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Michael Hanchard

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William Powers

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Errata, issue #23:

The actual title of Lynne Tillman's story is *Other Movies*. Due to editing errors, M. Kasper's name is misspelled, the title of his piece should be hyphenated, *Short-Prose*, and the illustration on page 162 is upsidedown.

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NICHOLAS GAETANO

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The Ordinary, the Awful, and the Sublime: Beit Sahur in Year II of the Intifada

NORMAN G. FINKELSTEIN

During a trip to the occupied territories in August 1988, I had the good fortune to meet and talk at some length with Nidal Barham of Beit Sahur. We corresponded during the year and, in June, I suggested that I spend three weeks in August with her family. She agreed, and arranged for me to teach English at a local school. What follows is an account of that visit.

1 The *Intifada* Comes To Beit Sahur

A ten minute drive from Bethlehem, Beit Sahur is a labyrinthine village of solid new concrete structures rising out of a deep valley with terraced hills.

Its fifteen thousand, mostly Christian, residents inhabit a universe poised between the traditional and the modern, the balance moving tentatively but steadily towards the modern, however. A married woman is still expected to live with her husband's family and give her full attention to them; but, the marriages are not arranged and she is not expected to wed until her early twenties (women in the last generation were often married off in their early teens). Nidal's father-in-law was visibly shocked that I was still not married and didn't even live with my parents. "But, who makes them breakfast in the morning?" he wondered. A married woman's first responsibility is still the family hearth but more and more married women are joining the workforce — along with *unmarried* women. Seeing me do the dishes one night, Nidal's six-year-old son Bassam remarked that it was a "sin" for men to do housework (at least, so said his grandmother), but on housecleaning days he happily joined in with his mother and sisters. The career ambitions of the teenage girls and boys in my English class were nearly the same — doctor, lawyer, chemist — with virtually all the girls believing that husbands should assist with domestic chores and fully fifty percent of the boys agreeing (only a few of their fathers did help out, however). Women wear bikinis at the beach but their husbands still anxiously watch for furtive leers. It is not a hyper-libidinous culture, but not an exceptionally repressed one either. Women and men sport the most stylish, if not the most titillating, fashions. Men do not typically ogle women and women do not typically primp for men. Teenagers are paired off but they are not yet sexually obsessed or jaded; there is about them a salubrious innocence, a refreshing wholesomeness. A husband working abroad may allow an unmarried male to be the guest of

his wife and family, but his spouse will not pass even a single night outside her home without first obtaining his permission.

Moussa, an English teacher and left-wing activist I befriended last year, never tired of lamenting to me the "backwardness" of social relations among his compatriots (especially between the sexes) as compared to the West. He had, I kept insisting, a somewhat idealized view of life in the West (no doubt influenced by a simplified Marxist notion of "progress"), seeing only the emancipatory virtues of modernity but not the anomie and loneliness, broken marriages and single-parent households, licentiousness and violence, substance abuse and child abuse, that attend it. When I suggested to him that a society which must install metal-detectors in its high schools cannot reasonably be deemed "free," he riposted that "freedom comes with a price." One cannot charge Moussa with hypocrisy, however. One night Nidal had his family over for dinner. His daughter and son immediately proceeded to turn the whole house upside-down, reducing Bassam to tears ("I can't play with these children. They're crazy!") and Nidal's father-in-law to rage. Moussa, of course, didn't believe in disciplining children. (I couldn't help but recall the scene in *Summerhill* when a mother surges with pride as her daughter stomps on A.S. Neill's grand piano and then leaps for the sofa. "The perfect Neillian child!" the parent exclaims, as Neill looks on aghast.) Over dinner, Moussa's wife ruthlessly criticized his "liberated" philosophy, much to the consternation of Nidal's family, which had never seen a wife publicly disparage her husband. Throughout, Moussa faithfully and dispassionately translated her insults for me — which, I opined, made him an exceptionally liberated male even by American standards.

During the first years of the Israeli occupation, Beit Sahur witnessed an unprecedented economic boon. Many residents I spoke with look back wistfully on those days when money and food were plentiful, weddings were lavish affairs held at the best hotels in Bethlehem, and weekends were spent on family outings at the Dead Sea or Tabariya (Lake Tiberias), the teenagers preferring the Tel Aviv beach or the late-night bars in Jerusalem. Politics was an esoteric pursuit, the province of university students and intellectuals. One informant ruefully recalled, for example, that during the 1982 Israeli invasion of Lebanon, people watched the carnage on the nightly news and wept bitter tears — but *did* nothing. It is true that in 1985 several score residents of Beit Sahur were rounded up by the Israelis for political activism. It is also true some of those I spoke with still bitterly recall the oppressiveness of the Israeli presence. "I do not remember ever feeling completely happy under the occupation. Occupation means no freedom," Nidal's brother told me. But, in general, little thought was given then to Arafat's doings, let alone the doings of radicals like George Habash (probably the more popular of the two leaders in Beit Sahur now).

Things began to turn sour in Beit Sahur in the middle seventies, and especially after the Likud's accession to power. Israel pursued with greater vigor its dual strategy of "slow transfer" and "proletarianization," coaxing the educated and professional elites to leave and reducing the remaining population to a reserve army of labor for its own economy. (The record on human rights abuses *per se* — house demolitions, deportations, etc. — in the occupied territories actually *improved* under Likud.) The results were encouraging at first for Israel, with some twenty thousand Palestinians emigrating annually, both because of Israeli policies and because of the overall economic downturn that set in in the West Bank and Gaza in the early 1980s. But, as opportunities dried up in the Gulf states and Jordan put severe travel restrictions in place, emigration began to slow. Israel then tightened the screws still more in the West Bank and Gaza in order to strangle its nascent autonomous economy (already hard hit by the recession and the loss of remittances from the Gulf). In Beit Sahur, the assault mainly took the form of a massive escalation in taxes.

Taxation first became an issue in 1975-6 when Israel introduced a new Value-Added Tax (V.A.T.) in the West Bank and Gaza, apparently in violation of international law (Israel's High Court ruled otherwise). Tax collection, however, was not ruthlessly pursued until the mid-1980s when Israel sought to fully exploit its *political* utility. To cite one example, the factory-owner living next door to me had been ordered in 1985 to pay one hundred thousand dollars in back taxes — a sum, he said, greater than his total gross revenues for the previous decade. Israeli policy was viewed as unjust, not only because of the sheer magnitude of the assessments, but also because of the goods and services — or lack thereof — provided in return. Government schools were dilapidated; medical care abysmal. So far as the amenities of "civilization" are concerned, Beit Sahur is the most barren of wastelands: one searches in vain for a public park, public library, public museum. Whenever six-year-old Bassam sees the commerical on Jordanian television advertising a fantasy amusement park, he turns morose. Nidal told me every parent in Beit Sahur faces the same problem. The first order of the day after statehood is won, she says, is to build a recreational center for the children.

Virtually everyone I talked to in Beit Sahur agreed that it was taxes that caused the *intifada*. "If tax policy continued as it was until 1985, there would not have been an *intifada* for a hundred years," Nidal's brother observed. "The taxes," responded one of the shebab, when I asked him to name the most offensive feature of the occupation. Indeed, one of the *intifada*'s first and most popular acts was to suspend tax payments. (This turned out to be a partial mistake, since it did not take fully into account Israel's ability to coerce compliance.) My neighbor even suggested that, if Israel were to reduce the tax burden, the *intifada* would immediately

end. This is most probably not true. For, in a dynamic not unfamiliar to students of U.S. history, the call for "no taxation without representation" quickly metamorphosed into the more comprehensive demand for self-determination and statehood. Having seized the imagination of nearly all Palestinians in Beit Sahur, this demand now has taken on a life of its own.

Since the *intifada* political consciousness and participation have more or less evened out in Beit Sahur. As Ghassan Adoni, a physicist at Bir Zeit University put it, "Before the *intifada* only idealists took up the struggle. They gave their all but it didn't add up to very much. Now everyone gives only a little bit but the result is much more impressive." An anecdote of Nidal's pointed up for me just how much the politics of Palestinian resistance have changed. Her brother-in-law, one of the "idealists" who was imprisoned in 1985, is due to be released soon. He recently told his mother that, so anxious is he to participate in the *intifada*, he can spend only a week in Beit Sahur and then must "put on my knapsack and go." The image he conjured up, I thought to myself later, was wrong. One doesn't "go" to the *intifada*; the *intifada* is right there in Beit Sahur, woven into the fabric of daily life.

II: Crisis or stage?

Everyone I spoke to in Beit Sahur commented at some point on how different things are now from when I last visited, exactly a year before. The most notable change is the near- absence of mass public protests. In the first months of the *intifada*, these demonstrations — in which, as Moussa nostalgically recalled, mothers joined their children at the makeshift barricades singing patriotic songs and stoning the soldiers — were, symbolically, at least, the heart of the *intifada*. Active confrontations in Beit Sahur now mainly take the form of ambushes as the *shebab* stone the soldiers and settlers a dozen or so times each day from rooftops or from behind ramparts.

The decline of mass public protests in Beit Sahur is not in itself evidence of a crisis in the *intifada*, as some people I talked with suggested. In the first place, the *intifada* has from the start tended to develop unevenly. Early on, for example, Bethlehem looked to Beit Sahur for inspiration; now, roles have reversed as Jesus's birthplace is more and more the site of massive violent confrontations with the army. Moreover, so far as these confrontations are concerned, the eye of the *intifada* storm has moved north, with the cities of Tulkarm, Jenin and Nablus putting up the stiffest "active" resistance to the occupation (along with the Gaza, of course). Secondly, the *intifada* could not have endured very long in its exact original form. To survive, it had to find a shape that permitted daily life to go on. Uninterrupted mass demonstrations did not allow this. For similar reasons, Palestinians no longer go every time they hear gunfire from house to house or to the rooftop to find out what has happened. They now patiently wait to hear the news from relatives and friends or from the

afternoon radio broadcast, Al-Quds, which recounts all of the previous day's happenings. The interest and concern are still there, but without the frenetic pace. Thirdly, as the repression mounted, ambushes became the most logical choice of tactics. In the first months of the *intifada*, openly confronting the army did not mean courting certain death. Sometimes the soldiers did fire warning shots or intended only to injure and, of course, sometimes they aimed to kill. Now, they aim only to kill. Multiple ambushes also exact nearly the same price from Israel as did the earlier mass demonstrations. Finally, "passive" resistance can be every bit as militant — and run almost as many risks, though of a different kind — as the "active" confrontations. Consider tax resistance. More than ninety percent of the villagers in Beit Sahur still refuse to pay taxes (in the West Bank as a whole the percentage has fallen to around fifty percent). Israel has brought to bear the full weight of its coercive apparatus to break the tax strike, but to no avail. A pharmacist I talked to was ordered to place his full inventory — valued at one hundred fifty thousand dollars — in the sun to rot. A baker I interviewed had his ovens confiscated. One resident was given six months administrative detention just as I left after even refusing the option of not paying his taxes but only signing a statement that said he did. From all this, Ghassan Adoni concludes that the *intifada* is not passing through a crisis but, rather, has been institutionalized. It may be less spectacular — no razzle-dazzle of mass demonstrations — more routine, yet the *intifada* has now assumed a shape that will enable it to endure for years — as he believes it must if the Palestinians are to succeed.

Yet, the morale of Palestinians *has* indisputably plummeted. Where once there was much enthusiasm and optimism, now there is much despair and foreboding. The reasons behind this demoralization are complex:

1. *Economic disarray*. The West Bank/Gaza economy is in a shambles. Palestinians have been hit hard by the precipitous devaluation of the Jordanian dinar. The same fifty kilos of sugar that cost five dinars two years ago now costs thirty dinars. Thousands of breadwinners are languishing in jail. Unemployment is estimated at fully thirty percent. Capital that used to flow into the occupied territories for construction and other projects has dried up because of the uncertain future, and employment prospects in the Gulf states have dimmed as indigenous elites replace the Palestinians. Palestinians with professional degrees are forced to do menial labor or go without work. Remittances from abroad are also drastically down. Nidal's father had to give up a lucrative contracting career in the Gulf and return home after the arrest of his two sons. With scarcely enough money to cover basic needs, life has been reduced to the grinding monotony of poverty. "All we do," complained one neighbor, "is eat, sleep, work. No cinemas, no trips." On the other hand, the boycott of most Israeli products continues as Palestinians have more and more taken

to producing basic goods themselves. Residents of Beit Sahur proudly displayed for me the milk made in Jericho. Moussa now has a chicken farm, complete with three incubators, in his front yard.

2 *Political wrangling.* The political realm is now much more a contested — indeed, embattled — terrain. The consensus within the Palestinian movement is showing signs of strain. The Unified National Command is no longer quite so unified. Islamic Jihadi, one of its constituent organizations, has started issuing separate leaflets. There is heated disagreement over the Shamir election proposal. Yasir Arafat's mainstream Fateh organization itself is said to speak with a dozen different voices. In many places, the local popular committees are splintering along party lines. The Islamic fundamentalist movement, Hamas, is picking up momentum. Originally, the national leadership ignored Hamas, hoping it would just go away; it did not. Now, the P.L.O. has urged Palestinians to cooperate with it. Many of the mostly Christian residents of Beit Sahur were shocked and indignant when one of Arafat's lieutenants described Hamas in a Jordanian newspaper as "one of the purest streams of the *intifada*." A sociologist I talked to put the strength of Hamas at one-third in the West Bank. (His view was that Hamas had its finger closer to the popular pulse; for example, the overwhelming support for education to continue. Hamas helped to force the Government schools in Gaza open even as they were closed in the West Bank. Presently, Hamas opposes the Unified National Command's call for Palestinians attending school to honor general strike days.) When I repeated this estimate to Nidal and suggested it is a problem, she corrected me and said that, if true, "it is a disaster." Adoni told me that the figure of one-third is surely *not* accurate, however. He pointed out that, even in the Gaza, where Hamas has always been considered strong, Palestinians overwhelmingly endorsed the Algiers statehood declaration, notwithstanding Hamas's opposition. He put its strength at ten percent in the West Bank and twenty percent in Gaza, but cautioned that its full potential has not yet been exhausted. The P.L.O.'s "diplomatic initiative" has dissipated much of the *intifada*'s popular energy. *Fateh*, and even the Communist Party, are doing less and less grassroots organizational work as they focus on the negotiations in Tunis. (Moussa recently quit the Communist Party in disgust because "all it does is wait for the *shebab* to throw stones.") Indeed, Palestinians generally admit to biding their time as the U.S.-P.L.O. "dialogue" unfolds — or purportedly unfolds. The spontaneous, democratic character of the *intifada* is being undermined as the P.L.O. seeks to subordinate the internal leadership to itself. Yet, and the point bears emphasizing, the P.L.O. is, overwhelmingly, still regarded as the unique institutional embodiment of Palestinian nationalism. Palestinians desperately cling to it as the only vehicle capable of delivering them a state — which it surely is.

3. *Mood swings*. In the heady first days of the *intifada*, many Palestinians believed that an independent state was at most a few months off. The buoyancy of Israeli society was grossly underestimated. The opening of the so-called dialogue with the U.S. resulted in a second spasm of optimism. Moussa, who was in jail then, told me that even most of his fellow political prisoners expected to be released imminently. The real basis of the U.S.'s "strategic partnership" with Israel is generally not well understood by Palestinians (except in the left parties which have been much less sanguine about the talks in Tunis). The U.S. government is charged with hypocrisy, inconsistency, indecisiveness, kowtowing to the Jews — but not with acting self-consciously from its perceived self-interest. Indeed, Palestinians may well take comfort in the illusion that the U.S. doesn't have real stakes in its alliance with Israel. Arafat's depiction of Israel as the U.S.'s "spoiled baby" does not help matters much. (Was the Shah's Iran a "spoiled baby" as well?) Nor, for that matter, does his prediction that it is "fifteen minutes to midnight." Palestinians need and are politically mature enough to handle the hard facts. They have no need of and are too politically mature for paternalistic myth-makers. One has only to compare the lyrics of the *intifada* songs, with their clever and well-aimed barbs ridiculing the U.S., Hussein, the Islamic League, etc., to the hackneyed lyrics of the earlier anthems to realize just how much more politically savvy Palestinians have become, even if, as I said, still harboring illusions about the U.S.

In any case, the pendulum has now begun to swing in the other direction as the Palestinians succumb to pessimism. There is, for example, an acute awareness of their political isolation, with much skepticism about the future so long as the regional balance of forces doesn't change. Palestinians also suspect — rightly, I'm told — that the *intifada* is no longer having much of an impact on Israeli society. The overall mood was best put to me by my next-door neighbor one night. "It took over ten years to resolve the Taba dispute and who cares about Taba?," he told me. "Can you imagine how long it will take to resolve Jerusalem?!" I had no answer.

4. *Repression*. The first point to make is just how relentlessly draconian the Israeli repression is. Unlike, say, the U.S. during the Indochinese War or France during the Algerian War, Israel makes no pretense — not even a half-hearted, token, or cosmetic one — of wanting to capture the "hearts and minds" of the Palestinians. Israel's arsenal includes only sticks, no carrots. Indeed, if anything, Israel tends to administer *gratuitous* doses of violence and humiliation, so much so that its policy often seems to verge on the irrational. Consider that Israel's first priority now is to break Palestinian resistance and reestablish control of the occupied territories. Yet its tactics often produce the opposite effect. They actually facilitate Palestinian national unity by imposing penalties — e.g., restrictions on movement and international phone communication — that

strike hardest the middle- and upper-classes least supportive of the *intifada*.

All the same, as Adoni put it, "the Israelis, even if they haven't broken the *intifada*, are learning to handle it." (He points out, with intentionally ironic exasperation, however, that "Israel has ruled us for twenty-two years and still doesn't know us.") The massive detentions, for example, have dealt a near-crippling blow to many popular committees as grass-roots leadership devolves upon less politically and ideologically qualified cadre. Some fifteen thousand Palestinian activists are currently being held by the Israeli authorities. In the words of one Israeli officer, "We have arrested the captains and left free the generals." It is a rare family indeed in which no member has been jailed. Nidal's two brothers and brother-in-law are still serving time. (Early on in my visit, rumors were rife that they would be swapped in a prisoner exchange following Israel's abduction of Sheikh Obeid. Nidal anticipated a festive party for all of us to celebrate their release; instead, the night before I left we learned that one of her brothers had been brutally beaten by prison guards and placed in solitary confinement.) Indeed, many Palestinians I met have served multiple prison terms. Moussa has "visited" — as Palestinians put it — Ansar 3 detention center three times and Dahariya once. His three brothers are presently being held by the Israelis, causing no end of grief, Moussa tells me, for his "rapidly aging" mother. Moussa's genial 23-year-old upstairs neighbor has been imprisoned seven times since 1985. Israel's newest device for restricting the movements of Palestinians is the "green" identity card. Each of the six thousand or so "trouble-makers" thus far issued one cannot travel outside his village and the nearest town.

Palestinians are not at all times and in all places overtly gripped by fear. The reasonable question is, Why not? I at first dreaded coming home each day from the school, Talitha Kumi, where I taught English, so disconcerted did the rhythms of the occupation leave me. Talitha Kumi was a kind of sanctuary of normalcy, tucked away in a mountain retreat, seemingly far removed from the grimness of the occupation. I had gone to Beit Sahur to experience the daily realities of the occupation, yet I was soon grasping every opportunity to escape them.

Fear does, of course, always lurk in the background: it is the overarching reality for every Palestinian. Fear for what the future may (or may not) hold, fear for one's family. Nidal complained of a recurring nightmare in which her children are snatched away by the soldiers. Palestinians have not overcome such fears. What they have learned is to control them, more or less. The one fear that all Palestinians *have* overcome is of the Israeli soldiers — if not of their guns. Palestinians no longer cower before the Israeli *ubermenschen*; the IDF's awesome image has been dealt a shattering and probably permanent blow by the *intifada*.

