is the intelligent body which we should call *yes body* and not *nobody*, and which may unfold itself from an areflexive narcissism toward a vision of itself as mirrored in the cosmic whole . . .
>
> It is frequently necessary to become no-one, in order to survive. The *Odyssee* knows this at its most grandiose, wittiest scene. Odysseus, the present-minded Greek hero calls . . . to the blinded Cyclops that *no-one* had blinded him. Thus one may overcome both one-eyedness and blindness. With this call Odysseus . . . leaves the sphere of primitive moral causalities, the network of revenge . . . The utopia of every conscious life is and remains a world in which everybody may be Odysseus and may let live the *no-one* despite history, politics and citizenship, despite *someone-ness*.
>
> . . . therefore Odysseus and not Hamlet is the true ancestor of modern and everlasting intelligence.

It is easy to see how these ideas undercut the very bases of most structures of our lives. Hence we may see in the general panic of the dissolution of self caused by them one of the deepest sources of cynicism. The class structure itself would be only a secondary cause. The tank-egos into which the reflexive illusions have grown would not necessarily be dissolved with the attainment of a classless society. This knowledge about the illusory nature of the self, hitherto reserved for meditative minorities, finds its everlasting enemy in the structure of cynicism.

After thus discussing the nature of cynical defenses against the critical philosophy of the enlightenment, which consist in simultaneous affirmation and denial, Sloterdijk next analyses the great cynical types of world history as well as the cynicisms embedded in modern social structures. In the former, the cabinet of cynics, the author discusses the origins of cynicism in antiquity in the interpretation given of Diogenes and the Kynics by the Satirist Lucian of Samosata. Cynicism as kynic philosophy that has changed sides and has been

adopted by the power-holders properly begins with the writings of the ancient rhetorician Lucian. Lucian was followed in Western history by figures embodying both the kynic impulse and its cynic distortion. The author discusses three types, all of them literary, which have shaped and defined the modern cynical consciousness. There are Goethe's Mephisto as the kynic-cynical embodiment of the will to knowledge, Dostoijevsky's grand-inquisitor, as the founder of modern institutional cynicism, and finally Heidegger's *One*, as the real subject of the diffuse cynicism of modernity.

It is odd that two figures from Western history which most readily suggest themselves for an analysis of cynicism are missing from this list. Thus, it might be argued that Augustine's doctrine of the political role of the church and his politicisation of Christian spirituality constitutes one of the most influential cynical inversions of the original kynic impulse radiating from Jesus. The grand inquisitor is believable as a figure precisely because of this antecedent origin of a cynical doctrine of institutions from a kynic critique. Similarly, one of the sublime masters of the cynical erection of schizoid structures would seem to be Machiavelli's Prince. This figure, more than most others, prefigures the cynicism of politics among nations. In general, the role of institutional Christianity in the genesis of cynicism, although discussed, does not receive the attention it seems to deserve.

Nevertheless, Sloterdijk's analysis of his three cynical types is excellent. Let us examine here only the last, Heidegger's *One*, as the one closest to our skins. The description of this subjectivity contains besides one of the most penetrating critiques of Heidegger's philosophy.

According to Sloterdijk, Heidegger analyses the impersonal subject, the *One* that initially governs us as the quintessence of inauthenticity. It is the *no-one* under whose rule I live as the other. Everyone is the other and no one is himself. For it everything seems authentic but is not, all discourse is mere talking in dispersion of mind. Human reality is controlled by imitators, by ego-machines that lead a ghost-like existence that is nevertheless no real existence. Everything appears as if. To separate appearance from reality would mean a re-introduction of the old style of metaphysical thinking based on the distinction between existence and essence. Heidegger does not wish to do this, yet he wants to maintain the possibility of a difference between inauthentic and authentic. The will authenticity bespeaks the metaphysical remnant in Heidegger's philosophy.