Fear is also bound at some point to become an immediate reality for every Palestinian: the fear that Nidal felt one night as soldiers threatened to rampage through her home searching for one of the *shebab*; that her ten-year-old daughter, Nadia, felt when the soldiers, rifles pointed, chased her and her friends down the street as they sang national songs — and she slipped; that Moussa felt when he was put in solitary confinement for eighteen days and imagined the jailers had forgotten about him; that even *I* — an American and a Jew — felt as a dozen heavily armed soldiers barged into my apartment at 2:00 a.m. and I hadn't yet identified myself. The next night I could barely sleep. Each time I lost consciousness, I "heard" the soldiers pounding on the door and jumped out of bed shouting, "Come in, come in."

The most direct fear is of collaborators. Palestinians are now divided by much mutual suspicion. Israel's "Department of Dirty Tricks" has been working overtime sowing discord in the occupied territories. In a village neighboring Beit Sahur, a woman was drugged, stripped and photographed by a collaborator who then threatened to distribute the pictures if she didn't cooperate. The woman courageously told her family what had happened. They killed the collaborator — but not before killing her from shame. Nidal now will not go anywhere — not the dentist, not the hairdresser, not even an acquaintance's home — alone. Self-anointed "spokespersons" for the *intifada* with no nationalist credentials from their pasts — of which there are not a few — are also distrusted, not to mention loathed, by Palestinians. The sometimes mortal fate of collaborators evokes much less pity in the occupied territories than in Israel or the U.S. Dr. Israel Shahak, professor emeritus of the Hebrew University, recently reminded readers of an Israeli periodical that neither he nor his fellow Jews in the Warsaw Ghetto had any regrets — far from it! — when the Fighting Organization "killed every Jewish collaborator it could find" on the eve of the Uprising. A leaflet distributed by the Unified National Command while I was in Beit Sahur did caution Palestinians to be more circumspect in handling collaborators. No doubt there have been innocent victims. But this was just as much the case in the Warsaw Ghetto. In an interview I did some years back with my mother, a survivor of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising, she recalled with horror the execution of even "suspected" traitors: "Whoever had a gun could kill and be killed without a trial. There were terrible things. You cannot imagine what went on."

Yet, fear does not get the better of decency. I asked Nidal's mother-in-law what I should do if one of the *shebab* seeks refuge in my apartment at night. "Of course, let him in. We Palestinians would never close the door on our children." Nor — if my experience is any guide — on an adult stranger. One night I lost my way home. It was pitch black outside. I did not know Arabic and could easily be mistaken for an Israeli. But, desperate as I was, I asked a Palestinian family seated on their porch if

they knew where the Barhams lived. No luck. They called to their neighbors. A commotion ensued as a crowd began to gather. Finally, someone recognized the name. A woman pointed me the way but I couldn't follow her directions. It was a considerable distance away. She then sent her two children (they couldn't have been more than seven and eight years of age) to guide this stranger safely through the night to his destination.

Indeed, daily existence in the occupied territories is generally *not* paralyzed by fear. There are exceptions, of course. Nidal's brother-in-law paced the front room nervously as word spread that the houses in our neighborhood would be searched for weapons. (The only purpose of these alleged searches is to terrorize. Every resident has ample warning and the soldiers know it — which doesn't prevent them from ransacking the homes.) The army had publicly shamed him a year earlier and ever since he has lived in dread that the humiliating spectacle would be repeated. After witnessing a particularly gruesome massacre in Bethlehem several days later, he jerked his car out of the garage and drove off in a half-crazed state. The occupation was visibly getting to him, and his infant daughters. At every sound of gunfire, they burst into hysterical sobbing and had to be rushed home.

But generally life does goes on, even as the dialectic of repression and resistance plays itself out a stone's throw from one's doorstep. Fifteen-year-old Iyad nonchalantly chats with me on the rooftop as soldiers down below shoot at the elusive *shebab*. Nidal prepares dinner almost oblivious to the bullets exploding just outside the large picture window in her kitchen. I devour falafel with a dozen or so neighbors who calmly watch as the *shebab* erect a barricade several hundred feet from us and await the soldiers' attack. No one ducks; no one runs for cover.

Life goes on as it does for basically two reasons. First, it goes on because of the sheer heroism of the Palestinians *and* the tacit — if not fixed — limits of Israel's repression. When the soldiers banged on Nidal's door in the dead of night and demanded entry, she replied with icy sarcasm to the commanding officer, "You are, of course, *most* welcome in my home, but please do not make too much noise because my children will be frightened." The irony as she said "*most*" was like the twist of a dagger in the heart. The officer retreated. Nidal later freely admitted to being frightfully scared as she relived the night in 1985 when her home was ravaged by the army and her brothers taken away. But, knowing as she does that the soldiers exploit any sign of weakness, she has learned to keep her poise. Courage? Yes. But the soldiers *did* retreat. As the notorious Border Guards brutally beat one of the *shebab* after he brought down a Palestinian flag because the identity card he carried was green, Nidal's mother-in-law began to protest. The Border Guards reminded her that *they* were not mere reservists but real, tough soldiers. "No one is stronger than God," she retorted, as they ordered her to leave. Bravery? Yes. But they

didn't shoot her for her insolence either. In a word, there are limits to the repression. This is not to say that humiliation and violence are not inflicted on the Palestinians capriciously. An American-educated psychologist practicing in Beit Sahur was stopped by the army on his way to work and forced to drink his car water to prove it wasn't gasoline. A thirteen-year-old boy I met was chosen at random and savagely beaten by the army after a stone-throwing incident and then ordered to pay a thousand shekel fine. Nonetheless, the Palestinians are not yet engaged in a *total* war with Israel and the army has not yet broken a certain threshold.

Life also goes on in Palestine because life *always* goes on. It went on in the Warsaw Ghetto. It went on in the Nazi concentration camps. It goes on in south Lebanon and the south Bronx. One night Nidal silently ponders what dress to wear for delivering the morning benediction at school. The men pass the sleepy, oppressively hot afternoons in the shade playing endless rounds of backgammon. Nidal's mother-in-law is glued to the television set each evening for her soap opera. Human beings are evidently endowed with an almost infinite capacity for repression and adaptation. Both pessimists and optimists about human nature, I suppose, can find comfort in this fact. I still vividly recall how appalled I was by Simone de Beauvoir's memoir of the German occupation of France in which she recounts jealously eying a chic new scarf and the abject despair of a friend whose hair was falling out — this on the very same pages that tell of their friends in the Resistance and of Jewish descent being deported, never to return. Even if what she wrote were true, I thought, wasn't there something unseemly in publicly admitting it? Now I see that her point was precisely that pettiness remains a part of life even *in extremis*.

III Like all other teenagers?

Much of my stay in Beit Sahur was spent in the company of the *shebab*. Having worked for many years with teenagers in New York City, I was curious to learn what made these adolescents tick. And, as I already mentioned, the youth of Palestine stand very much in the frontlines of the resistance today. It is impossible to understand the *intifada* without understanding them.

Curiously, not a few adult Palestinians I questioned about the *shebab* condescendingly dismissed them. Nidal's brother derided the *shebab*'s stone-throwing as a "hobby," the result of boredom from being out of school so long. Ever the Marxist, Moussa ridiculed the *shebab*'s simple-mindedness, truly believing that their peers in the U.S. were much more politically sophisticated. (When one of his students told me that the Palestinians would win if they struggled hard enough and "if God willed it," Moussa, an unreconstructed atheist, could barely conceal his contempt. No American adolescent, he was certain, would ever say something

so patently silly.) A psychiatrist I interviewed tried to persuade me that the *shebab* are no different from teenagers everywhere, in search of excitement to vent their surplus energy. In the U.S., the outlet is destructive: drugs and fast cars. In Palestine, it is constructive: the national struggle. Things were that simple, or so he believed.

A cynical observer could, of course, find evidence to support these conclusions. Beit Sahur's daily record of resistance as reported on the Al-Quds broadcast occasionally evoked cheers, as if for the "home team," from teenagers standing around the radio. The arrival of the Unified National Command's leaflet late one night stirred much enthusiasm from the adolescents assembled in Nidal's kitchen. Yet, only she took the time to read it closely.

The youth of Palestine may, like "teenagers everywhere," possess boundless energy but surely the much more important fact is to what end their energies are used. One cannot, I think, speak about a "thirst for adventure" in the abstract anymore than one can speak about a "thirst for power" in the abstract without caricaturing and trivializing reality. Yet, if it is not true that the *shebab* are just like all other teenagers, it is also not true that they are a species apart. They are not one-dimensional heroes and heroines, even if not always easily admitting to their humanity. The girls next door claimed to fear, not for themselves, but only for the innnocent bystanders, as they stoned the shooting soldiers. At a local rehabilitation center, I met three *shebab* with permanent spinal injuries. (As I was interviewing them, Senator Domenici of New Mexico abruptly walked in — and just as abruptly walked out. As he left, one of the youths called out, "What's the hurry? You just came." Little did she know that she had just witnessed the parturition of another Congressional "expert" on the *intifada*.) I asked them if they ever despair. "No," they replied as one, "we are happy just to be alive. The spirit of the *intifada* sustains us." I later asked a local psychologist if this were true. He denied it emphatically, stating that they — indeed, *all* Palestinian youth — are suffering terribly inside, and worried very much for the future when all the repressed hurt boils over. In the first months of the *intifada*, he told me, the pain of the injured *was* mitigated by all the favorable publicity showered on them, but this was no longer the case. "The psychologist is right," Nidal said. "They must be furious inside at the injustice and insanity of it all. I sometimes resent having to sacrifice just a little of my life for my own children. Yet, it is right that I should have to sacrifice for them. But is it right that I should have to sacrifice my whole life just because I don't want my family beaten and humiliated?"

One evening I chatted with Iyad, a likeable and not atypical teenager living next door.

"What do you think about at night?"

"At the beginning of the *intifada*, I thought alot about taking the state and what life would be like afterwards. We all imagined then that we would take it in a few months' time. Now, the state is a more distant dream. It may take six or even seven years. I don't think about anything at night anymore. I just fall asleep."
"Why is a state so important to you? You are only fifteen years old. Shouldn't you be thinking about parties and having a fun time?"
"We think everything will be better after a state. Even parties."
"You may be twenty-two before there is a Palestinian state. You will have lost some of the best years of your life."
"But my little cousins — the next generation — they will have the state."
"But what about *you*? Don't you resent missing so much of your youth?"
"For me, it is only seven years. It is not my life. My friend Edmond was killed. So long as I live, I will never forget that."
"Do you think about death alot?"
"Yes, of course. I am afraid of death. I wonder sometimes whether, if I am killed, my death will have a purpose. Whether we will ever take the state."
"Do you think about girls, love?"
"Sure, we all think about those things. Everyone else has a girlfriend. I am still looking for someone who understands me. She doesn't have to be beautiful so long as she understands me."
"What is it about you that girls don't understand?"
He paused and then shook his head in frustration.
"I don't know. I can't explain it."

Education is every Palestinian youth's first priority, which explains Israel's decision early in the *intifada* to close the schools. Indeed, the punishment such a move would inflict on Palestinian morale was considered so great that Israel evidently deemed it worth the price of leaving the *shebab* with much more free time to stone the soldiers. When one night we received the Unified National Command's belated announcement of a general strike for the next day, I asked Nidal's two daughters if they weren't glad for the unexpected holiday. "No," they vehemently replied, "we've had enough holidays!" Nidal later told me that her children had been so anxious for classes to resume during Israel's year-long closure of the schools that many days they were reduced to tears.

The students in my English classes at Talitha Kumi were the intellectual cream of Beit Sahur and neighboring Beit Jala. I was told, however, that they were not totally unrepresentative of Palestinian students in these two villages. English is already in first grade a required course at Talitha Kumi (in Government-run schools, classes in English begin only in the fifth grade) and the twelve- and thirteen-year-olds in my prep (junior high) classes were already assigned abridged editions of *Oliver Twist* and *A Tale of Two Cities*. They could understand, if not yet speak (with a few notable exceptions), fluent English. Talitha Kumi being a Lutheran school, German is also taught. A native German instructor lamented one day the poor performance of the students, unfavorably comparing them with the students in her own country. German was, after all, their *third*

language, I pointed out. She was unmoved. I shuddered to think what she would have said after teaching at an American school. For a grammar lesson devoted to proper nouns, Nidal (with whom I co-taught) asked the class to name a river. Several hands immediately flew up. I assumed everyone would say the Jordan. The first student answered the Thames. The next student answered the Seine. The third student answered the Nile and the fourth, finally, the Jordan. I later told Nidal that, if the same question were asked of a typical American student, with luck he would answer the Mississippi and, with no luck, the Atlantic Ocean. She thought I was only making a joke.

The class quickly came alive one day during a free period as Nidal asked the students how they would *prefer* the Palestinian-Israeli conflict be resolved. (It goes — or should go — without saying that virtually all Palestinians would *accept*, if not necessarily *prefer*, the two-state settlement.) There were as many different ideals proposed as there were pupils in the class. The majority seemed to favor some version of a democratic secular state in all of historical Palestine. One student bitterly denounced Hamas because it "wants to create a Muslim state like in Saudi Arabia and Iran." When one pupil argued that all the Jews should be made to leave but perhaps could come back to visit, a classmate openly dissented, stating that "The Jews have a right to be here. They have no where else to go." (The class did not know I was Jewish.) One student I met later was full of praise for "Peace Now" (which, she believed, "cares more about us than many Palestinians do") and scoffed at the notion of a Palestinian state in all of Palestine: "How can we demand everything when we have nothing?"

Politics is both passion and way of life for Palestinian youth. The students in all my classes surged with enthusiasm and soared with pride as they sang after me the English version of Schiller's verses to Beethoven's "Ode to Joy,"

> Brother, sing your country's anthem,
> Sing your land's undying fame.
> Light the wondrous tale of nations
> With your people's golden name.
>
> Tell your father's noble story,
> Raise on high your country's flag.
> Join then in the final glory,
> Brother, lift your flag with mine.
>
> Build the road of peace before us,
> Build it wide and deep and long.
> Speed the slow and check the earnest,
> Help the weak and guide the strong.

None shall push aside another,
None shall let another fall.
Work together, all my brothers,
All for one and one for all.

I gave Nidal's two daughters my camera one morning and instructed them to take pictures of whatever pleased them. They returned that night with several shots of a Palestinian flag, a shot of the map of Palestine, a shot of a wall on which was scrawled in English, "In this time we must have one idea to return to the land," a shot of the Arab Women's Union, two shots of several preteens playing "*jaysh* [i.e., army] and *shebab*" (the most popular children's game since the *intifada*), a shot of a barricaded street, and a shot of the deserted shopping district as merchants honored the commercial strike. A teenage girl living next door shyly displayed for me her just completed needlework, a *green*, *white* and *black* dove against a *red* background. The girl's sister joined Nidal's family one night as she "celebrated" her eighteenth birthday by fasting. It happened that on her last birthday the army killed a close friend. I suggested that we should at least sing songs. They agreed, first singing the Palestinian national anthem (Nidal's eldest daughter, Nisreen, exclaimed that "Every morning should begin this way!") and then several patriotic and traditional Palestinian tunes. I only met one Palestinian youth that talked in slogans — "You can kill the revolutionaries but you can't kill the revolution," he told me one night — and this perhaps had something to do with the fact that he was a fugitive from Israeli "justice," expecting to be arrested, and perhaps tortured, at any moment.

The one question I quickly learned *not* to ask the teenagers is, What are your plans for the weekend? There is no weekend in Palestine. The tedium is unbroken as each day merges mutely with the next. Outdoor team sports are out since the army routinely fires on youths forming crowds. Jogging is out since the army routinely fires on youths seen running. I suggested to Nidal that I ask the local commander to let the teenagers jog around Shepherds' Field. She answered that a Palestinian would not ask the Israelis for such permission since it implies that they have the right to withhold it. The once-frequent trips to Israel are out because of the pogrom-like atmosphere that now reigns there. Antisocial behavior is now also tabu. Drug use, which was not uncommon before the *intifada*, has virtually disappeared. For Palestinians, there is no bigger shame than a family member involved with drugs. Nidal told me the strange story of one Beit Sahur mother who waxed rhapsodic as her son was handed a ten-year prison sentence by the Israelis for plotting armed resistance to the occupation. He had been acting very suspiciously for a long time and rumor had it that he was in cahoots with drug dealers. What a relief, then, to learn that it was politics!

The one activity youth do indulge is the Palestinian folk-art of *dobke* dancing. These weekly events, however, are considered less a social occasion than a political one for asserting Palestinian identity, which

explains why *dobke* groups are organized along political lines. I spent several evenings with members of the PFLP troupe. One girl I talked to freely admitted being miserable since the *intifada* began. "Life was so much happier before. Now, there is no fun, no trips." "So, wouldn't you like to see the *intifada* just end?," I asked. "No," she unhesitatingly replied, "not we if don't get a state. Otherwise, all the death, all the suffering would have been in vain." Many of the *shebab* in their late teens and early twenties queried me about studying in the States. No one begrudged them this ambition, since the colleges are closed and job prospects are nil. It *was* pointless for them to stick around. One unusually gifted fellow was just getting ready to leave for Texas where his uncle lived. Nidal lamented this loss "to his class(mates)." I added: "to his nation." The irony couldn't be more perfect. The U.S. bankrolls Palestine's torture and the cream of Palestine's youth, fleeing the torture, eventually enrich the U.S. Who said you can't have your cake and eat it? Palestinian youths harbor not a few illusions about the American Way of Life. Two teenagers I talked with one night, Raed and Iyad, argued the respective virtues of U.S. and Palestinian culture. Raed envied the fun and games in the U.S., claiming that every Palestinian youth would jump at the opportunity to live here. Iyad dissented, preferring the richness and closeness of the Palestinian family; the prospect of leaving home at eighteen left him cold. The dispute ended as they agreed paradise demanded a combination of the two.

The *intifada* has both strengthened and weakened communal bonds in Beit Sahur. The atomizing tendencies at play in recent years have been checked and reversed; but new cross-generational stresses and strains have developed. Parents cannot and will not deny their children's right to struggle for a better life. They all recognize now how humanly degrading the occupation was and how morally compromised they are for having abided it so long. Yet, they also agonize over their children's safety. Nidal remarked to me one night that she wished Arabs weren't so traumatized by death and could take it in stride like Westerners. I couldn't help but smile. Didn't she know that it is *Arabs, not us*, who are supposed to be indifferent to death? Occasionally, parents put so much pressure on children not to participate that they leave home and drift from house to house for shelter at night. Intergenerational tensions reached such a peak during my stay that a meeting chaired by the local psychiatrist was organized between the *shebab* and their parents. It proved fruitless, however, as no adult would publicly admit that his or her parental fears had gotten the better of his or her commitment to the *intifada*.

Several months back my family viewed a video of Beit Sahur which featured Nidal and her six-year-old son, Bassam. I sensed my mother's discomfort as Nidal beamed when Bassam described his picture of the soldiers clashing with the *shebab*. I wrote Nidal about this. She replied as

follows: "My satisfaction was not because of the drawing but because of Bassam's ability to explain it. In fact, the first time I saw these drawings I was deeply shocked that my child was involved in this terrible situation and had lost his childhood so early. I know that, normally, my child should draw a butterfly, a bird, a flower, a cat, a car, or anything that children like to draw. Please tell me what shall I do to keep my child away from what is going on? Even if I did succeed in keeping him away, would it really help? Sooner or later he will understand that we are under occupation. Is it fair to ask me to show grief and sorrow when my child expresses the present in his drawings while Israelis keep taking their small children to a museum to see what happened in the past? In that museum, children are fed with hatred and when they grow up they connect the present with the past and let this hatred out. Innocent people like us are the victims. I do not take my children to such museums. They witness the suffering and the humilation of their people every day in the street."

IV Whither Palestine?

The *intifada* continues today not so much because of enthusiasm or even inertia but mainly because there is no alternative. There is no ground to which Palestinians can retreat. In Ghassan Adoni's evocative phrase, "It is as if the Palestinians are ascending a rope ladder and as they climb each rung the one just below them burns away." For Palestinians, a return to the *status quo ante* is — at least, for the moment — unthinkable. As intolerable as the occupation was before the *intifada*, it is even more intolerable now, after so much sacrifice and after glimpsing a life of full human dignity. And, every Palestinian knows that if this battle is lost, it will be — in Moussa's words — "a political catastrophe, setting back the national struggle at least twenty years."

For Israel, a return to the *status quo ante* is *also* unthinkable. The old system obviously didn't work. Things got out of hand. There was too much freedom. Israel now intends to install a system of what Professor Shahak calls "computerized slavery" in the occupied territories. The aim is to establish a regime that will monitor and regulate every detail of Palestinian life — that is, total control. That is the real stake of the battle raging in Gaza over the magnetic identification cards. That is the real meaning of an extraordinary item buried in the 6 September *New York Times*: "In the West Bank, Arabs refused to set their clocks back an hour, to the time observed in Israel, which went off daylight time on Sunday. Residents said they would continue to observe 'Palestine time' for two weeks....Private West Bank schools opened an hour earlier than instructed by the Israeli authorities, despite threats that the army would detain students caught going to school on 'Palestine time.'" In its quest for total domination of the occupied territories, Israel is determined to put at its

command, if not the heartbeat, then at least the clock beat of every Palestinian.

As it pursues its obsessive goals, Israel doesn't have a totally free hand. Consider that Shamir could have easily crushed the *intifada* in the first few weeks if he had barred all traffic in goods and labor between the occupied territories and Israel. But Israel itself has become so dependent on such ties that this is no longer an option.

It is obviously impossible to predict with any certainty how the struggle will unfold. Basically, there are four alternative — if not mutually exclusive — scenarios. They are all based on the reasonable assumption that nothing substantive will come of the P.L.O.'s current "diplomatic initiative" for a two-state settlement and the attendant "dialogue" with the U.S.

1. *Random violence.* The *intifada* may deteriorate into purely destructive violence as the political leadership is discredited and total despair sets in. The danger, as Adoni put it, is that "the struggle for rights degenerates into a struggle for revenge." One Palestinian invoked for me the image of Samson and the Temple. Another said it would be wise for Israel to negotiate now before the hate becomes so deep that Palestinians won't even consider such an option and the wounds become so deep that they will never heal. That time is perhaps not so far off. Primo Levi once wrote that the survivors of Auschwitz typically fell into two categories. First, those for whom "the suffering was traumatic but devoid of meaning, like a misfortune or an illness. For them, the memory is extraneous, a painful object which intruded into their lives and which they have sought — or still seek — to eliminate." And secondly, those for whom "remembering is a duty. They do not want to forget, and above all they do not want the world to forget, because they understand that their experiences were not meaningless, that the camps were not an accident, an unforseen historical happening." Nidal (like my mother) belongs to this second category: she has glimpsed too much, it has touched her too deeply and she has comprehended it too well. But most Palestinians of her generation, I suspect, fall into the first group. As Nidal herself confidently predicted, "once there is peace, Palestinians will forgive and forget. That is our nature." I am not so certain about the children, however. This new generation has been witness to much more suffering and, hence, is much more embittered and hardened than the one that preceded it. Nidal's eight-year-old nephew, whose father has been in jail the past four years, for example, is forever given to revolutionary exhortations. One morning at breakfast he in all seriousness urged the Palestinians to "escalate the armed resistance if the Zionists do not stop killing our children." He is a "man" of action as well. The day before he just missed grabbing a gas grenade that the soldiers accidentally dropped and throwing it at them. The American-trained psychologist told me that his three-year-old son

sharply rebuked him one day in Jerusalem as he gestured in gratitude when a Jew gave him the right-of-way: "Don't wave to him! He is a soldier."

2 *Spread of fundamentalism.* Generally, I was told, fundamentalism has little appeal for Palestinians, who are religious more from habit than conviction. Islamic fundamentalism only first took root in the occupied territories after the successes scored by the Iranian revolution and the catastrophe that befell the Palestinian "national camp" in 1982. Fundamentalism as it emerged then was a highly disorganized and fragmented movement. Fully fourteen Islamic organizations competed for influence at Bir Zeit University. The weakest of them was the Islamic Brotherhood, of which Hamas is an offshoot. Hamas, like the Brotherhood before it, has a solid reputation for opportunism, in this respect resembling the Amal much more than Hezbollah in Lebanon. Like the Amal, it may cut a self-serving deal with Israel, one falling well short of a Palestinian state. At least Israel hopes so, which is why it is promoting Hamas's cause in the occupied territories. So far, this is not a big danger; Hamas is too weak. But it may become stronger if conditions deteriorate. A sociologist commented to me that *Hamas* is a creature of crises: "It is like a parasite that thrives on political vacuums and despair."

3. *Counterfeit sovereignty.* The P.L.O. mainstream may agree to a "compromise" formula which gives the Palestinians a flag, a national anthem — and nothing else. It is apparently already toying with this idea. Everyone I talked to in Beit Sahur peremptorily dismissed the current discussion about elections as irrevelant and a sham — everyone, that is, *except* the Fateh representative. He was convinced that elections were the next item on the political agenda, and then Palestinians would be offered a state "on condition that it be immediately federated with Jordan." Most Palestinians, he said, would accept this proposal, if only after some coaxing by the P.L.O. "People need to be led," he reminded me. To be sure, even he said that without an overall framework pointing to a state, elections were completely unacceptable.

This scenario becomes more likely the longer the stalemate on the ground continues, for at least two reasons. First of all, international diplomacy, not the *intifada*, is the P.L.O.'s strategic priority. (This derogation of the struggle on the ground is closely related to the P.L.O.'s historical lack of connection with and confidence in mass popular movements.) Thus, the *intifada* is conceived, at best, as a lever to be applied in the diplomatic game, not the cornerstone of it. It is as if Arafat believes that he can trick or seduce his adversaries into giving the Palestinians a state. This is the only possible interpretation of the P.L.O.'s refusal to reject outright Israel's election proposal which, though the fact was nowhere reported in the U.S. media, *explicitly precluded a Palestinian state.* Just get me to the negotiating table and I'll finagle you the state, Arafat

seemed to be saying. This is, of course, pure nonsense. Israel and the U.S. only understand and respond to force, which in the present case means above all the *intifada*. Yet, the P.L.O.'s obsession with diplomacy has deprived the *intifada* of precious material resources. Indeed, this obsession has tended to diffuse rather than concentrate the force of the *intifada*, as Palestinians look to Tunis, Washington and even Jerusalem (but only the Labor Party, of course!) for a miraculous breakthrough. The result of all this is that the longer the political stalemate continues, the weaker the *intifada* and the P.L.O.'s confidence in it become, and the greater the P.L.O.'s temptation to cut its losses and opt for a spurious state.

This is all the more likely to happen since — and this is the second point — it may be that the P.L.O. *can't* do better. There is no reason to assume that the Palestinians can hold out indefinitely. The repression *is* taking a terrific toll. Palestinians are not accustomed to so simple a life that they can withstand the worsening deprivation as Israel turns the screws tighter and tighter. This is not a rudimentary society. The alternative is, of course, very grim but, as Professor Shahak reminded me, the Palestinians would not be the first people in history to succumb to brute force.

As the P.L.O. bureaucracy plays with such a "compromise," Israel is busily positioning a credible leadership in the occupied territories that would embrace it. Presently, there are two competing leaderships within the occupied territories, both of which, however, are under the umbrella of the P.L.O. First, the Unified National Command, which has deep roots in the popular struggle and in particular among the most destitute classes in the rural areas. Second, the traditional urban and intellectual elites, formerly loyal to Jordan and very much distrusted by the Palestinian masses. One informant speculated that Israel's most notable, if still only partial, success has been to displace the leadership of the *intifada* from the former to the latter.

This strategy of Israel's perhaps accounts for a curious episode that I witnessed one evening in Jerusalem. An Arab study group sponsored a roundtable with Helena Cobban of the Brookings Institute. Cobban, who had spent six weeks in the occupied territories, argued the bankruptcy of armed struggle and the virtues of civil disobedience for the Palestinian national movement. "What the Palestinians need now is clear slogans like the Bolsheviks in 1917," she told the assembled crowd. "Maybe, 'No to the occupation, yes to the P.L.O., yes to statehood.'" The point of Cobban's performance was obvious enough. Speaking before an audience of Arab intellectuals enhances her credibility as she prepares an account of her stay — entitled, perhaps, "For Palestinians, non-violent civil disobedience is the only way" — that casts the issue of violence and non-violence in terms most palatable to an American audience, i.e., *Palestinian* violence and non-violence. The more intriguing question was

why the Palestinians themselves were playing along with the charade. True, they did vigorously oppose her "thesis," preaching the right and value of armed struggle. Yet, none of them denounced the presentation for the opportunistic farce it plainly was. Were these intellectuals allowing themselves to be used even as they struck militant poses, unable to resist the allurements of power and prestige? And why was Israel granting them special dispensations, allowing them to openly advocate violent resistance to the occupation, if not to groom an elite beholden to itself for favors?

Such, at least, was the opinion of several Palestinian intellectuals I later met who opposed such meetings as well as any professional contacts with Israelis. A Bir Zeit scientist said he supported joint political action, even personal relations, with Israeli scholars, but not a normalization of professional ties. "Israel wants the outside world to believe things aren't so bad — that, despite it all, business goes on as usual. That's the real reason we are invited to conferences and to collaborate on research." A psychologist scornfully told me that "all we get from them is sympathy and pity, but they do nothing for us. They want our names to get funding for research projects which are worse than useless. Imagine that I was asked to exchange my data on depression in the refugee camps for data on depression in the settlements!"

4. Escalating resistance. The P.L.O. mainstream may finally publicly concede what it no doubt already privately acknowledges: that the "dialogue" with the U.S., in which it has invested so much energy and hope, is a farce — indeed, that the U.S. intended it merely as a diversion to allow Israel more time to crush the *intifada*. Such an open confession could, of course, pose some dangers to Arafat's wing of the P.L.O. since he has staked so much of his credibility on the "dialogue." His political enemies would undoubtedly try to capitalize on his failed gamble. Arafat's leadership of the P.L.O., however, would not be in any serious jeoporady. In fact, Palestinians would probably close ranks behind him as he denounced the U.S.'s "betrayal" and urged them to escalate the resistance. This, I think, is the most likely scenario in the short term. More civil disobedience, perhaps even a complete severance of ties with Israel. And more violent resistance.

One question put to me with unexpected frequency by Palestinians was my opinion of the bus incident in July when a Gazan, reportedly driven to despair as he witnessed the savage beating of a family member by the army, overturned an Egged bus in Israel, causing the death of a dozen or so civilians. No Palestinian I talked to condoned the incident, but none categorically condemned it either. The most common sentiment I heard was that it was wrong, but perhaps sent a message to Israel that the repression was pushing Palestinians dangerously close to madness. Nidal admitted to being happy at first but then moved to tears as she personally witnessed the grief of relatives of the dead. My own view was that,

morally, the act was plainly indefensible but scarcely cause for righteous indignation. Consider the case of Herschel Grynszpan, whose murder of a secretary at the German embassy in Paris triggered *Kristallnacht*. Grynszpan was reportedly driven to despair as he learned that his family was brutally expelled from Germany by the Nazis. One searches the Holocaust literature in vain for an unequivocal — even an equivocal — condemnation of the killing. Indeed, isn't Grynszpan seen as a hero of sorts for vindicating the humiliation and abuse of his family? The day after the bus crash, Shamir denounced it as "an act of murder, the fruit of a horrible mind full of hatred." No doubt, Hitler and his henchmen condemned Grynszpan in similar terms.

Palestinians are presently debating whether to escalate the violent resistance to the army and "civil" administration. The firebomb attack on tax collectors in Ramallah, for example, was widely discussed and applauded. (The tax collector is, next to the soldier, the most hated symbol of the occupation. In Beit Sahur, tax collectors usually swoop down on Sunday morning when the *shebab* are in church. Stores immediately shut down as word spreads that they have entered the village.) On the one side, it is said that the genius of the *intifada* was to achieve a near perfect balance of violence and non-violence, thereby neutralizing Israel's most potent weapon — the army. An escalation of the armed resistance would upset this precarious balance, however, providing Israel with the perfect pretext to unleash its military might. A bloodbath would surely ensue. On the other side, it is said that Israel only understands violent force and that, in any case, Israel doesn't have to wait for pretexts: when it is ready to commit a bloodbath, it will find a reason or, if need be, fabricate one.

The terms of this debate are purely tactical and strategic. I sensed no moral qualms among Palestinians about resorting to violent resistance. Mubarak Awad may not be the only pacifist in Palestine, but I doubt there are many more like him. When I urged the students in my English class to sing "like angels" the "Ode to Joy," Nidal corrected me: "like soldiers." When I proposed to Nidal that I also teach the students "Down By the Riverside," she demurred, stating that its lyrics were "not relevant to us now." When Nidal was asked to select a passage from the Bible for the morning benediction at school, she immediately ruled out "the one about turning the other cheek."

Palestinians are painfully aware of the egregious double standard to which they are held. As a female settler swaggered in front of our school bus, pistol in hand, the driver commented, "Pity us. A Jewish woman can carry a gun and we are not even allowed a stone." When the radio reported the firebombing of the tax collectors in Ramallah, Nidal turned to me and said, "It's only fair." Her reaction reminded me of something my mother told me. I once asked her why the Jews in the Warsaw Ghetto launched

the armed resistance when already all was lost? Surely, they did not expect to defeat the Nazis. My mother responded, "Our feeling was that, if we must die, some Germans must also go. They, too, had to pay a price."

One afternoon, as the *shebab* stoned the soldiers outside our window, Nidal did pause to reflect on her irrepressible glee. "Am I losing my humanity?," she wondered aloud. Perhaps so, I thought, but not anymore than most of us would in similar circumstances. A few weeks earlier I had read Arno Mayer's remarkable account of the Nazi holocaust, *Why Did The Heavens Not Darken?* In the book's final chapter, Mayer describes the avenging fury of the Soviet Red Army as — in the words of Soviet novelist Ilya Ehrenburg — "all the trenches, graves, and ravines filled with corpses of the innocents advanc[ed] on Berlin, [along with] the boots and shoes and babies' slippers of those murdered and gassed at Majdanek." Ehrenburg urged the Red Army to exact "not an eye for an eye, but two eyes for one eye." According to Mayer, Stalin criticized Ehrenburg's call for blind vengeance, "insisting that not all Germans are Nazis." Yet, in the margin next to Ehrenberg's injunction, I pencilled in "Yes!" Both my parents had been in Majdanek and much of my family perished there.

When I was asked, as I repeatedly was, my opinion of violent resistance, I was, however, uncharacteristically reticent — and not only because I was unsure if it was politically wise. For, it was as if I were being asked whether I, as a *Jew*, sanctioned the killing of *fellow Jews*. I felt very uncomfortable with the issue being posed in these terms. If I sanction the right of Palestinians to resist with armed forced the Israeli occupation (and I do), it is because I believe *every* people has that right — or, as Gandhi put it when the Palestinians revolted in 1936, "according to the accepted canons of right and wrong, nothing can be said against the Arab resistance in the face of overwhelming odds." To cast the issue in *Jewish* terms was, in my view, to tribal-ize and therefore falsify it. It put me very much on the defensive. In *these* terms, to condone armed resistance *was* a kind of self-loathing.

V The "Jewish Question"

The Palestinians I met barely raised an eyebrow as they learned I was Jewish. Nidal told me that one teacher at Talitha Kumi was displeased but I didn't notice; she was evidently doing her best to conceal the coolness. The typical response was indifference. Word had been passed to the *shebab* in Beit Sahur that I was "okay" and, generally, the matter rested there. One afternoon I kept pestering Iyad about why he chatted with me so easily. After all, I was an American and I was Jewish. "We first ask questions and then we judge," he replied simply. A neighbor invited me to accompany him to a baptism ceremony. One of the guests asked who I was. The neighbor casually introduced me as a Jew from the United States. I regretted that he so nonchalantly

mentioned I was Jewish until I realized that no one even reacted. The headmistress of Talitha Kumi told me she didn't expect the United States to be evenhanded between the Jews and Palestinians — "But why must they drive us into the ground?"

Sometimes, this unaffected reasonableness bordered on the incomprehensible. A Palestinian real estate agent I knew from last year insisted as we sat in his Hebron office that Arabs and Israelis are both victims of the "capital monopolies" in the U.S. I asked how his son, Ahmed, was doing. "My son? He was just released from six months administrative detention. He didn't do anything. But — never mind." I later talked to Ahmed. Like his father, he is a communist. In 1985, he went to study in the Soviet Union on a four-year scholarship. He was very taken with what he saw and experienced. A new world had opened up. He returned after one year to Palestine to renew his papers. The old world now came crashing in. He was arrested and thrown into solitary confinement. In the past four years, he has been locked up seven times. He now has to carry a green identity card. A few short years ago his horizons stretched beyond the steppes of Soviet Asia. Now, he is confined to Hebron. Ahmed, too, maintained that both Jews and Arabs have been victimized by U.S. imperialism. I envied — even as I found difficult to fathom — his ability to be so "politically correct." He even had some good words to say about the soldiers. "In prison, they aren't all bad; occasionally, one will make a decent gesture." I couldn't agree. The moment an Israeli dons an army uniform, agreeing to terrorize children as he breaks into Palestinian homes in the dead of night — and *no* Israeli soldier would refuse such an order, he has lost ninety-five percent of his humanity. As to the other five percent, it didn't interest me, although I can easily understand why it would interest him.*

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*Several people who read or heard this essay in manuscript form objected to these remarks. Allow me, then, to quote from an article that recently appeared in the Israeli press. The author is Yehuda Ya'ari, the respected editor of the United Kibbutz Movement magazine, *Kibbutz*. Declaring his intention to "emigrate from Israel tomorrow," Ya'ari, *inter alia*, writes: "I am emigrating because 'Peace Now' serves Arik Sharon and Arens. They flash their brass, serving as battalion commanders in repressive missions, and then righteously and hypocritically lecture before their regular audience of a few thousand....When they receive an order to disperse [Palestinian] gatherings or imprison hundreds of thousands in their own homes, they obey it in the name of democracy — which is good for one people and unnecessary for another people. And, in the name of Israel's security..., they destroy the home of an entire family, even if only one of its members is suspected of something, leaving children and a wife and elderly parents outside. Between one rally and another, between one slogan and another, between one great speech and another — the first with wonderful quotations from Altermann [a Hebrew poet], then Amos Oz and, after him, the politician Jamus [a 'Peace Now' leader], they uproot orchards and awaken sleeping children...." (*Davar*, 22 September 1989).

On only three occasions did the "Jewish Question" become a sore point. Once, several members of the *dobke* group got into an acrimonious debate. A fellow who had been savaged many times by the soldiers said that "ideologically, I support Habash, but tactically I agree with Abu Moussa," the leader of a Syrian-backed splinter group. Another fellow challenged him: "In other words, you want to kill all the Jews?" "No, only the fascist Jews," he replied. Several faces turned to me. I said he should feel free to speak; after all, I was there to listen and learn. "Of course, I assume you are not going to kill me right now," I added. He was visibly embarrassed when he realized I was Jewish but didn't retract his remarks. Nonetheless, as we were leaving he leaned over to me and whispered, "We don't want to kill the Jews. But, tell me, what choice do we have?"