Heidegger leads us in a phantastically explicit manner through the realms of a positive negativity of the *One* and its dispersions, while simultaneously asserting that all of this is said without any utopian aims nor any moral critique. The alienation in which we live does not point back to another, unalienated condition from which we might have been thrown. The inauthenticity cannot be distinguished from authenticity yet points beyond itself. With this ambiguity Heidegger achieves a second liquidation of metaphysics after the first one achieved by the grand theories of the 19th century. He attempts a radical secularisation of aims and purposes. Existence is not a progress toward any kind

of grand purpose. One must think beyond good and evil not only in regard to means but also in regard to ends. We are in no way called upon to suffer today for a great tomorrow. Thus, Heidegger provides a powerful critique of the "socialisms of the grand tomorrow", of the "utopias of endless sacrifice".

Heidegger, while pointing to an authentic existence, nevertheless refuses to commit himself to any kind of moral distinction. This constitutes precisely his cynicism. But like every cynicism, this one also harbors a kynic core. Sloterdijk believes this kynic impulse to reside in Heidegger's concept of a resolute existence toward death. He quotes the following sentence from *Being and Time;* "The One prevents the arising of the courage to fear death". In this statement there is hidden a powerful critique of all those forms of existence that subsume one's own death as a means to the attainment of some great purpose. In the general culture based on armaments the meaningless of life is escaped by the many through an escape from the fear of death. But the "I die" accompanied by fear is to be understood as a kynic a-priori which can become the foundation for a resolute celebration of life, a giving of meaning by an energetic consciousness to the here and now. Needless to say Heidegger himself does not take this step but remains in a general cynical stance, the affirmation of an authentic other, a conscious existence without commitment to it. In Heidegger the critique of instrumental reason finds its completion as a critique of cynical reason. The cynicism of the means-ends calculators is destroyed by the kynic critique of all ends. There is here a great potential for liberation, once the Heideggerian melancholy is overcome. Authenticity can then be experienced in "love and sexual union, in irony and in laughter, creativity and responsibility, meditation and ecstasy". The difference between inauthentic and authentic existence would then be one between unconsciously automated guidance by a general cynical subject and conscious resoluteness toward that which is truly one's own, the consciously lived presence. Life can be lived in a continuum of conscious moments that lie beyond all moralities, especially those substitute moralities that place the good into the distant future and help to relativise evil on the way there.

Perhaps the most impressive section of Sloterdijk's long book is the one dealing with the six major institutional cynicisms by way of a phenomenological analysis, as well as the secondary cynicisms ensconced in the information media, the markets and the systems of criminal justice.

The core of the analysis of institutional cynicisms is the recognition that in political reality as it is presently constituted the actual is not the rational. It departs from the fact that our institutions normally operate upon an idealistic interpretation that is counterposed to another, hidden interpretation which is suggested by the very functioning of these institutions. The officially proclaimed goals of institutions hide a more cynical recognition of the ugly "reality" behind the beautiful "appearance". Each of the major institutions hides a double truth: a truth of the masters and a truth of the victims, one of the hero and one of his valet. In this manner Sloterdijk describes the cynicisms institutionalised in the military, the organization of the state, the institutions

governing sexuality, medicine, religion and organized science. Some of these cynicisms may be briefly characterised.

Military policies have accustomed us to consider a gigantic *folie à deux* as the quintessence of conscious realism. Adaptation to the status quo means adaptation to a paranoid definition of reality. In this respect the terms "reality" and "realism" are systematically misused by official propagandists of the military apparatuses. These tend to characterise resistance to the madness of the armaments race as escape from reality into a world of beautiful dreams. In actual fact, we must escape from the systematic paranoia dominating everyday life into a realistic structure of detente.

In the state system cynicism arises from the tension between the two aspects of the modern state. It is on the one hand a system of legitimised oppression and violence. But on the other, it is the protector of the helpless, the maintainer of order and defender of peace. From the mixture of these two contradictory functions arises the cynical negation of all official interpretations of the state in theory and practice. Thus, the maintenance of peace is often merely the postponement of war, the establishment of order a euphemism for the bloody suppression of justified protest, concern for welfare merely a device to prevent revolution by the giving of alms, and the administration of justice a harmless term for the legalisation of refined repression. Servants of the state systematically engage in double think and double talk. Existence with this schizoid division in the mind has been in the West ever since Christianity became the official religion of imperial powers, and the religion of hope thus placed itself in the service of brutal powers in order to perserve its "kingdom of love". Thus, every symbol of this culture has become simultaneously a symbol of barbarism. The apogee of political cynicism was then reached with the coming of the national socialist state, which, according to Sloterdijk merits the epithet cynicism of cynicism. It was accompanied and followed by the development of a cynical structure of like dimensions, namely a state-capitalist society that labels itself socialist. The conflict today between two seemingly different systems of states is in reality a conflict within each system. In both the market capitalist states and the state capitalist systems the real conflict obtains between relations of production and forces of production. Both systems attempt to deflect attention from these conflicts within by projecting them outwards as conflicts between systems. Thus, a pretended capitalism is locked in deadly struggle with a pretended socialism, with both systems being in reality equally bankrupt. This real struggle over fictitious issues prevents both systems from realising the potentials inherent in them as actual tendencies towards free and rational societies.