One night, as I was walking home with Raed, probably the *least* political of the *shebab* I befriended, he asked me whether I thought the Palestinians needed a Hitler to "really teach the Jews a lesson." I tried to persuade him that Hitler was not the answer. At the dinner table, he persisted in his questioning. I broke into a sweat. "How can you even ask me such a question?," I finally blurted out. "I am Jewish. My whole family was incinerated by the Nazis." (He later claimed to have forgotten I was Jewish.) An unusually loud burst of gunfire suddenly sounded outside. Nidal's father-in-law, shaking his head in disgust, exclaimed, "That's what we get from the Jews!" Nidal finally intervened. "No Palestinian wants a Hitler," she said. "But, truthfully, sometimes we do wish he had killed all the Jews." I wanted to explain why this was wrong. But, just at that moment, the army came to the door. Apparently, someone on the roof had whistled. The *shebab* whistle to communicate with one another at night. The teenagers seated around the table tensed up. They knew the soldiers would likely accuse and then beat them. As it turned out, the soldiers found the real "culprits." But, I realized then it was futile to attempt rationally to discuss the "Jewish Question." Insane situations produce insane reactions. Something Noam Chomsky once wrote came back to me: Don't expect someone to recognize your humanity when your boot is on his neck. I am quite certain my parents would have waxed euphoric if, in 1943, they were told that every last German was about to be killed. Why should I expect a more elevated morality from the Palestinians? If they do rise to a higher moral plane, I will, of course, be the first to applaud them. And if they don't, so be it. I will hold Palestinians fast to my ethical standards only *after* Israel removes its boot. And, truth be told, even now, forty years after the Nazi Judeocide, I still do not expect my parents to be "objective" about the "German Question."

That night after dinner Nidal and I talked about the Palestine conflict. I told her that, in my view, history — however unjust — could not be undone. Israel was, for better or for worse, a fact. The Palestinian claim to Israel was as unrealistic as the Indian claim to the United States. The

historical claim superseded even the most indisputable moral one. She took offense. Why was I comparing the Palestinians with the Indians and the Israelis with the Americans? The proper analogy was between Israelis and Indians, on the one side, and Palestinians and Americans, on the other. After all, it was the Israelis who were wanting to usurp the land they occupied hundreds of years ago. I saw her point. But then she said, "For the first time, I see the Jew and the Israeli in you." Now, it was my turn to take offense. On the one hand, if she saw the Jew in me, it was fine since, after all, I *was* a Jew. On the other hand, it was unfair to write me off as the enemy just because we disagreed. I was reaching for the truth. Sometimes I may commit errors in reasoning. It didn't make me an enemy; it just made me mistaken. That was the only time Nidal and I came close to clashing — and, in truth, it wasn't very close at all.

For three weeks, Nidal and her family treated me with unfeigned decency and generosity. I was a virtual stranger. I was Jewish. They took me in as their guest even though they were strapped financially. One night Nidal joined me on the porch as I sat there sobbing. I had snapped. I kept shaking my head and repeating that it wasn't fair. In a curious reversal of roles, Nidal reminded me that Palestinians weren't the only people in the world to have suffered from injustice. True enough. And yet, in one distinctive sense, the martyrdom of the Palestinians *is* worse. It is usual for victims of injustice not to be accorded sympathy. Yet, Israel has managed so successfully to invert reality that Palestinians have been collectively *demonized*. As Nidal and I talked that night, my mind kept flashing back to a student in my English class. His face was perpetually lit up by a boyishly innocent, if slightly mischievous, grin. Except once. He asked me what Americans thought of Palestinians. Before I could reply, he sputtered with barely suppressed rage, "They think we're animals, don't they?" I didn't have it in me to tell him it was true.

* * *

My last day in Palestine was not a happy one. We awakened to the news that guards had brutally crushed a peaceful protest at Jened maximum-security prison. Nidal's brother was apparently among those injured and thrown into solitary confinement. (In the topsy-turvey world of occupation, his original sentence of five years was cause for a great celebration in Beit Sahur. Everyone expected a much longer sentence.) Nidal asked me to view a videotype of a documentary that Israeli television had done of Jened. The prison was described as a "five-star hotel." So marvelous were the accommodations that Palestinians killed Israelis just to get in. The footage of the prison was fully given over to the daily exercise period, with the inmates playing table tennis and basketball, and a dialogue between the prisoners' committee and the eminently humane and reasonable warden. In short, it was exactly the kind of documentary one would expect of a *state*-owned and -managed television network. Ironically, it caused an uproar in Israel as the

public protested the prison officials' undue magnanimity. The prison regime was consequently tightened even more, which is what prompted the inmates' latest protest. Nidal kept muttering under her breath "five-star hotel." Protests were already being planned, as in 1985 when the inmates' families marched outside the prison. Nidal's brother later wrote her that the inmates broke down in tears when they heard the chanting outside. They weren't alone! My father once confided to me that by far the cruelest revelation of the Nazi holocaust was that no one cared. He could understand and even forgive the bestiality of the Nazis — after all, some people *are* beasts — but he could never understand or forgive the silence of everyone else. "What a difference it would have made," he meditated, "if I had heard people crying out — even if only to the heavens and even if only in despair."

In the afternoon, news arrived of a massacre in Bethlehem. Four Israelis had infiltrated a crowd of protesting youths disguised as tourists and shot five of them point-blank. One youth lay dead as soldiers pulled the four wounded by their hair along the pavement to the army depot. As the terrified crowd dispersed, the civilian-clad assassins laughed and joked with the assassins in uniform.

Where were the pundits to agonize over *this* act of terrorism? Where was Robert Silvers's anguish over "The Agony in *Israel*" (*New York Review of Books*, 7 January 1988; my emphasis)? Where was Meron Benvenisti's wisdom that this is not a brutal occupation but a "primordial, irreconcilable, endemic shepherd's war" (*New York Times Magazine*, 16 October 1988)? Where was Pulitzer-prize winner Thomas Friedman's "tough" insight that "You're all bandits....I know — I lived with you" (*Publishers Weekly*, 14 July, 1989)? Where was moralist Anthony Lewis's reminder that "there is a special burden on the Palestinians now to try to break the stalemate" (*Times*, 17 September 1989)? Where was *Times* cultural commissar Walter Goodman's caution that the Palestinians' "tales of atrocities" haven't been verified (6 September 1989)? Above all, where was Elie Wiesel's agony over the hapless fate of Israel and the Jews?

Were they all clamoring about the murder of several hundred unarmed Chinese youth in Tienanmen Square — and not the murder of several hundred unarmed Palestinian youth? Were they protesting the incarceration of several thousand Chinese political prisoners (from a population of one billion) — and not the incarceration of several thousand Palestinian political prisoners (from a population of one-and-a-half million)? Were they singing paeans to the Chinese people's struggle for democracy — and not the Palestinians' struggle for what John Stuart Mill called the most basic of democratic freedoms, namely, the right "to determine with which of the collective bodies of human beings [one] chooses to associate"?

As I was leaving Beit Sahur, Nidal's brother accompanied me to the top of the hill outside town. Looking toward the horizon, he mused: "Pales-

tine is a beautiful place. The climate. The landscape. Even the people are good and decent. Everything is beautiful. Except the occupation."

Several times each day Palestine's natural serenity is shattered by sonic booms as Israeli fighter jets speed overhead. Such flights are banned within Israel proper. Nidal tells me that Palestinians have never gotten used to them. Nerves still rattle and fray as buildings quake to their foundations. For a few seconds, Palestine is brutally jolted from its center of gravity. A journalist friend recently asked me for a metaphor that captured the impact of Israel's occupation on Palestinian life. Those awful sonic booms immediately leapt to mind.

Identity, Meaning and The African-American

MICHAEL HANCHARD

> . . .this independent Negro Movement is able to intervene with terrific force upon the general social and political life of the nation, despite the fact that it is waged under the banner of democratic rights, and is not led necessarily either by the organized labour movement or the Marxist party.
> C.L.R. James, "The Revolutionary Answer to the Negro Problem in the U.S." (1948)
>
> In the industrial era, El Dorado is the United States, and the United States is America.
> Eduardo Galeano, *Memory of Fire*, vol. 3., *Century of the Wind* (1988)

The second edition of Webster's New International Dictionary defines America as follows: "1) Either continent of the Western Hemisphere; 2) The United States of America; 3) The characteristic features of American life, collectively."[1] This attempt at a definition illustrates the multiple incongruities we face in attempting to identify America, or Americans, its individual subjects. The elements of the definition clash with each other. They suggest claims to American identity based on (a) residence in North or South America, (b) citizenship in the United States, or (c) a mode of existence across two continents that is, somehow, characteristically "American."

The shift from noun of place to noun of person (America, American) leads to greater confusion. When considered as three facets of a single definition, several questions are raised. First, why does the United States require a separate meaning in (2) when it is a part of (1)? Second, is it possible to describe people of different racial and ethnic groups, social classes, religious convictions and sexual preferences in North, South, Mesoamerica and the Caribbean in terms of "characteristic features of American life, collectively"? Last, how is it that the secondary definition of America is generally taken to be the primary and indeed the only definition, since in the United States and, indeed, in parts of Latin America "America" and the "United States" have become interchangeable terms?

For my purposes, the last query is the most important one. Assuming a correlation between the politics of language, of meaning, and *Realpolitik*, the emergence of the United States of America as the primary and dominant meaning of America writ large must have been produced out of the dialectical relation between the hegemony of the United States and the residual location of the "other" nations of the Western Hemisphere. This in itself is not a novel insight. It is one that has been ably explicated in the fiction, prose and poetry of José Martí, Pablo Neruda, Derek Walcott

and others. Yet it is important to rearticulate these narratives within the debate over the term "African-American," for this struggle over nomenclature reflects broader cultural and material struggles for U.S. blacks over their paradoxical location within the most powerful nation-state in the new world.

While the quest for a more historically-specific nomenclature for the descendants of African slaves who reside in the United States is an important step towards a renewed cultural awareness, the quest would remain unfulfilled, or worse, dishonest, if American as adjective and noun were not subject to intense critical scrutiny. Clearly Africa, in its continental and etymological form, is far from a settled, monolithic site of symbolic and political discourse. Yet "America" too is a cacophony of unmanageable narratives. It is crucial that proponents of the term African-American avoid the inadvertent and implicit acceptance of the hegemonic notion of the U.S. as America, with its manipulative construction of individual and collective identities within the ambit of "Americana." To put this another way, the addition of African as adjective to American as noun should neither be effected nor clamored for without a consideration of its internal ambiguities and contradictions.

Several articles and essays concerning the naming of U.S. blacks have appeared over the past several months. Many respond directly to Jesse Jackson's use of African-American during his recent tour of African states. Others that were written years or even decades ago have been reissued now in an effort to lend historical perspective to the current debate. A selection of these essays, written by authors with divergent critical outlooks, gives evidence of an eager acceptance of "America" as collective subject and singular cultural form. What these articles reveal are the broader social and political conflicts that inform the discursive struggles over meaning and identity of black life in the United States.

The recurrent theme in Ralph Ellison's *Going to the Territory*, an ensemble of essays, lectures and speeches given over the course of his literary career, is the tensions inherent in the relationship between the Negro American (to use his term) and pluralist society. Ellison stresses the impact of Negro Americans upon American culture, despite the barriers of Jim Crow, slavery and other forms of oppression. His assumptions are given succinct expression in the following passage from the essay "What America Would be Like Without Blacks":

> If we can resist for a moment the temptation to view everything having to do with Negro Americans in terms of their racially imposed status, we become aware of the fact that for all the harsh reality of the social and economic injustices visited upon them, these injustices have failed to keep Negroes clear of the cultural mainstream; Negro Americans are in fact one of its major tributaries. If we can cease approaching social reality in terms of such false concepts as white and non-white, black culture and white culture, and think of these appar-

> ently unthinkable matters in the realistic manner of western pioneers confronting the unknown prairie, perhaps we can begin to imagine what the United States would have been, or not been, had there been no blacks to give it . . . color.[2]

Clearly Ellison has reduced America to the geographical and attitudinal realm of the United States, shifting from continent to nation-state within this passage while employing an identical meaning for both. What is most striking about his remarks, however, is his implicit acceptance of a notion of liberal pluralism. Through a suspension of the Manichean scheme of U.S. society in a manner characteristic of liberal/pluralist ideology, Ellison implies that *all things being equal*, Negro Americans have had a profound impact upon U.S. culture, to the extent that it would be hard to imagine the country without them. Ellison describes Negro Americans as part of the "cultural mainstream" and as one of the "major tributaries" of American culture. Absent from his metaphors is a recognition of the terms of membership in U.S. culture and the invariably subordinate location of Negro Americans within it.

Ellison's lapses are regrettable, yet characteristic of his politics. While economic liberalism excuses the suppression of wages and the repression of organized labor as "market imperfections," its justifying ideologies neglect "the influence of social power upon the encounter of voices."[3] Ellison discusses the encounter of whites and blacks in terms of our "pluralistic and easily available popular culture."[4] Yet if we acknowledge the dynamic of power and powerlessness lurking behind the interface of white and non-white cultures in the U.S., we well recognize that U.S. blacks are represented as they are in popular culture not in spite of their marginality, as Ellison posits, but *because* of it.

Ellen Rooney characterizes liberal pluralism in its critical form as a "heterogeneous yet hegemonic discourse."[5] It masks the struggle for voice inherent in symbolic encounters with a myth of egalitarian representation. This myth serves to divert attention from the process of incorporation and sublimation of difference into something easily accessed and popular. One has only to gauge the spatial and symbolic distance between young black rappers performing during commercial time outs and the communities in which their rhymes and rhythms are produced to recognize the drastic neutralization of context that occurs before those televisual images hit the screen.

Ellison asks us to forget about the black/white dichotomy and think of U.S. social reality "in the realistic manner of western pioneers confronting the unknown prairie . . . ." Yet this purportedly resolute metaphor, full of conventional masculinity, only distorts the contextualization of black experience and identity. I was forced to ask myself after reading this passage if the prairie was really unknown to native peoples or if they had in fact known it by another name. Ellison buys into the notion of the expansive "American" spirit ever seeking out new areas to stretch out its

(or perhaps "his") limbs. Yet the underside of this notion of early American expansion harbors the process of decimation inflicted upon native peoples. The pioneering spirit was at the same time the harbinger of dislocation, plunder and brutality.

Finally, even if we accept the western pioneers on Ellison's terms, we must ask ourselves if that experience is a viable parallel to that of blacks who were transported, as mere chattel, from Africa to the New World; or if the subsequent passage of Europeans through Ellis Island could be compared to the northward migration of southern blacks after World War II, or the influx of blacks from the Caribbean and Latin America to the already delimited spaces of the U.S. If we ask these questions I believe we will come to the conclusion that neither Ellison's brand of pluralism nor his metaphor of confrontation and pioneering are a tenable basis for considering the peculiarities of black experience in the United States.

Bayard Rustin's essay on the subject of nomenclature was published one year after Ellison's. It offers a counterpoint to the metaphors of the latter, and furnishes an historical context for the "name game" that has been lacking in most recent commentary. Rustin traces the appellative transitions from "Africans" to "Free Africans" in the 17th and 18th centuries, to "Colored Americans" in the 19th century. Rustin points out that "Negro" was a collectively self-chosen word reflecting the Negro's "Americanization and self-realization."[6] He cites a long passage from a 1928 letter that W.E.B. DuBois wrote to a 15-year-old correspondent about Negro as noun. Rustin concurs with DuBois' belief that "Negro is a fine word. Etymologically and phonetically much better and more logical than 'African' or 'Colored' or any of the various hyphenated circumlocutions."[7]

He admits that Negro is not historically accurate, but then neither are any of the words used to describe Europeans (Jews, Nordics, Whites, etc.). Rustin concludes that personal changes in name, dress, or hairstyle will not change the Negro condition; "We should not be fooled by names or appearances. The real problems lie beneath the surface."[8] In a similar but flippant tone, writer T. Ellis announced in *The Village Voice* that "this current black semantic brouhaha is a waste of time. . .This is a topic to take up Sunday afternoon over barbecue [sic], reward for a week of wrestling with real problems."[9]

Thus for Rustin and Ellis "real problems" are the base; "names and appearances" the superstructure of black social experience. This dichotomy, however, is a false one. As Raymond Williams has argued, the conventional distinction between the material and symbolic does not correspond to the social reality of "language and signification as indissoluble elements of the material process itself."[10] The analytic space between "names and appearances" and "real problems" is socially traversed by collective and individual narratives engaged in discourse. How can one

separate a racial epithet, for example, from the social context in which it is uttered? Certainly an N, I, double G, and E and one R in unilinear sequence has not, in itself, harmed anyone. What has brought harm, however, are the violent intentions which this linguistic ensemble mediates, and the physical violence that often accompanies its use. This best exemplifies why Rustin's dichotomy is false. Moreover, the donning of "Afro" hairstyles and "African" dress are indicators of collective identification. Like the debates over nomenclature this is but another example of the two-tiered discourse embedded within social relations, illustrating the fluidity of discursive relations between and within communities. As for Ellis's simplistic binary oppositions of semantics vs. real problems, work vs. play, well, they speak for themselves. It is precisely because naming and identity are "real problems" that they should be discussed over barbeques as well as in workspaces, class and committee rooms.

Nevertheless, Rustin does not follow Ellison in lauding the pluralistic/democratic uniqueness of the U.S. polity (at least not in this particular essay). By providing the historical memory of the names black people in the United States have used to refer to themselves, Rustin's essay serves the valuable purpose of displaying the intersection of identity, naming and meaning despite the inconsistent usage of the real problems/appearances dichotomy. He notes that by the 19th century "'American' signified an adamant refusal to be sent back to Africa (at the time the people urging emigration were mostly white) and an assertion of a new sense of American identity."[11] Here we can see the correlation between self-naming and social struggle. The linkage of African and American was part of an incipient narrative formulated by blacks about themselves that presented an alternative to the dominant myth of an America without non-Europeans.

Ruskin might have added that with the adoption of new meanings, old ones are suppressed. At the historical junctures of colored and Negro, Negro and black, the former nomenclatures were overtaken by the emergent ones in such a way that the connotations of colored and Negro as well as their location within the cultural lexicon were transformed. Negro (Stanley Crouch notwithstanding) is now commonly understood by blacks as a perjorative term signifying conciliation with whites, where it once stood as a signifier of self-definition and demarcation. To call someone black in the 1950s could have (and sometimes did) lead to a fight. In the early 1960s the term black resurfaced as a positive self-reference, linked to black nationalism, challenging the dominant culture in general and the acquiescent Negro in particular.

The interface of black and Afro-American in the 1960s and 1970s was not contentious. I suspect the encounter of black or Afro-American with African-American will be milder still. This meeting of terms and epochs does suggest however that African-American will alter other meanings as

it comes into its own, and may even render some meanings culturally obsolete. Yet if we have recognized one tendency in this process of appellative transition, it is that each purportedly definitive term has been succeeded by another making similar claims. In addition, each term was superseded when its definition no longer corresponded to the shifting identity of the communitites it was intended to represent.

The linkage of African with American holds this tension as well. Indeed, this new union rearticulates another set of contradictions that have persisted through this century and the one preceding it, because once linked each word symbolizes the inverted contradiction of the other. Africa has been canonized as a monolithic entity and not as a continent, while America as either continent or New World has been reduced to a single country. Consequently we are left with an elliptical designation that confuses as it seeks to clarify, that suppresses the odysseys of non-white peoples into the singular experience of blacks in the United States.