The cynicism pervading sexual life is created by the dualisms introduced on the basis of Western ideologies of love. From the beginning in Platonism and Christianity theories of love have wittingly or unwittingly postulated dualities of body and spirit, "lower" and "higher" loves, genitals and the heart, sexuality and "love". These hierarchies have become institutionalised and have led to a creation of forbidden realms whose attractiveness grew as a function of the

measure of their suppression. The more the "lower" elements would be repressed, the more they returned to haunt the dreams of the "higher". Repressive idealisms have thus daemonized a whole spectrum of human experience. The very attempt had to lead to systematic lying in this sphere; hence the cynicism informing sexuality is an expression of this dishonesty. It is an attempt to accept the repressed but irrepressible reality in the guise of its denial. An example of this cynicism is modern pornography. While pornography has by and large lost all shock value, it is nevertheless still a booming business. It is, as it were, a "practicing of the acceptance of the not-yet structure of a schizoid consciousness which has been cheated out of its living time. It sells that which is immediately given as a matter of course as a distant goal, as a utopia of sexual attraction." (p. 488)

The stage for the appearance of medical cynicism is set by the dual function of the doctor as healer and partisan of life, and as a holder of power over life and death. With the former he is a natural ally of the oppressed, with the latter he is potentially in league with the oppressors. In modern life these two functions have separated into a popular medicine and a medicine of the masters whose emphasis is on maintaining the independent power status of the guild of practitioners. The entire practice of medicine has, moreover, developed into the technocratic administration of bodies in line with the general tendencies of the culture as a whole. The master medicine is the medicine of masters, insofar as it orients itself on its ability to cure the "bodies of power."

Additionally, in modern medical practice most diseases are the consequences of unreasonable modes of life fostered by society and even by medical practice itself. The very administration of medicine in such cases puts the doctor into the highly ambiguous position of acting against his better knowledge, of favoring with one hand the ills for which he receives his remuneration with the other. The partisanship of the doctor with life would oblige him to seek the prevention of illnesses by the elimination of their social and medical causes. This would imply the establishment of political and dietary intervention into those forms of life that render people ill. To the extent that medical practitioners merely content themselves with high technology and spectacular cures of illnesses, they are in the position of allowing the causes of diseases a free hand and cashing in on their results. There is thus a choice between a kynism of the simple life and a cynicism of comfortable dying, a kynism that confronts self-destruction, stupidity and ignorance with the certainty of death versus a cynicism that collaborates with the general repression of death in our overfed and overmilitarised societies.

Religious cynicism characterises organised Christianity in so far as it is based on dogmatisations of symbolic structures in regard to things on which in principle there cannot be certainty. Hence, dogmatic Christianity is from its beginning ridden by *mauvaise foi* and double think. Increasing dogmatisation has led to a self-deceptive and self-hypnotic state of consciousness in which one strongly affirms "absolute" faith in those areas in which one knows oneself to be highly uncertain. The heritage of *mauvaise foi* has remained after

secularisation within all post-Christian ideologies. Modern ideological distortions were prepared by the Christian habit of presenting the intrinsically uncertain in the guise of "conviction", the merely believed as the known, and one's confession as one's battle lie. Together with the systematic daemonization of the erotic sphere and its practice of confronting the fullness of life with the reminders of death, Christianity has left us with a bad consciousness that is spirally twisted in upon itself.