Perhaps the most revealing exchange regarding the term African-American took place on a special segment of the McNeil-Lehrer report March 22, 1989, a panel discussion which included Kwame Toure (formerly Stokely Carmichael), black businessman Bruce Llewellen, Regina Edelin of the National Urban League, and Leon Wynter, an editor for the Wall Street Journal. Toure and Edelin favored the name change. Wynter and Llewellen seemed indifferent to it. Llewellen, using a beverage can as a metaphor for people of African descent in the United States, summed up his position by stating that "a can is a can. It doesn't matter what you call it. It's what's inside the can that counts." This metaphor epitomized two principal features of the commodification undergone by much of the black petit-bourgeoisie. First, in the attempt to draw a parallel between an inanimate object (a can) and a social collectivity (blacks), he deprives the latter of human agency and shifts the responsibility of self-reference from blacks to someone else. In other words, if his metaphor were to have a truly relational utility, the can would have to speak and name itself. In any event, the can ain't saying. Secondly, there is Llewellen's materialistic distinction between form and substance, which is tragically ironic in light of the fact that it has been the perceived somatic form of black women, children and men that has obscured (for many whites) the reality of their existence as species beings. The production and skills argument put forth by Llewellen was problematic over 100 years ago when first exposed by Booker T. Washington. It is certainly problematic now.

The journalist echoed Llewellen's statements with depressing similarity. In response to Toure's claim that socialism was the only solution to the exploitation of black people, he sarcastically retorted that the last time he heard, blacks in the bustling city of Lagos, Nigeria "still liked things." The message was clear from both Wynter and Llewellen. Capitalism was

was the only game in town and black folk needed to get with it. In today's marketplace, skills and competence would provide the only saving graces.

The battle lines were drawn, much in the same manner that they have been over the course of the 20th century, between W.E.B. DuBois and Booker T. Washington, DuBois and Marcus Garvey, Malcolm X and Martin Luther King, Jesse Jackson and Andrew Young. Depending upon whether one was a patriot or, on the contrary, decided that the United States was a sinking ship not worth saving; whether one believed in integration rather than separatism, economic nationalism or Pan-Africanist socialism, as the path to progress, greatly influenced each discussant's position on the term African-American.

Sounding both anachronistic and shrill, Toure declared that U.S. blacks were Africans, pure and simple. Their only hope as a people would be to discard the useless notion of being an "American" to begin with, embrace Africa and an African brand of socialism. Toure, who himself underwent a name change, now lives in Jerry Rawling's Ghana, where loans from multi-national financial institutions coincide with socialist rhetoric. Toure had the courage of his conviction to leave the United States and reside elsewhere. Yet for most blacks in this country, exile or exodus is neither a probable nor desired solution to their problems. Toure made no attempt to deal with this very "American" facet of "African" modes of existence in the United States, which made his comments sound perversely apolitical and resonant with exile. In the broadest sense, the three other discussants represented elements of social activity (entrepreneurial, media-related, political) generated by the black middle classes that would have to be accounted for in any calculus of black politics and broader still, in any assessment of progressive coalition building among non-whites in the United States. If the Rainbow Coalition means anything politically, it is the art of possibility, the spectre of social change affected by a broad array of ethnic groups and working classes. Toure's comments offered no solutions or strategies, only rhetoric.

Yet Toure was the foil in this debate for another equally significant reason. He refused to negotiate his position, on the grounds that capitalism and U.S. imperialism were irredeemable systems of exploitation. Toure wants no part of "black capitalism" or proto-nationalist variants advocating economic self-help as a subset of national or global movements of capital. This is an implicit critique of a variety of projects, from the nation of Islam's agenda for economic self-sufficiency, John Johnson's labor-intensive entrepreneurship, to the new crop of would-be black Brahmins (Reginald Lewis, *et al.*). In each, it remains unclear how the generation and reproduction of capital by a few will alter social structures and foster a more egalitarian ethos in black communities plagued by underdevelopment. Had this been made more explicit it would have introduced a new tension to the debate.

The most lucid comments were, to my mind, those of Regina Edelin. Despite her call for a "return to African values" which smacked of an indeterminate culturalism (which Africa? which values?), her rationale for employing the term African-American was most compelling. She linked the appellation to a "cultural offensive" — a transformation of educational curricula and programs in black communities across the United States in order to unpack an embedded history. While vague, the suggestion of a revision of elementary school textbooks, children's games and other pedagogical devices represents one of the most significant challenges to organic intellectuals in the 1990's, and is a cultural sphere in which such intellectuals have to become more actively engaged if the left is to appear relevant to a generation of people raised on Pee Wee Herman, Jimmy Swaggart, Kool Moe D., Sugar Ray Leonard, Eddie Murphy and Ronald Reagan.

Another incident which highlights the complexities of this new union occurred in the newsroom of WLIB, one of New York's most popular black radio stations. A news report that referred to a dark-skinned woman with a Latinate surname brought confusion to the newsroom. "Everybody in the newsroom was struggling with what to call her," said David Lampel, WLIB program director.[12] It was decided that African-Latino was the proper term. Suddenly we are confronted with a fundamental quandary — should people of African descent who live in America, but not in the United States, be known as something other than Americans? Are blacks in the United States going to reproduce the same public/private, they/we dichotomies that nationally chauvinistic whites have mobilized in an effort to exclude non-whites from the national portrait? Is the quest for a more representative term for U.S. blacks just a mimicry of all the other hyphenations of identity that have preceded it?

Although these questions often elicit competing, essentialist responses, there are no simple answers. In fact, these questions are replete with troubling juxtapositions of their own. Yet they are questions to be grappled with, for if debate over the hyphenation of black identity is considered just a matter of vocabulary, the term African-American will become just one more element of black consciousness to be appropriated by the state and civil society without any real modification of the cultural and material conditions of U.S. blacks. Moreover, these questions will not be dispelled by the canonical use of *any* single nomenclature, for these questions are continuously present within the multi-faceted constitution each individual represents. African as prefix to American as it is colloquially understood seems to suggest that the real meaning to black identity lies in the American, and this may be closer to the mark than the proponents of hyphenation would care to admit.

In no way do I want to suggest that either Jesse Jackson or other supporters of the canonical adoption of African-American intended for

their position to be implicated within the discursive categories of empire and imperialism. What is profoundly important and, to my way of thinking, a fortunate confluence, is that it is Jackson (via Regina Edelin) who has placed the petals and seeds of black signification on the table of public debate. The same person who, through his candidacy and politics, has laid bare the increasingly conservative syllogism of Republican-Democratic debates; the first presidential candidate since Eugene Debs to suffuse a populist, progressive narrative into national politics is now attempting to expand the contours of black ideology through a debate about naming.

The same political agent who is questioning the U.S.'s role in Latin and Mesoamerica and pressing for a more vigilant response to the intransigence and genocidal practices of the South African state, is also asking U.S. blacks to assume a generically African but decidedly non-American identity. This nexus of progressive cultural and political activism should not be rationalized as a logical extension of Jackson's political being, but viewed as a possible feature of a yet-to-be formulated black radicalism, infused with narratives of class and gender, that seeks to construct a practical agenda for change on a national scale. In this sense it is Jackson as well as his more progressive rhetoric that must be pushed in the quest to expand radical voices and praxis in the U.S.

It is imperative that progressive political and cultural movements by blacks in this country reject the idea of America as the United States. For to accept that definition, with its self-selected borders and dominions, is to impoverish a political and cultural heritage to which blacks from the Caribbean and Latin America have made important contributions. How could one, for example, recount the Harlem Renaissance as an historical moment without the contributions of Claude McKay and Marcus Garvey, two Jamaicans, or the tensions of nationalist, Pan-Africanist and socialist tendencies found in the disputes between Garvey, W.E.B. DuBois and A. Philip Randolph? Could there be integrity to an account of black radicalism in the United States without the figure of the Trinidadian C.L.R. James organizing black workers in Mississippi, writing a still poignant analysis of race and class in the United States in 1948 and working, along with W.E.B. DuBois, George Padmore and others to formulate a Pan-Africanist agenda for the modern world?

The novels of three American writers provide examples of the need to reconsider the spatial and epistemological limitations that the United States as America poses. In addition to the structural and tonal similarities between Toni Morrison's *Song of Solomon* and Gabriel Garcia Marquez's *One Hundred Years of Solitude* there is the shared absence of an individual hero, and an emphasis on the collective identity of two communities, Mercy and Macondo, as they struggle with communal antagonisms, racial hatred, and class conflict.

George Lamming, the Barbadian novelist, suggests that community is the predominant feature in much of Caribbean fiction, including his own. Note the following passage, from a retrospective essay on Lamming's own powerful novel, *In the Castle of My Skin*:

> What I say now of *In the Castle of My Skin* is also true of other Caribbean writers. The book is crowded with names and people, and although each character is accorded a most vivid presence and force of personality, we are rarely concerned with the prolonged exploration of an individual consciousness. It is the collective human substance of the village itself which commands our attention. The village, you might say, is the central character.[13]

Lamming's village is largely constituted of black people struggling with national and communal identites in a post-colonial ethos. Here we find similarities in the fictive expressions of a Latin American, Carribbean, and one North American novelist. Each text stands in direct contrast to the conventional novel, with its highly individuated form.

On another level, these novels suggest the existence of alternative communities in various pockets of America, communities pressing onward in the face of cultural and material expropriation. It is the onward march of Lamming's, Morrison's and Marquez's communities that distinguishes their narratives from much of American fiction. These three novelists have made the universal out of the particular (to paraphrase Wole Soyinka), and in doing so their tales have exposed the frailty and historically contingent construction of national boundaries.

The tale of the diaspora, like the three noted above, holds a subversive resonance when contrasted with that of the nation-state. At the same time that European powers constructed national dialogues, African slaves were being uprooted from communalist and other social systems in various parts of the continent, and scattered about the New World like filaments of a shaven gem. Africans and their distant relatives in the New World have abided by, and sometimes revolted against, the myth of national borders ever since.

Embedded in the tale of the diaspora is a symbolic revolt against the nation-state, and for this reason the diaspora holds a dual significance. It suggests a transnational dimension to black identity, for if the notion of an African diaspora is anything it is a human necklace strung together by a thread known as the slave trade, a thread which made its way across a path of America with little regard for national boundaries.

As we witness the slow, grudging descent of the United States from its role of world policeman, we listen also to an increasingly chauvinistic national rhetoric that clamors for a return to "classic" or "traditional" values, values that the country has never, as a country, really known. We should recognize in the long term that such a contradiction must collapse under its own weight. As the internationalizing effects of capitalism are felt in the U.S. domestic economy, as they have been felt by countless

nations and peoples before, and as U.S. citizens drive Korean-made cars to Japanese-owned workplaces in their own country, we should be made aware that the resurgence of this chauvinist rhetoric has no real basis. Yet we can abstract a valuable lesson from this contradiction if we realize that embedded within the concept of an African diaspora is the whole of America, North, Central and South; and that the presence of African descendants in America is a symbolic counterpoint to the hegemonic equivalence of the United States as America.

Historically blacks as human collectivities in the U.S., Caribbean and Latin America have been more suspicious of each other than the nation-state system, capitalism or bourgeois culture. In citing the significance of the concept of the diaspora then, I am not glossing over the litany of contentious, often tragic encounters between and within black communities, but to highlight the obverse of this conflict, the potential for a dissolution of the categories which separate these communities and an identification of the cultural and political features that link them. DuBois, writing about the disputes between U.S., Caribbean, and other black activists in the U.S. during the 1920s, wrote:

> My thoughts, the thoughts of Washington . . . and others (Garvey, etc.) were the expression of social forces more than of our own. THese forces or ideologies embraced more than our reasoned acts. They included physical, biological, and psychological forcs; habits, conventions, and enactments . . . the total result was the history of our day. That history may be epitomized in one word — Empire; the domination of white Europe over black Africa and yellow Asia, through political power built over the economic control of labor, income and ideas.[14]

This brilliant insight is the recognition of two histories at once related and distinct: the histories of empire and subordinated peoples. U.S. blacks lie at the vortex of conquest and decimation. And so does the hyphen between African and American.

I hope this essay has, among other things, made one thing clear: the debate about African-American is symptomatic of material and symbolic encounters between whites and non-whites in both the old world and the new. It is just one step in that awkward dance of reluctant partners known as "U.S. race relations," a dance of meanings, not pigmentations. The present debate over these meanings should be extended to encompass the colloquial understanding of America, with all of its complications.

Notes

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1. *Webster's New International Dictionary*, 2nd edition. Springfield: G. & C. Merriam Co. Publishers, 1956, p. 83.

2. Ralph Ellison, "What America Would be Like Without Blacks", in *Going to the Territory*. New York: Vintage Books, 1987, p. 108.

3. Ellen Rooney, "Who's Left Out? A Rose By Any Other Name is Still Red; or, The Politics of Pluralism," in *Critical Inquiry* no. 12, Spring 1986, p. 55.
4. *op. cit.*, p. 109.
5. *op. cit.*, p. 553.
6. Bayard Rustin, "Blacks? African-Americans? What's in a Name?", *The New York Times*, p. A25, Feb. 1, 1989.
7. Ibid.
8. Rustin, "Blacks? African-Americans? What's in a Name?" Henry Louis Gates Jr. seems to make a similar claim, with his distinction between "This undue concern with our name" and "economic and social equality" in a magazine article on the debate over the term African-American ("In Search of a Good Name", *Time*, March 6, 1989, p. 32). It is possible, however, that Mr. Gates' comments were interpreted by the reporter in a manner which gave them a different meaning from the one which Mr. Gates intended. It is difficult to tell.
9. T. Ellis, "Remember My Name", *The Village Voice* June 13, 1989, p. 38.
10. Raymond Williams, *Marxism and Literature*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1977, p. 99.
11. Rustin, "Blacks? African-Americans? What's in a Name?"
12. Quote from David Lampel in a *New York Times* article entitled "'African-American' Favored by Many of America's Blacks." Isabel Wilkerson, Jan. 31, 1989, pp. A1/A14, col. 1.
13. George Lamming, "*In the Castle of My Skin*. Thirty Years After," in *Anales Del Caribe*. La Habana, Cuba: Centro de Estudios del Caribe/Casa de Las Americas, no. 3, 1983, p. 279.
14. W.E.B. DuBois, *Dusk of Dawn*. New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1940, p. 96.

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When Black Elk Speaks, Everybody Listens

WILLIAM POWERS

This paper[1] briefly discusses the Christian life of the Lakota, Black Elk, who was made famous by the poet, John G. Neihardt, and others, after the publication of *Black Elk Speaks*, which in the opinion of some is the most influential book ever published on American Indian religion. I realize that a critical evaluation of an Indian and a book that have reached the zenith of popularity in the United States and Canada, and a good part of Europe, risks touching the nerves of those who today hail Black Elk as a true prophet of a universal way of thinking about the world – far beyond the boundaries of the Pine Ridge reservation where he lived most of his life. But, though nerves may be touched, even exposed, my critique is not so much of a man who lived through the classic period of Lakota history and culture, but of the disciples who were to follow him, praise, him, adulate him, idolize him, deify him, and frequently misunderstand him and the culture in which he lived at the time of his interviews with Neihardt.

My overall contention is that the book *Black Elk Speaks*, and the plethora of other books, articles, reviews, essays, songs, plays, and poetry, in fact, obscure Lakota religion rather than explain it. Further, I will argue that much of what passes as Lakota religion today is the product of the white man's imagination, and that soon the Lakota religion, if it follows the path of *Black Elk Speaks* shall simply be absorbed by other religions or philosophies, and it will be no fault of Black Elk the man, but rather Black Elk the myth, Neihardt, and his disciples. If the term "disciples" seems to convey at once a Christian image, it is precisely because I believe that *Black Elk Speaks* and Black Elk myth, as opposed to the Black Elk truth, are so successful because Neihardt and others have consciously molded a character that conforms to the Judaeo-Christian model of worldliness, suffering, and salvation. There are those who would argue that the writing of Black Elk's "teachings," as they have come to be called, was not a conscious attempt to satisfy a largely white and Christian audience, but simply a coincidental merger of world views that exist in some mystical way to explain the irrationality of the white man's world.

I would argue that the best judge of such irrationality might be the *Indian himself* rather than white disciples of Black Elk. However, most elderly Indians on the Pine Ridge reservation who knew Black Elk, and this would include other medicine men and singers, some of them still living and practicing native Lakota religion, would wonder why all the fuss about Black Elk. They would insist that Nick (or Nic), as Black Elk

was commonly called even during the time of the famous Neihardt interviews, was a charismatic and versatile man. He was a medicine man, although most would not have remembered him as a ritual curer or dreamer, as has been stated by his disciples. Rather they would know him first as an Episcopal layman and perhaps catechist. They would remember him as someone who took up the Ghost dance religion but explained it to his followers in decidedly Christian terms of damnation. They would indeed remember him as a Roman Catholic catechist, who along with his second wife, spent most of their lives from 1905 until his death in 1950 as leaders in the Catholic church, participating fully in the various Catholic programs that brought thousands of Indians together every several years. More importantly, he was known as someone who could teach in Lakota what he believed to be the tenets of the Catholic church. And he would be remembered for his important role of godfather to the newly baptized, as well as ersatz priest when inclement weather or other responsibilities of the church made it impossible for the Jesuits at Holy Rosary Mission to travel to the outlying districts to perform their priestly duties, particularly in the reservation town of Manderson.

Although time and space prevent me from presenting in detail a biographical sketch of Black Elk that would do him justice, I will attempt here to touch upon the most salient features of his participation in Lakota and Christian religion. DeMallie's recent book[2] provides the best, although brief, history of Black Elk, drawing heavily upon missionary literature. Also of some note, although likewise rather brief, is Steinmetz's sectarian treatment of Lakota religion as a kind of pre-Christian belief system in which the sacred pipe is regarded as a harbinger of Christ.[3] If one can cut through the tendentious claims of a Jesuit who has spent twenty years proselytizing among the Lakota, there are moments of excellent ethnographic narrative in his work.

There is, of course, the potential danger of converting Black Elk too severely – balancing his overdramatized traditional role as medicine man with an equally overweighted dedication to Christianity. However, I shall try here to look at his other life, drawing occasionally on interesting shreds and patches of information from my own field work, which include assessments of Black Elk by Lakota people who knew him. Unfortunately, this is a population that is usually not included among the experts and interpreters that have introduced Black Elk to the white man's world, and of course to the younger generation of Lakota and other Indians.

Black Elk Speaks, contrary to most claims, is not Black Elk's story, or even an outline of the most salient features of his life.[4] The importance of *Black Elk Speaks* lies in its description of a *holy vision* of Black Elk's which he revealed to Neihardt. This vision came to him in an attenuated form when Black Elk was nine years old. He then went by the boyhood name of *Kahachnigapi* (Chosen), a point which Neihardt is not aware of

but which is important to the Lakota. Interestingly, despite the claims of Black Elk disciples that the book has invoked a spiritual renascence among its followers, only a few chapters of *Black Elk Speaks* are focused on Lakota religion. The majority discuss in a rather abbreviated way the growing up of an average Lakota.

If we pare his life story down to its significant elements, we find that Black Elk was born on the following dates: 1856, according to the archives of Holy Rosary Mission where finally he was given religious instructions; 1858, according to the information found on his tombstone; 1862, according to the information give by Black Elk to Brown; and 1863, according to the information given to Neihardt. DeMallie convincingly demonstrates that Neihardt was right, and that 1863 is the correct date. These inconsistencies in his birth date represent only minor controversies that generally surround his life.

I shall not dwell on his early years, which we must surmise were like that of any other Lakota boy growing up on the Great Plains in the last half of the nineteenth century. What we know of specific importance is that when he was nine he received part of a vision, and in 1881 when he was eighteen years of age, he received a great, full-blown vision, which was interpreted by another medicine man, who told Black Elk that he must publicly perform his vision, a common practice in Lakota religion. That year Black Elk performed the Horse dance. The description of the great vision and the Horse dance figure prominently in Neihardt's book and are frequently interpreted in other works.[5]

Sometime during the next five years, Black Elk converted to Episcopalianism. We have little information about this period of time, but we assume that he participated in all the Lakota rituals. However, two facts help up to reconstruct this period in his life. First is the fact that the Episcopalians were the first and only active Christian missionaries on the Great Sioux Reservation between 1879 and 1888 when the first Catholic mission, Holy Rosary Mission, was built four miles north of Pine Ridge Agency.

Secondly, the Buffalo Bill Wild West Show, which Black Elk was to join around 1886, also required that all Indians must be Christian. In 1886 Black Elk sailed with Buffalo Bill for Europe an stayed for three years. In letters he sent home during this time, he is already quoting, albeit crudely, passages from the Bible.

The disciples of Black Elk usually interpret this period as one in which Black Elk sought to learn more about the white man, more about his origins, more about his power. But in fact, there is no reason to believe that Black Elk behaved any differently from the other Indians who accompanied the Wild West shows to Europe. The reservation system had created a vacuous period. There were no buffalo to hunt and no enemies to kill. The Lakota and others were at last at peace with each other, and

they were frankly bored. Old song texts which I have collected from this period of time indicate clearly that the Indians leaving for Europe saw it as a challenge, a potential adventure that had all the daring and adventure of the hunt and the warpath. Some of the men even sang death songs at the train station, believing that indeed they might never return from this far off place located rather abstractly across an ocean they had never seen yet had named in Lakota, the Great Water.

The three years in Europe must have been exciting. Black Elk travelled in England, Italy, Germany, and France, and unluckily was stranded. We know nothing about this period except that later he rejoined Buffalo Bill and finally returned home to Pine Ridge. There he arrived just in time to hear about the new messiah in the guise of the prophet Wovoka in Nevada. Black Elk joined in the Ghost dance, but according to informants on the Pine Ridge reservation his manner of preaching the Ghost dance doctrine was decidedly Christian.

For example, in order to make his Christian followers understand the nature of the cataclysmic event that was to manifest itself in the form of a great upheaval of the earth, with the white man churned under, while the Indian remained safely on the surface to rejoin the old people who had died and the buffalo that had nearly disappeared, Black Elk would fill a paunch with water and bury it in the ground. As he preached he would suddenly stamp on the ground around the paunch of water, forcing its contents to spill over. He would then instruct his followers that the portending cataclysm might very well take the form of the Great Flood of Biblical times, and that all disbelievers would perish in the tide. He also carried gunpowder with him and after building a fire would quickly throw it into the blaze comparing the explosion and scattering of hot ashes to the punishment of fire in hell. All these methods greatly impressed the Lakota people and even today they remember the proselytizing techniques of these stories.

But after the Ghost dance failed, ending with the massacre of the Lakota by the United States cavalry at Wounded Knee Creek, Black Elk, at least temporarily, again began to exhibit an interest in the old times, conducting Yuwipi meetings, curing rituals held in a darkened room for the purpose of calling spirits who in Lakota belief would instruct the medicine man as to the precise method for curing his ailing patients. At this point Black Elk, like so many other medicine men, was participating simultaneously in both religious systems, drawing upon the protocol and ritual of traditional Lakota religion, as well as on Christianity to help meet daily problems as they arose.[6] The necessity of Neihardt and others to make him uniquely Lakota has obscured the fact that most Lakotas have been and continue to be quite capable of moving between two or more religious systems on a situational basis, drawing from each or all those prayers, songs, rituals, histories, myths, and beliefs that satisfied the

needs of the particular time and its attendant crises. The western position that people are supposed to belong to one religion, or at least to one religion at a time in serial allegiance to a singular belief system, has contributed significantly to the myth of Black Elk.

At any rate, Black Elk did not spend all his time cogitating over the mysteries of the universe and particularly that part of the world called the white man. Three years after returning from Europe, in 1893, at the age of 28 or 29, although the exact day is not known, Black Elk married a woman named Kate Warbonnet.[7] A son named Never Showed Off was born in 1893, and another son, Good Voiced Star, was born in 1895. His more famous son, Benjamin, who served as the interpreter for both Neihardt and Brown, was born in 1899. His wife, Kate, was apparently one of the first converts to Catholicism, that is to say, was formally recognized and baptized by the newly arrived German Jesuits. Thus in 1895, the first two sons were baptized in the Catholic church, receiving the names William and John respectively. William died in 1897, and Benjamin was baptized on March 11, 1901. Kate later died in 1903, leaving John and Benjamin.

After Kate's death, Black Elk must have felt very much alone in the world with only his sons. He continued to practice various traditional Lakota rituals, a fact pointed out by John Lone Goose, a neighbor who was also a catholic and a lay catechist. Apparently, Lone Goose had talked with Black Elk about Catholicism and criticized him for participating in what the Jesuits were to almost casually regard as acts of the devil. It was in 1904, after curing a young Indian through traditional methods, that he chanced upon a Jesuit, named Father Lindebner, whom the Indians called Short Father. Lindebner convinced Black Elk to become a Catholic, and after two weeks of instruction at Holy Rosary Mission he was baptized by Father Lindebner on December 6, 1904, the feast of St. Nicholas. Black Elk was given the saint's name and from then on was known to the residents of the Pine Ridge reservation as Nicholas Black Elk, or less formally, Nick. His godfather was the son of a French trader named Peter Pourier, a Catholic catechist.

On July 2, 1905, Nick Black Elk was confirmed in the Catholic Church at St. Francis Mission on the Rosebud reservation, receiving the confirmation name of William. A year later he married Anna Brings, also known as Anna Brings Back Horses, or Brings Back White Horses. She had been married previously under the name of Anna Water Man, or Waterman, and brought to the marriage one daughter, Emma. Apparently, she was baptized a Catholic, but not confirmed, and in the year of their marriage, 1906, she was confirmed at an Indian Congress on July 7, receiving the name Rosa, afterward frequently going by the name, Rosa Anna.

Together, Nick and Rosa Anna had four children, Lucy, Henry, Mary, and Nic Tom, all of whom were baptized on the day of their births. Much

later, Benjamin, or Ben as he was commonly know, was confirmed Benjamin Aloysius on June 15, 1911.

The preceding detailed examination of Black Elk's family lineage conveys the idea that Catholicism played an important part in his life, as did his early participation in other religious pursuits such as Episcopalianism, the Ghost dance, Yuwipi, the Vision Quest, and the public enactment of his most powerful visions. Black Elk was consistent in all his beliefs, but toward the end of his career, Catholicism prevailed. And involvement in his newfound religion was systematic, that is, he participated fully in it according to the rules. All his children were baptized and confirmed. Even his interpretations of old Lakota religion were couched in decidedly Christian terms, such as his fire and brimstone interpretations of the Ghost dance.

Between 1907 and 1930, Black Elk was almost totally consumed by his duties in the Catholic church. He was a member of the St. Joseph's Society, a confraternity of Lakota catechists who served as custodians of the local chapels, and who even held prayer services on Sundays and other important holidays when the priests could not make the journey. His wife became a member of the St. Mary's Society, the women's counterpart. These societies had originated with the Benedictine fathers, who found them a convenient way of organizing cadres of the faithful to serve the needs of the Mother Church. During this time, Black Elk was so popular among the Jesuits that he and one or two colleagues were constantly in demand to travel to other reservations to help missionize the other Indians. Black Elk traveled among the Arapahoes and Shoshonis of Wyoming, the Winnebagos of Nebraska, and even the Dakota of eastern South Dakota. It is reputed that he was Father Eugene Buechel's favorite.

Black Elk's role as a godfather for baptism was particularly important, his record outstanding. For example, in less than one month after Black Elk had been confirmed, he served as godfather for one Jacob Stead (Steed) at Manderson, the community with which he is most readily identified. Over the next year, he served as godfather for seventeen other persons. Between 1906 and 1910, according to the baptismal records of Holy Rosary Mission, he served as godfather for a total of fifty-nine people. Among these were Mark Big Road, a leading medicine man on the Pine Ridge reservation; a German woman known as Agnes Mary Tahacsica win; still another by proxy; for Silas Fills the Pipe, who later would become a fellow catechist and colleague in travels to other reservations; his own mother, Mary Leggings Down, known as Mary Nahachco win or Tipi Gloucia; and for his own son, Henry. In 1911, at St. Peter's Church in Manderson, he served as godfather for twenty people at one mass baptism.

Between 1913 and 1920 he served as godfather for fifteen people, one of whom was his own son's wife. On May 31, 1917, he was godfather for

ten persons. During the years 1920 to 1928, he stood up for twelve people, including Jonas Ground Spider, also known as Jonas Walks Under Ground, a leading peyotist in his later years, and Crispina Pourier, the daughter of his own godfather.

On September 1, 1930, he was godfather for the last time for Mary Iron Crow who was sixty-five years old. This date is important because it was the month *after* Black Elk was first visited by John G. Neihardt. In all, Black Elk, for over twenty-five years, not eight, as has been claimed,[8] stood up for a total of 134 people for which we have documentation.

Black Elk Speaks was published in 1932. There is no trace of Black Elk's Christian life in it. But Neihardt was clearly aware of the old man's participation in the Catholic church. Although DeMallie states (1984, 27) that Neihardt probably did not know about Black Elk's participation in the Catholic church, later in the book he states:

> Black Elk told Neihardt little about his later life, his experiences in the Catholic Church, his travels to other Indian reservations as missionary, and his work as a catechist at Pine Ridge. Neihardt was curious about why Black Elk had *put aside his old religion*. According to Hilda (Petri), Black Elk merely replied, "My children had to live in this world," and Neihardt did not probe any further. (DeMallie, 1984, 47, italics added)

Although *Black Elk Speaks* met with critical acclaim, the Jesuits at Pine Ridge must have been shocked. There is no evidence that they even knew the Neihardt interviews were being conducted. To them, Black Elk was one of their prize catechists, even though they occasionally chided him for spending too much money on the conversion of new souls.[9] He was part of their showcase, and there was no reason for them to believe that he was anything but sincere. Although a claim has been made that there was a misunderstanding between Black Elk and Neihardt, the latter wanting simply to write a biography of the old man, and the former believing that Neihardt wanted to be instructed in the old religion, this claim is not supported empirically. Neihardt wanted to write a good book, one that would increase his own status as a poet and writer. It was not the money, he once told Black Elk, because he could make much more money writing other kinds of things. But later, when looking for a publisher for the work, he approached the publisher William Morrow, suggesting the chapter on the Horse dance might make a good movie and thus help promote book sales. Morrow published the book but died before any agreement with a motion picture producer could be arranged. The book, despite its critical acclaim, was not an immediate financial success.[10]

Countering the admonition Black Elk received from astonished clergy at Holy Rosary Mission, the old man issued a letter in 1934, two years after publication of *Black Elk Speaks*. The letter, witnessed by Reverend Joseph Zimmerman, S. J., at Holy Rosary was written by his daughter, Lucy (Looking Horse).[11] Its contents are instructive because it totally

disclaimed Neihardt and the book that had made Black Elk famous, It stated:

> I shake hands with my white friends. Listen! I will speak words of truth. I told about the people's ways of long ago and some of this a white man put in a book but he did not tell about current ways. Therefore I will speak again, a final speech.
>
> Now I am an old man. I called my priest to pray for me and so he gave me Extreme Unction and Holy Eucharist. Therefore I will tell you the truth. Listen, my friends!
>
> For the last thirty years I have lived very differently from what the white man told about me. I am a believer. The Catholic priest Short Father baptized me thirty years ago. From then on they have called me Nick Black Elk. Very many of the Indians know me. Now I have converted and live in the true faith of God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Accordingly, I say in my own Sioux Indian language, "Our Father, who art in heaven hallowed be thy name," as Christ taught us and instructed us to say. I say the Apostles' Creed and I believe it all.
>
> For very many years I went with several priests to fight for Christ among my people. For about twenty years I helped the priests and I was a catechist in several communities. So I think I know more about the Catholic religion than many white men.
>
> For eight years I participated in the retreat for Catechists and from this I learned a great deal about the faith. I am able to explain my faith. From my faith I know Who I believe in so my work is not in vain.
>
> All of my family is baptized. All my children and grandchildren belong to the Catholic Church and I am glad of that and I wish very much that they will always follow the holy road.
>
> I know what St. Peter has to say to those men who forsake the holy communities. My white friends should read carefully 2 Peter 2:20 22. I send my people on the straight road that Christ's church has taught us about. While I live I will never fall from faith in Christ.
>
> Thirty years ago I knew little about the one we call God. At that time I was a very good dancer. In England I danced before Our Grandmother, Queen Victoria. At that time I gave medicines to the sick. Perhaps I was proud, I considered myself brave and I considered myself to be a good Indian, but now I think I am better.
>
> St. Paul also became better after his conversion. I know that the Catholic religion is good, better than the Sun dance or the Ghost dance. Long ago the Indians performed such dances only for glory. They cut themselves and caused the blood to flow. But for the sake of sin Christ was nailed on the cross to take our sins away. The Indian religion of long ago did not benefit mankind. The medicine men sought only glory and presents from their curing. Christ commanded us to be humble and He taught us to stop sin. The Indian medicine men did not stop sin. Now I despise sin. And I want to go straight in the righteous way that the Catholics teach us so my soul will reach heaven. This is the way I wish it to be. With a good heart I shake hands with all of you.
>
> [signed]Nick Black Elk
> Lucy Looks Twice

Joseph A. Zimmerman,
S. J.(Wanblee Wankatuya [High Eagle])

Despite all this empirical evidence for Black Elk's self-proclaimed allegiance to the Catholic Church, admittedly a Catholicism that could coexist with traditional Lakota religion, Neihardt returned a second time to record the "teachings" of Black Elk, this time hoping to write a more popular book on the Sioux. Disappointed that *Black Elk Speaks* was not a commercial success, he wanted to gather information for another book, *When the Tree Flowered*,[12] which he desperately wanted to become popular. Yet again we find no references to Black Elk the catechist even though by his own admission Neihardt knew that Black Elk was still a strong Catholic.

If this were not enough, just three years later, Joseph Epes Brown came to the Pine Ridge scene, actively looking for Black Elk, and ultimately wrote another popular book, *The Sacred Pipe*.[13] We know less about the methodology concerning the writing of this latter book, another which attempts to immortalize the "teachings" of Black Elk. Brown's foreword, presumably "told" by Black Elk, states quite unequivocally:

> We have been told by the white man, or at least by those who are Christian, that God sent to men His son, who would restore order and peace upon the earth; and we have been told that Jesus the Christ was crucified, but that he shall come again at the Last Judgement, the end of this world or cycle. This I understand and know that it is true . . . . (Brown 1953, xix)/

This statement was collected by Brown in 1947. On August 19, 1950, Black Elk died and was buried in St. Agnes cemetery in Manderson, South Dakota, with a full Christian burial. He never lived to see the publication of Brown's book in 1953, and one wonders why and under what circumstances the Black Elk myth was repeated so few years after the old man had refuted Neihardt's book.

Did Black Elk enjoy dictating his teachings to men who mysteriously had been "sent" to him? Or were his "teachings carefully edited to conform to the white man's expectations of his life? In believing that Black Elk was indeed an honorable man, one possessing the charisma that attracted these authors, I opt for the latter.

Since *Black Elk Speaks* was written, countless numbers of articles and references to it have proliferated in American literature. Interestingly, anthropologists, although keen on using the book in their classes on American Indians have rarely entered into the controversy. One of the most critical disciplines has ironically almost totally ignored the possibility that much of what Black Elk had to say was manufactured by a white man. Those least interested in Black Elk, either as a person or as a phenomenon, have been the Oglalas at Pine Ridge themselves. Although Black Elk's "teachings" still remain an important part of American liter-

ature and poetry, they have not impressed the average Lakota, who today wonders why so many people would be interested in the life of, what to them, was just another Oglala.

According to traditional Lakota doctrine, medicine men do not rise above each other. They practice their religion, they follow the way of the pipe, and sooner or later they become old and impotent and are replaced by other younger medicine men who take up the rituals of their predecessors. There is no room in Lakota religion or Lakota philosophy for medicine men who place themselves above other medicine men and the common people. It is a contradiction in terms. Lakota medicine men should above all be humble, and to have a book written about them extolling their virtues above others is unthinkable in Lakota terms. The idea of focusing on one medicine man as some kind of paragon of Lakota virtue is strictly a white man's idea. And this idea has been replicated over and over now with the publication of other books that are epigonic of *Black Elk Speaks* and whose authors also were mystically sent to write the teachings of their respective gurus.[14]

Despite the adulation of Black Elk by his white disciples, he is still remembered by Lakotas primarily as a Catholic catechist, but not greater than Silas Fills the Pipe, Ivan Star Comes Out, Peter Pourier, Joseph Horn Cloud, and others who were his contemporaries, but who have had no biographers to tell their deeds. They were all humble men, caught up in the period of time in which Christianity arrived upon the scene to compete with Lakota religion. In some cases, Lakota people were converted to orthodox Christianity, but perhaps in most cases, they compromised; they joined Christian denominations, but without totally forsaking their native religion.

Since the turn of the century, much of what passes today for Indian culture and religion has been fabricated by the white man, or Indians who have been trained in the white man's schools. If we were to focus only on the literature of the Lakota and Dakota, written by Indians or whites, pseudo-autobiographies[15] or biographies, we find an amazing, continuous list of titles, reissues, and translations appearing nearly every year. Chronologically, some of those include Charles Eastman's works, *Indian Boyhood* (1902), *The Soul of the Indian* (1911), and *From the Deep Woods to Civilization* (1916). These are characteristic of the Indian who has become educated and writes about his youth for a white audience. Next are Luther Standing Bear's "autobiographies," all obviously written by a New York editor, including *My People the Sioux* (1928) and *Land of the Spotted Eagle* (1933), among others. Between the publication of these is *Black Elk Speaks*, published in 1932, and Mari Sandoz's book, *Crazy Horse*, in 1942, which is also a romanticization of Lakota culture, written for whites, and refuted by some Indians who did not believe that Crazy Horse was a chief to be revered. *The Sacred Pipe* followed in 1953.

There was a German edition of Neihardt's *Black Elk Speaks* in 1955 prior to reissue in America in 1961, and in Germany in 1962. Neihardt's work appeared in Italian in 1968, and was again published in London in 1972 and reissued in 1974. The Sacred Pipe appeared in German in 1956, in Italian in 1970, and has been reissued in English in 1971, 1972, 1973, 1976, 1977, 1979, 1980, 1981, and 1982, at last count.

Then new medicine men happened upon the scene, all having in common the same as-told-to "autobiographies," and all written by white men sent for the purpose of recording Lakota religion. An example of this phenomena is of course *Lame Deer: Seeker of Visions* with Richard Erdoes, published in 1972 and translated into German in West Germany in 1979 and in East Germany in 1982. *Lame Deer* is currently being translated into Hungarian.

Even without including the French translations, this incomplete publication record gives some indication of the popularity of the books under question, suggesting just how many *more* translations have stood between what Black Elk and others said and what the ultimate reader hears. Today, when Black Elk speaks, everybody listens, and everybody hears precisely what he or she feels inclined to hear with little regard for the meanings of the Lakota words.

Essentially, in *Black Elk Speaks* and other books written by white men for a white audience, the ideas, plots, persons, and situations of these books have been constructed to conform to the expectations of a white audience that generally knows little about what it means to be brought up as a Lakota over the past one hundred years. Of particular significance, I think, is that the only language to which *Black Elk Speaks* and other books have not been translated is Lakota, the native language of the people who presumably are the originators and benefactors of these religious ideas. *Black Elk Speaks*, although translated into many languages of the world with the belief that we can hear what Black Elk said through what has often been called the *authentic* voice of Neihardt, cannot be translated back into the original. *The Sacred Pipe* fares better, perhaps because there is no pretense in creating a voice, only a culture-history, whose contents include the seven sacred rites of the Oglala in which all Lakota medicine men believe.