Finally, the cynicism pervading organized science derives from the gap between an increasingly abstract form of scientific knowledge, accessible to the very few, and the mixture of half wisdom and truth that constitutes popular wisdom. Modern science as the technological administration for the testing of abstract hypotheses is incapable of being the kind of knowledge that can be incorporated and lived. Moreover, the grand philosophies of order that provided the metaphysical foundations for the rise of modern science usually were confident of being the complete vision of the real. Kynic critiques have usually brought to bear facts and aspects of reality that do not fit the grand theories, against the pretensions of the latter to absolute knowledge. But the real cynicism of science according to Sloterdijk is constituted by the positivistic methods of empirical science. These methods are applied to aspects of reality in which such "scientific objectivity" is illegitimate, as in all the humanistic and social disciplines. In these subjects there should not be scientific neutrality but a concern for the "material" investigated. Scientific objectivity inevitably implies here a cynical complicity with those aspects of social reality which in the eyes of the subjects studied cry to heaven. The appropriate response to social facts that impose suffering upon men is not objectivity but passionate concern. The functionalist theoreticians find however, in positivist methodism an organon for the defense of existing systems against their victims, a defense with "mellow brutality and cool indirection."

The remainder of Sloterdijk's book contains interesting material on the secondary cynicisms referred to above, a transcendental analysis of schizoid subjectivity as well as a witty section on the psychosomatic manifestations of cynicism. By far the most interesting part is, however, the author's lengthy analysis of Weimar culture as a type case of, and a symbol for, the quintessence of cynicism. This goes back to an earlier book of the author dealing with an analysis of literature from the Weimar period.

Weimar culture was a highpoint of cynicism as enlightened false consciousness, as the simultaneous affirmation and denial of basic values. It was still close enough to the grandeur of the metaphysical tradition to attempt to maintain its high ideals, while irrevocably removed from it by the breakdown of the great culture in the World War. World War I, this "military commentary on Nietzsche's metaphysics" placed all post-war attempts at affirming the great tradition into the position of the hollow pose and grandiose but empty gesture. Thus, Weimar intellectuals developed attitudes of refined cynicism: "aesthetic autonomy in the midst of disintegration; participation in the general destruction; cold affirmations of conditions that denied the hopes of life;

attempts to overcome the coldness of the world through coldness of art." We, by contrast, live in a period of flat and bureaucratic cynicism in which even the illusory escape of the grand gesture is denied us. There is, however, one grand act that remains open to us by which we could effect a radical solution to all of our problems, that is, the general and bodily dissolution of the schizoid structure of consciousness in an atomic holocaust. In a witty chapter, entitled bomb meditation, the author characterises the atom bomb as the Buddha of the West. The very existence of the bomb may be that goad to complete and utter détente and relaxation on all fronts in which lie the only real solutions to the problems of our paranoia. The only question is whether this détente is to take the outer form of physical disintegration or the psychic form of the dissolution of the schizoid and defensive ego. Our hope lies, so Sloterdijk believes, in the recognition that the structure of our consciousness is based on a gigantic illusion.

> In our best moments. . . our most energetic activism ends in letting things be . . . then when the rhythm of life spontaneously carries us, courage can return to us like an euphoric clarity of mind or a relaxed seriousness. In it wakefulness attains to the heights of being. Clearly and cooly every moment enters you. . then bad experiences are driven away by the new conditions. No history makes you old. The lovelessness of yesterday does not oblige you to anything. In the light of such presence of mind the spell of bad repetitions is broken. Every conscious moment cancels the hopeless past and becomes the first moment of a new history.

With these words, Sloterdijk ends his book which because of its structure reminds one more of a raga than a symphony. If that be a defect, it is surely a minor technical one, by its very length it is prevented from being the tightly argued treatise that we customarily expect from philosophers. This defect is counterbalanced by a wealth of vital and brilliant ideas that make one even forget the occasional exaggeration with which the author treats the "idealisms" of the great tradition. This tradition is not wholly dogmatic and not an entirely repressive structure of consciousness. Beginning with its foundations in the Platonic dialogues, it has always also been substantially nourished by the liberating light of critical reason. Kynism was not the only bright flash erupting into dogmatic darkness. Yet it is well to be reminded that beside the canonized Socrates of the philosophies of order there was another Socrates who got angry enough at injustice and stupidity to merit the epithet mad.

Department of Political Science
Concordia University

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