But it is not only that the work cannot be translated back into the language of the people themselves. There is no interest in Black Elk on the reservation as a philosopher or spokesman for the traditional way of life, at least not by his living contemporaries. Hierarchical ranking of medicine men is, again, antithetical to Lakota thought. Furthermore, there are practical problems with Black Elk's interpretations of his life and vision. Some of his ideas, taken to be applicable to all Lakota by his various interpreters, are, in fact, idiosyncratic and mean very little to the uninitiated Lakota. The attempt to regard basic Judaeo-Christian tenets of

Neihardt's culture as somehow characteristically Lakota makes the work unacceptable to the Indians on the reservation. They frankly do not need spiritual leaders like Black Elk. They have their own leaders, and their medicine men frequently disagree with Black Elk's philosophy.

There are, however, some Lakota today who do look to spiritual guidance from books. The new generation of Indians has moved to the cities away from their direct source of inspiration on the reservations. In many ways their needs are greater, for they must live in constant contact with the people who have attempted to destroy their culture and their religion. For these young Indians, *Black Elk Speaks* and other fabrications of the white man become not only increasingly acceptable but even desirable in the form of literature, given the Judaeo-Christian substructures introduced by contemporary white writers. To survive in the world today, a white man need only be a white man, but for an Indian to survive he must be both Indian and white. In many ways *Black Elk Speaks* is a form a literary imperialism as are so many other books on Indians. But it also represents literary compromise in that Indians are allowed to be Indians because the white man has dictated through clever prose and poetry the very parameters of being Indian. And through this process, the young Indian accepts a religion, one he calls Lakota religion, manifested in an acceptable form of literature and written by a white man who knows little or nothing of the real religion practiced by older and younger Lakotas today on the reservation. And this younger generation of Lakota does not even know the difference.

With each new translation and yet another subtitle, another translator's preface, another advertising copywriter's impression of the book that will make it sell, it is undeniable that the myth of Black Elk has captured the minds and emotions of white Americans and Europeans. Contemporary medicine men at Pine Ridge, however, would be surprised to know about this. This type of romantic culture has always appealed to the Euroamerican world. Not surprisingly, for example, the complete works of Karl May are recently undergoing a rejuvenation in Europe, as are the works of James Fennimore Cooper in the United States. But even from this Euroamerican background is it not immoral to witness the creation of an Indian religion by a romantic white man? The religious zeal of even more romanticists is overshadowed by their total ignorance of a Lakota religion learned first hand from those ritual specialists who are not the subjects of books, and who are therefore more nearly akin to the ideal type of Lakota medicine man accepted by Lakota culture.

When Nick Black Elk first spoke to Neihardt, only the old man's son and some of the other old timers who were present really heard what Black Elk had to say. But today when Black Elk speaks everybody listens – they listen in English, German, French, Italian, Russian, Hungarian, Spanish, and in Portuguese, and each one hears and interprets Black Elk's

meaning within the context of his or her own language and culture. And even the Indian who listens and others who are caught up in the old man's "teachings" are unaware that the true spiritual nature of the Lakota, or at least part of it, has been manufactured in the literary workshops of the white man. And that is precisely the way the white man wants it to be.

Notes

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1. This is an excerpt of a larger paper by the same title that was originally presented to a number of universities in Germany during May and June, 1985. I am particularly thankful to Drs. Christian and Johanna Feest for their hospitality and use of their library where I wrote the initial draft. I am also grateful for the hospitality provided by our German hosts, particularly Professor and Mrs. Helmbracht Breinig. Only publications relevant to this article will be cited. References to *Black Elk Speaks* and their works about Black Elk could themselves fill a not-so-modest volume.
2. DeMallie (1984).
3. See particularly Steinmetz (1980).
4. *Black Elk Speaks* and *The Sacred Pipe* lack any major criticisms. The major perpetuators of the Black Elk myth are found in Deloria (1984), which contains a comprehensive bibliography. For a critical evaluation of as-told-to autobiographies, the best work is by Krupat (1985). An interesting debate over the authenticity of Black Elk also appears in Swann (1983). For a critical evaluation of Neihardt's work in general see the infrequently-cited book by Whitney (1976).
5. There are a few other interpretations of the Horse dance which is still remembered by living Lakotas. It was a dramatic event in which persons who dreamed of the Thunderbeings wore masks and rode horses that danced to the songs. For references to the Horse dance see Feraca (1963) and Powers (1982).
6. For an analysis of dual participation in Lakota religion and Christianity, see Powers (1987).
7. The biographical material as well as his role in the Catholic church has been gleaned from archives at Holy Rosary Mission, Pine Ridge, South Dakota, *Liber Baptismorum*, 16 volumes, and *Registrum Confirmatorum*. Information related to marriages is contained on a special file index.
8. The claim was made in a review of DeMallie's book *The Sixth Grandfather* by Lueninghoener (1984).
9. Detailed records of expenditures and loans incurred by Lakota catechists were kept by the Jesuits and Holy Rosary Mission.
10. There are various references to Morrow and Neihardt in DeMallie (1984).
11. In the Jesuit Archives at Marquette University and published in DeMallie (1984).
12. Neihardt (1951).
13. For a discussion about the tension between Neihardt and Brown see McCluskey (1972).
14. In addition to Brown (1953), see also Lame Deer and Erdoes (1972) and Mails (1979).
15. See Krupat (1985).

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JUAN FLORES AND GEORGE YUDICE

1 Latinos as a Social Movement

"My grandparents didn't get special language instruction in school. In fact, they never finished high school because they had to work for a living." Latinos hear this and similar statements every time the question of bilingual education comes up. Such statements highlight an important difference — the maintenance of another language and the development of interlingual forms—between this "new" immigrant group and the "older," "ethnic" immigrants. The fact is that Latinos, that very heterogeneous medley of races, classes and nationalities[1] are different from both the "older" and the "new" ethnics.[2] To begin with, Latinos do not comprise even a relatively homogeneous "ethnicity." Latinos include native-born U.S. citizens (predominantly Chicanos — Mexican-Americans — and Nuyoricans — "mainland" Puerto Ricans) and Latin American immigrants of all racial and national combinations: white — including a range of different European nationalities — Native-American, black, Arabic, and Asian. It is thus a mistake to lump them all under the category "racial minority,"[3] although historically the U.S. experiences of large numbers of Mexican-Americans and Puerto Ricans are adequately described by this concept.[4] Moreover, both of these groups — unlike any of the European immigrant groups — constitute, with Native-Americans, "conquered minorities."[5]

If not outright conquered peoples, other Latin American immigrants, heretofore inhabitants of the "backyard" over which the United States claims the right of manifest destiny, have migrated here for *both* political and economic reasons, in part because of U.S. intervention in their homelands. From the time of José Martí, who lived in New York for over one third of his life during the 1880s and 1890s, slowly establishing the foundations for the Cuban independence movement, to the 1980s sanctuary movement for Central American refugees, U.S. actions (military incursions as well as economic sanctions) in Latin America have always generated Latin American migrations. The policies of U.S. finance institutions (supported by the U.S. government and, at times, by its military), moreover, have brought enormous foreign debt to Latin America and with it intolerable austerity programs that have induced many to seek a living in the United States.[6]

The result is a U.S. Latino population projected to be over 30 million in 1990, a minority population unprecedented in the history of the United States. Sheer numbers are in themselves influential but the way in which the numbers increase is more important: as a result of continuous immigration over the last 30 years, as well as the historical back-and-forth migration of Mexican-Americans and Puerto Ricans and more recently of other national groups, Latinos have held on to Spanish over more generations that any other group in history. 90% of U.S. Latinos/ Latin Americans speak Spanish.[7] In contrast, speakers of Italian dwindled by 94% from the second to the third generation.[8]

The civil rights movement spurred new forms of consciousness and political action among Chicanos and Nuyoricans. They and other Latinos have been able to use the language issue as a means to mediate diverse types of political enfranchisement and social empowerment: voting reform, bilingual education, employment opportunities, and so on.

In fact, the conditions for identity-formation, in all its dimensions (social, political, and especially aesthetic), have been largely provided by the struggle over how to interpret language needs and the adjudication and legislation, on that basis, of civil rights directed primarily (but not exclusively) to Latinos.

In recognition of these conditions, which were not in place when the two major trends in ethnicity theory (the "melting pot" of the early twentieth century and the "new ethnicity" of the '50s and '60s) emerged, we feel that there is greater explanatory power in a "new social movement" approach to Latino identity. By "new social movements" we refer to those struggles around questions of race, gender, environment, religion, and so on, which cannot be fully encompassed under the rubric of class struggle and which play out their demands on the terrains of the body, sexuality, language, etc., that is, those areas which are socially constituted as comprising the "private" sphere. This is not to say that the inequalities (and causes rooted in relations of production) referred to by class analysis have disappeared. On the contrary, from the perspective we adopt such inequalities (and their causes) can be seen to multiply into all spheres of life. Capitalist society does not cause racism any more thatn it does linguistic stratification; it does, however, make all these differences functional for the benefit of hegemonic groups. A social movement approach does not so much disregard class exploitation as analyze how racism, sexism, linguistic stratification, etc. are mobilized through "both discursive positions and control of the means of production and coercion."[9] Under these circumstances, political agency is, according to Stanley Aronowitz,

> constituted in the gap between the promises of modern democratic society and its subversion by the various rightwing states. Politics renews itself primarily in extra-parliamentary forms which, given the still potent effectivity of the modern state form, if not its particular

> manifestations of governance, draws social movements into its orbit. Some call this cooptation, but it is more accurate to understand it as a process related to the economic and cultural hegemony of late capitalism, which draws the excluded not only by its dream work, but by the political imaginary that still occupies its own subjects.[10]

What is particularly different about the new social movements is that they enter the political arena by "address[ing] *power itself* as an antagonist," such that they must deploy their practices in the cultural as well as economic spheres. To understand Latinos, then, we must understand the conditions under which they enter the political arena. Among these conditions, which were not in place when the "ethnic" (European) immigrants negotia-ted their enfranchisement in the U.S., are the welfare state (which in part brought to the fore the terrains of struggle and which neoconservatives are currently attempting to dismantle) and the permeation of representation by the consumer market and the media.

In what follows, we explore how Latino identity is mediated and constructed through the struggle over language under such "postmodern" conditions.

2 The Struggle Over Language

First of all, the name, "America." Extrapolating from Edmundo O'Gorman's meditation on the "invention of America,"[11] we might say that "America" has been conceived over and over again throughout history. The name "remains the same," but it has had successive reconceptualizations (it is rewritten in the Borgesian sense that Pierre Menard rewrote *Don Quixote*) and with each one the terrain changes. The current mass migration of Latinos to the United States engenders such a process of reconceptualization, bringing to mind F. J. Turner's notion of America as a moving frontier and giving it another twist so as to invent a new trope: America as a "living border." If the "discovery" of "America" transformed the ocean into a frontier on whose other side lay a "new" world, and if that new world was subsequently defined by the westward movement and capitalization of the margin, under-*writing* "the record of social evolution"[12] or modernity and providing a "'safety valve' for the discontent of a new industrial proletariat"[13] largely comprised of European immigrants, then the latest reconceptualization of America, by Latinos, is a cultural map which is all border, like the inter-lingual speech (or Spanglish) of Chicanos and Nuyoricans.

> I [...] opt for "borderness" and assume my role: My generation, the *chilangos* [slang term for a Mexico City native], who came to "el norte" fleeing the imminent ecological and social catastrophe of Mexico City, gradually integrated itself into otherness, in search of that other Mexico grafted onto the entrails of the et cetera... became Chicano-ized. We de-Mexicanized ourselves to Mexi-understand ourselves, some without wanting to, others on purpose. And one day, the border became our house, laboratory, and ministry of culture.[14]

Contemporary Latino artists and writers throw back the anxiety of ambivalence cast upon them as an irresolvable perplexity of naming and placing. Gómez-Peña talks of "this troubled continent accidentally called America" and "this troubled country mistakenly called America."[15] "AmeRícan," announces Tato Laviera in the title poem of his third book of Nuyorican poetry, "defining myself my own way many ways Am e Rícan, with the big R and the accent on the í."[16] The hallowed misnomer unleashes the art of brazen neologism. The arrogance of political geography backfires in the boundless defiance of cultural remapping. The imposed border emerges as the locus of re-definition and re-signification. The cover illustration of *AmeRícan* boasts a day-glo Statue of Liberty holding aloft a huge *pilón* of liberty, the majestic torch of comida criolla, ajo y plátano. Latino taste buds water with mofongo and mole. "English only Jamás!," "Sólo inglés, no way!

Latino affirmation is first of all a fending off of schizophrenia, of that pathological duality born of contending cultural worlds and, perhaps more significantly, of the conflicting pressures toward both exclusion and forced incorporation. Another Nuyorican poet, Sandra Maria Esteves, thematizes this existential split in much of her work: "I am two parts/a person boricua/spic past and present alive and oppressed."[17] Esteves enacts the bewilderment, darting back and forth between unreal options and stammering tongues, "Being Puertorriqueña Americana Born in the Bronx, not really jíbara Not really hablando bien But yet, not gringa either, Pero ni portorra, pero sí portorra too Pero ni que what am I?"[18] She cannot "really" be both, she realizes, but she senses a unique beauty in her straddling position, and is confident in the assertion, which is the title of her poem, that she is "Not Neither."

Contrary to the monocultural dictates of the official public sphere, the border claims that it is "not nowhere." This first gestus of Latino cultural practice thus involves an emphatic self-legitimation, a negation of hegemonic denial articulated as the rejection of anonymity. Though no appropriate name is available in the standard language repertoires, whether English or Spanish, namelessness is decidedly not an option. Whatever the shortcomings and misconceptions of bureaucratic bilingualism, alinguality is neither the practiced reality nor a potential outcome of Latino expressive life. The interlingual, border voice characteristically summons the tonality of the relegated "private" sphere to counter the muzzling pressure of official public legitimation.

The trope of a border culture is not thus simply another expression of postmodern aesthetic indeterminacy, along the lines of Derrida's decontextualized frame or *parergon*, "the incomprehensibility of the border at the border,[19] or a Baudrillardian simulacrum (*neither* copy *nor* original).[20] The trope emerges, rather, from the ways in which Latinos *deploy* their language in everyday life. It corresponds to an ethos under

formation; it is *practice* rather than *representation* of Latino identity. And it is on this terrain that Latinos wage their cultural politics as a "social movement." As such, Latino aesthetics do not pretend to be separate from everyday practices but rather an integral part of an ethos which seeks to be politicized as a means to validation and self-determination. And it is precisely the projection of this ethos into the culture at large and into the political arena which threatens the dominant "Anglo" culture with loss of control of its physical and metaphorical borders. As the shrillest voices of the English-Only movement have put it, such Latino language and cultural practices threaten national unity and security.[21] Latino disregard for "our borders" may result in the transformation of the United States into a "mongrel nation."[22]

> There are misguided persons, specifically Hispanic immigrants, who have chosen to come here to enjoy our freedoms, who would legislate another language, Spanish, as co-equal and co-legal with English... If Hispanics get their way, perhaps someday Spanish could replace English entirely.... we ought to remind them, and better still educate them to the fact that the United States is not a mongrel nation.

Language has been accurately characterized "an automatic signaling system, second only to race in identifying targets for possible privilege or discrimination."[23] Unpack the discourse against the language of Latinos and you've got a panoply of racist and classist repudiations:

> These children [of illegal aliens] will remain part of that population which never learns English, and threatens to make America a bilingual country, costing the American taxpayer billions of dollars.
>
> Token citizenship will not help poor, unskilled Hispanics when they find themselves in a permanent underclass, isolated by a language barrier. The hopes that brought them here in the first place will turn to despair as they become dependent upon government handouts....
>
> Congress has presented the indigenous population of Mexico with an open invitation to walk across our Southern Border....[24]

Language, then, is the necessary terrain on which Latinos negotiate value and attempt to reshape the institutions through which it is distributed. This is not to say that Latino identity is reduced to its linguistic dimensions. Rather, in the current sociopolitical structure of the United States, such matters rooted in the "private sphere," like language (for Latinos and other minorities), sexuality, body, and family definition (for women and gays and lesbians), etc., become the semiotic material around which identity is deployed in the "public sphere." The purpose always seems to be to maintain hegemony or to negotiate empowerment of those groups which have been discriminated against on such bases.

The attack on the perceived linguistic practices of Latinos is a vehicle for attacks on immigration, bilingual education, inclusion of Latinos in the services of the welfare state, and above all, a repudiation of the effect

that Latinos are having in reshaping U.S. culture. Furthermore, such attacks highlight the influence that the dominant groups in the U.S. expect Latinos to have on foreign policy. Their rhetoric harbors the fear that U.S. imperialism in Latin American countries is boomeranging and eroding U.S. hegemony.

The language question then is a smoke screen for the scapegoating of Latinos on account of recent economic, social and political setbacks for the United States. "Anglo insecurity" looks to the claims of Latinos and other minority constituencies for the erosion of the United States' position in world leadership, the downturn in the economy, and the bleak prospects for social mobility for the next generation.[25] In fact, now that dominant U.S. national rhetoric seems no longer able to project a global communist bogey, on account of political changes in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, this rhetoric will increasingly consolidate its weapons against Latinos as the drug-disseminating enemy within. The War on Drugs will increasingly become a War on Latinos and Latin Americans, as the recent brutal U.S. invasion of Panama has demonstrated. Furthermore, U.S. intervention in Latin America will increase as "the Pentagon searches for new ways to help justify its spending plans."[26]

3 Toward a Multicultural Public Sphere (Versus Hegemonic Pluralism)

The effect of dominant U.S. reaction to the special language needs that Latinos project and the rights that they claim on that basis has been to strengthen the moves toward unity on the part of diverse Latino communities. Otherwise divided by such identity factors as race, class, and national origin, there are economic, social and political reasons in post-civil-rights U.S. why Latinos can constitute a broadly defined national and trans-national federation which aspires to reconceptualize "America" in multicultural and multicentric terms that refuse the relativist fiction of cultural pluralism. It is for this reason that we have proposed to look at Latino negotiation of identity from a social movement perspective rather than a (liberal-sociological) ethnicity paradigm.

It is a commonplace among contemporary theorists of ethnicity in the U.S. that the assimilationalist or "melting pot" paradigm of the first half of the century "failed to explain what it most needed and wanted to explain—the persistence of racial stratification...."[27] The "new ethnicity" paradigm, which emerged to remedy the failure of assimilation theory and, as we stated above, to counter the gains made by blacks and other "racial minorities" in the wake of civil rights activism, makes the basic claim that ethnicity becomes the category around which interests are negotiated when class loses its moorings in postindustrial society. The "new ethnicity" can be understood to form part of what Habermas has posited as a "neoconservative postmodernism," that is, the rejection of "cultural modernism," because it has eroded traditional moral values, and

the continued espousal of infrastructural modernity or capitalism cum technical progress and rational administration.[28] The false premise of this argument, of course, is that the economy can be independent of culture; this theory thus serves the purpose of providing a cultural (or ethnic) politics in postindustrial society with no need to resort to economically based categories such as class: "In trying to account for the upsurge of ethnicity today, one can see this ethnicity as the emergent expression of primordial feelings [or "reenchantment," GY & JF], long suppressed but now reawakened, or as a 'strategic site' chosen by disadvantaged persons as a new mode of seeking political redress in the society."[29] The falsity of the model, of course, is that blacks and other "racial minorities" can be equated with white "ethnic" groups.[30] The result is reinforcement of existing class inequalities expressed in ethnic/racial terms.[31]

"Racial" movements could be understood to be the first of the "new social movements" or "new antagonisms" that call into question forms of subordination (bureaucratization and consumer commodification of "private" life) in the post World War II U.S. They do not, however, retreat from "cultural modernism"[32] (the erosion of traditional moral values undergirded by class, race, and gender discriminations) but rather extend it to the point of questioning "infrastructural modernism." Among the challenges is the push to legitimate the adjudication and legislation of rights on the basis of group need rather that the possessive individualist terms that traditionally define rights discourse.[33] "New ethnicity" theory is only one of a panoply of strategies by which neoconservatives have sought to contest the extension of rights on the basis of group criteria (affirmative action, headstart programs, anti-discrimination statutes, and so on). The result has been the acknowledged loss of foundations for rights and the shift to a paradigm of interpretability. Group rights must take place, then, in a *surrogate terrain*, like language or the family. According to Minow,

> One predictable kind of struggle in the United States arises among religious and ethnic groups. Here, the dominant legal framework of rights rhetoric is problematic, for it does not easily accommodate groups. Religious freedom, for example, typically protects individual freedom from state authority or from oppression by private groups. Ethnic groups lack even that entry point into constitutional protection, except insofar as individuals may make choices to speak or assemble in relation to a chosen group identity.[34]

If the framework of rights is an impoverished one for the struggles of the new social movements, then what has been the means to greater political participation? One alternative has been to engage in the struggle of needs interpretations. According to Nancy Fraser, "political issues concerning the interpretation of people's needs [are translated] into legal, administrative, and/or therapeutic matters,"[35] *differentially* according to the identificatory features (race, class, gender, religion, and so on) of the group.

Fraser goes on to argue that in each branch (juridical, administrative, therapeutic) of the late capitalist welfare state, there are gender and racially defined subsystems such that certain genders and races are positioned differently as regards possession of rights or eligibility for benefits and services.[36] The struggle around needs, then, is more typical of those groups that are socially "marked."[37]

Such "markedness" is at work in the struggle over Latino *language needs*; it was only by arguing for the legitimacy of the need for special language education that the Bilingual Education Act of 1968 was legislated as a civil right.[38] And it is around this "need" that dominant groups have launched their counter-attack. Some of the arguments for bilingual education posit a need for a positive self-image premised on the validation of the mother language and the culture of the minority student. However, based on instrumental rationality, dominant groups insist that the need of immigrant groups is to assimilate into mainstream society and thus the only special educational benefit that need be provided is special English instruction.

During the Carter administration, bilingualism and biculturalism were weakened by a new bilingual education law (1978) which limited access to bilingual programs and required teachers to know English as well as Spanish. A 1979 study "exposed" bilingual programs to be "a strategy for realizing the social, political, and economic aspirations of the Hispanic peoples."[39] Carter himself said: "I want language taught—not 'ethnic' culture, etc."[40]

Arguments for and against bilingual education aside, our point is that the struggle over needs interpretions—in this case around the need for special language education—is what in the present historical conjuncture in the U.S. mediates accumulation of value politically, economically, and socially. Latinos, after all, have made significant gains (they have professionalized) in the educational system because they can more easily qualify for the job requirements (Spanish language literacy) of bilingual education. Language, as we shall demonstrate below, is also the terrain on which Latino "aesthetics of existence" or affirmative self-formative practices operate.

According to Habermas, oppositional, resisting discourses emerge when the validity of legal norms is questioned from the perspective of an everyday practice that refuses to be depoliticized by the "steering mechanisms" of law, bureaucracy, and consumerism.[41] Through such resistant everyday practices, Latinos have contributed to reshaping the public sphere of American society. Or perhaps it would be more exact to say they have contributed to the emergence of a contestatory "social sphere" which blurs the public/private dichotomy because needs "have broken out of the domestic and/or official economic spheres that earlier contained them as 'private matters'."[42] Another way of conceiving this contestation is to

imagine social space as networks of conflicting and allied public spheres. What is defined as "private" from the purview of one, is "public" or political from the purview of another.

The relevance of casting Latino negotiation of identity as a contribution to the creation of an alternative public sphere can be brought out by situating it within Oskar Negt and Alexander Kluge's expanded understanding of the concept. They do not limit it to 1) the institutional settings of public opinion (media, parliaments, etc.) but extend it to 2) "the ideational substance that is processed and produced within these sites," and 3) "a general horizon of social experience,"[43] or "drive toward self-formation and self-reconstruction" (in the collective sense of "self") which is limited or crippled by the first sense.[44] An alternative model can be culled from Bakhtin's writings on "behavioral ideology" and the constitution of identity through the reaccentuation of speech genres. Ideological or discursive production is institutionally bound but is generally (except in cases of outright force) open to modulation whereby persons "author themselves" or make discourse "one's own" in the media of speech and behavioral genres.[45] Our utterances are necessarily enunciated and organized within such genres, which bear institutional marks. Self-formation is simultaneously personal and social (or private and public) because the utterances and acts through which we *experience* or gain our self-images are reaccentuated in relation to how genres have institutionally been made sensitive or responsive to identity factors such as race, gender, class, religion, and so on.

In postmodernity, "private" identity factors or subject positions may become unmoored from institutionally bound generic structures, turning "intimacy [...] the practical touchstone for the substance of the public sphere."[46] Experience, situated thus, is what fuels the utopian and contestatory potential of self-formation:

> What is even more significant is that subjective or psychological phenomena are now increasingly seen as having epistemological and even practical functions. Fantasy is no longer felt to be a private and compensatory reaction against public situations, but rather a way of reading those situations, of thinking and mapping them, of intervening in them, albeit in a very different form from the abstract reflections of traditional philosophy or politics.[47]

Alternative public spheres, with their different, situated knowledges, are, for Negt and Kluge, constituted by the conflictual back and forth *crossover* of everyday experience and fantasy over the boundaries of the hegemonic public sphere.[48]

On the other hand, the hegemonic public sphere itself "tries to develop techniques to reincorporate fantasy in domesticated form." This is precisely the function of "new ethnicity" theory: to coopt the alternative public sphere of a multicultural society in such a way that ethnic differ-

ence is reduced to its superficial signs, or from Negt and Kluge's perspective, a sublimation of the "unconscious practical criticism of alienation"[50]

4. Bowing to Prospero: Richard Rodriguez's Reprivatization Of Crossover Experiences

There is no better example of the attempt to channel the "crossover" toward an ersatz pluralism than Richard Rodriguez's "middle class pastoral": *Hunger of Memory: The Education of Richard Rodriguez*.[51] It is the story of a now influential "public" man who traded his former identity (as oppressed working class Chicano), his former symbolic authorities (his parents), his former language (Spanish) by assimilating to the *gringo* middle class under the tutelage of new symbolic authorities (his teachers and intellectual mentors, especially Richard Hoggart). His life reads like an advertisement against bilingual education; Spanish is the "private" language of the ethnic, English the "public" language of empowerment:

> Supporters of bilingual education today imply that students like me miss a great deal by not being taught in their family's language. What they seem not to recognize is that, as a socially disadvantaged child, I considered Spanish to be a private language. What I needed to learn in school was that I had the right—and the obligation—to speak the public language of *los gringos*. The odd truth is that my first-grade classmates could have become bilingual, in the conventional sense of that word, more easily than I. Had they been taught (as upper-middle-class children are often taught early) a second language like Spanish or French, they could have regarded it simply as that: another public language. In my case such bilingualism could not have been so quickly achieved. What I did not believe was that I could speak a single public language....
>
> Fortunately, my teachers were unsentimental about their responsibility. What they understood was that I needed to speak a public language....[52]

This passage conceals a romanticized projection concerning the "privacy" of Spanish, for Rodriguez clearly recognizes that Spanish could also be a "public" language. He makes this recognition only to discard it on the basis that his disadvantaged status could not let him aspire to an alternative publicity in Spanish. It is his own rejected sentimentalism toward Spanish, then, which lies at the root of the bad faith which he attributes to bilingual educators and others who seek to keep, cultivate or invent Latino culture and language as a competing, alternative public discourse. Instead, Rodriguez draws a tighter and tighter net around that which he (and the dominant culture) has defined as private until it is strangled out of existence and he emerges as his own abstracted interlocutor: "I hear an echoing voice—my own resembling another's. Silent! The reader's voice silently trails every word I put down. I reread my words, and again it is the reader's voice I hear in my mind, sounding my prose."[53] Who is this interlocutor but the symbolic Other (the law of the Anglo father or teacher) with whom he has identified after his linguistic and cultural "castration":

> I write today for a reader who exists in my mind only phantasmagorically. Someone with a face erased; someone of no particular race or sex or age or weather. A gray presence. Unknown, unfamiliar. All that I know is that he has had a long education and that his society, like mine, is often public (*un gringo*).[54]

Regarding the "castration" metaphor (which marks the moment of entry into the "public" realm of the symbolic), it should be remembered that Rodriguez has symbolically renounced his Chicanoness by attempting to shave off the darkness of his skin:

> I took my father's straight razor out of the medicine cabinet. Slowly, with steady deliberatness, I put the blade against my flesh,pressed it as close as I could without cutting, and moved it up and down across my skin to see if I could get out, somehow lessen, the dark.[55]

At the end of this same chapter ("Complexion"), his public identity has made his skin color meaningless. It is the value that he has gained as a public individual (*un gringo*) which contextualizes his complexion's meaning:

> The registration clerk in London wonders if I have just been to Switzerland. And the man who carries my luggage in New York guesses the Caribbean. My complexion becomes a mark of my leisure. Yet no one would regard my complexion the same way if I entered such hotels through the service entrance. That is only to say that my complexion assumes its significance from the context of my life. My skin, in itself, means nothing.[56]

After this thought, Rodriguez returns to consider *los pobres mexicanos* with whom he has worked during the summer. Their skin color signifies disadvantage, it speaks their "private" silence to him: "Their silence is more telling. They lack a public identity. They remain profoundly alien."

This is surely a comforting thought for conservatives who would like to see all entitlements for Latinos removed. They need not fear the blurring of boundaries between public and private. Rodriguez charges that it is the advocates of bilingual education and minority compensation who have sold their identity to bureaucratic policy makers:

> The policy of affirmative action, however, was never able to distinguish someone like me (a graduate student of English, ambitious for a college teaching career) from a slightly educated Mexican-American who lived in a barrio and worked as a menial laborer, never expecting a future improved. Worse, affirmative action made me the beneficiary of his condition. Such was the foolish logic of this program of social reform.[57]

Yet it is he who has cashed in on his legitimation of middle-class privilege. The irony is that despite his disavowal of Chicano or minority status, he is read, that is, his book is assigned in numerous college English courses precisely because he reassures "anguished Anglos" that the "latinization of America will, in time, lead to Hispanic integration."[58] He has spoken against bilingual education and affirmative action from Reagan's White House and has done quite well on the college lecture circuit as Prospero's tamed servant

(a nifty turn of events for a book that begins thus: "I have taken Caliban's advice. I have stolen their books. I will have the run of this isle.").[59]

It is no mere coincidence that Rodriguez is one of only two Latino writers (the other is Luis Valdez) cited by Werner Sollors in *Beyond Ethnicity. Consent and Descent in American Culture*,[60] for he fits the refurbished rhetoric endemic to the "ethnicity paradigm": viz. the negotiation of assimilation and cultural pluralism. "The language of consent and descent has been flexibly adapted to create a sense of Americanness among the heterogeneous inhabitants of this country."[61] Both Sollors and Rodriguez coincide in deriving this dynamic of consent and descent from the Puritans to the most recent immigrants. Sollors quotes Timothy Smith to the effect that the process of immigration (uprooting, migration, resettlement, community-building) constituted for the Puritans a transcendent experience that laid the basis of American ethnicization. This process, according to Smith and Sollors, even includes Afro-American *immigrants*![62] And the literature that it, the ethnicization process, provides, functions as a "handbook" or a "grammar" for "socialization into the codes of Americanness."[63]

Rodriguez, in a recent *The New York Times* supplement, *A World of Difference*, appeals first to the grammar school and then to consumerism for the "handbook" that can harmonize the diversity that constitutes the United States:

> Language is the lesson of the *grammar* school. And from the schoolmarm's achievement came the possiblity of a shared history and a shared future.... At the bank or behind the counter at McDonald's, or in the switch room of the telephone company, people from different parts of town and different parts of the country, and different countries of the world learn that they have one thing or another in common. Initially, a punch clock. A supervisor. A paycheck. A shared irony. A takeout lunch. Some nachos, some bagels, a pizza. And here's a fortune cookie for you: Two in their meeting are changed.[64]

5 Crossing Over The Contradictions Of Latino Market And Media

Rodriguez is not entirely correct, however, about the integrative force of consumerism for producing assimilated "Americans." Diverse Latino communities are also partially united by market and media courting of the 100+ billions of dollars that the 30+ millions of Latinos offer. One advertising agency's pitch to businesses reads: "[O]ur market is very young and very, very sensitive. You don't have the clutter of the Anglo market."[65]

Language, again, is the terrain on which the heterogeneous constitutencies of Latinos are rallied not only as consumers but also as cultural subjects. This is certainly a major factor which was not in place when theories of ethnicity were devised to account for the incorporation of the "older" immigrants into U.S. society. Language is the major cultural glue provided by Spanish Television. Two of the major networks,

Univision and Telemundo, highlight the transnational and unifying character of their programming. Indeed, Telemundo's slogan is: "*Telemundo: uniendo a los hispanos.*"

Strategists of marketing and the commercial media have not joined the English Only movement, nor do they seem to share the anxieties over cultural balkanization or contamination which propel it. Rather, the corporate "publicity sphere" has availed itself of the multicultural reality as a way of targeting consumer markets and taste cultures. Though for their own interested motives, advertisers reach out to the "Hispanic" market with campaigns custom-made for the culture, with special attention to holidays, family and religious life, and to the up-beat, success-story side of Latino experience. Citibank, for example, makes an effort to salute prominent Hispanic businessmen, especially those who "got help along the way from Citibank. One owns a chain of travel agencies; another runs six McDonald's franchises." They claim with pride that, worldwide, Citibank "employs more Hispanics and does more business with Hispanics than any other bank."[66] Pan Am has even adapted its jingles — "it is a very musical market" — to appeal to its "Hispanic" customers, "so we retained the theme but added a Latin feel with percussion and woodwind instruments."[67]

The Spanish language, of course, figures prominently in this ethnically tailored publicity. While many campaigns are rendered simultaneously in Spanish, advertisers recognize that translation is not enough. Here again the "Latin feel" plays a key role. Pepsi Cola, for instance, took pains, and advice from their "Hispanic" marketing agency, to adapt their slogan "Catch that Pepsi spirit":

> If we had put that straightaway into Spanish, viewers would have considered it voodoo, something about a spirit flying through the air. So we changed it to read, 'Vive el sentir de Pepsi.' That means, Live that Pepsi feeling. That's what the English slogan intends to say, but you have to know the idiosyncrasies of the market to put it across.[68]

Citibank goes even further; beyond capturing in Spanish the spirit of the English copy, they resort to the bilingual pun to catch the sympathetic giggle of potential customers and make them feel included. "We're going to play on the language here," their spokesman at Castor Spanish International says, "telling them that 'We always say sí at Citibank' (pronounced see-tee-bank in Spanish)."[69]

Ironically, this practice of linguistic and cultural adaptation on the part of commercial publicity is more suggestive than the traditional public sphere of Latino expression, especially those dimensions of it that go beyond mere responses to hegemonic negation. As publicity agents suggest, "When translation isn't enough, try 'trans-creation'." The idea of "trans-creation," for the advertisers a gimmicky term aimed at maximizing specificity in targeting differentiated consumer publics, is appealing

and apt as a characterization of border culture expression and self-definition. As one "Hispanic" media executive puts it, the "proper execution" calls for a sense of "the familiar Spanish patois of the community, reflecting not only different words and meanings, but also differences of rhythm of speech and inflection." Latino artists and poets also need to "trans-create" in this sense, at least at a tactical level, as does the wider Chicano and Nuyorican community in its everyday speech and expressive practices. In order to vocalize the border, traversing it is not enough; we must be positioned there, with ready and simultaneous access to both sides.

Perhaps the commonality between these two otherwise divergent worlds is the issue of needs. The advertiser bent on "reaching" and "selling" the Hispanic market, and the Latino cultural agent who would voice and envision the people's life-world, both inhabit a public sphere conceived of as the arena for the articulation and satisfaction of collective needs. Beyond the contention over rights and policies, the force of consumption, understood in its broadest sense, holds sway in the culture of experience. Here the private sphere, rather than being categorically autonomized, informs the public and even fuels the drive for social legitimation. "Trans-creation," whether from commercial or expressive and representational motives, serves to counteract the reduction of social experience to the dominion of laws and consensual ethical norms.

Such "crossovers" are a reality today, rooted in the bilingualism and biculturalism of Latinos. Many critics have correctly pointed to the erosion and misrepresentation by the mass media of traditional cultural forms and experience. But the market and the media are not the only forces in society and their interaction with other factors such as state bureaucratic apparatuses, law, and social institutions, can have consequences that go beyond the simplistic "colonization" of the Latino lifeworld. For example, the contradiction created in the dominant classes by divergent treatment of Latino language practices (opposition in the "social" sphere and enthusiastic acceptance and application in the commercial sphere) has opened up a space in which Latinos negotiate new cultural forms that impact upon the culture at large.

Compromised as it is, even Coors' turn to Spanish language advertising to undo the negative effects of its hiring policies with regard to Latinos,[70] demonstrates the extent to which consumerism blurs the cultural boundaries which so threaten dominant non-Latino groups. Those dominant groups which fear the "threat" of Latinization of U.S. culture, if also owners of businesses or directors of social and political institutions that could profit from Latino patronage, often find themselves having to cater to the needs interpretations of Latinos. The hysterical objections made against the public reach of Latino ethos through market and media, objections similar to those against bilingual education, only testify to the pervasiveness of Latino influence:

> Freedom of speech is not unlimited. As Justice Brandeis has pointed out, no one is free to shout "fire" in a crowded theater. Speech and information are often curtailed in matters relating to national security, for example. Cutting off American citizens from sources of information in the language of their country, fostering language segregation via the airwaves, these are major problems that warrant the steps we propose [i.e., limiting the growth of Spanish-language radio stations].[71]

Latino experience in the U.S. has been a continual crossover, not only across geopolitical borders but across all kinds of cultural and political boundaries. Political organization, for example, is necessarily coalitional; in order to have an impact Latinos have formed alliances to elect officials who will represent their interests. Throughout the sixties and seventies, Latinos formed or reformed dozens of national lobbying organizations. Uppermost in their lobbying efforts are counterarguments against discriminatory practices in immigration, hiring and educational policies, opposition to government intervention in Latin America, especially Central America, and, of course, promotion of language issues. It should be added that Latinos of all backrounds (with only the partial exception of Cuban-Americans) are assiduous supporters and participants in the solidarity and sanctuary movements. These forums are very important because they exert a progressive influence, especially as regards women's issues like abortion, on groups that have a conservative cultural heritage. Furthermore, the political and cultural crossover involved in these activities contributes to the creation of alternative public spheres in the United States.

Crossover does not mean that Latinos seek willy nilly to "make it" in the political and commercial spheres of the general culture. They are vehicles which Latinos use to create new cultural forms that cross over in both directions. The music of Willie Colon, Rubén Blades, and other U.S. based Latino and Latin American musicians is a new pan-Latino fusion of Latin-American forms (Cuban *guaguancos*, Puerto Rican *plenas*, Dominican *merengues*, Mexican *rancheras*, Argentine *tangos*, Colombian *cumbias*, barrio drumming) and U.S. pop, jazz, rock, even do-wop, around a salsa base of Caribbean rhythms, particulalry Cuban *son*. Salsa cuts across all social classes and Latino groups who reside in New York, home ground of this fusion music. Originating in the barrios, it made its way to "downtown" clubs and across borders to the diverse audience of the Latin American subcontinent. The crossovers have resulted in a convergence phenomenon which does not represent anything other than its malleability and openness to incorporation.[72]

Salsa, perhaps better than any other cultural form, expresses the Latino ethos of multiculturalism and crossing borders. Willy Colon, for example, became a salsero precisely to forge a new "American" identity:

> Now look at my case; I'm Puerto Rican and I consider myself Puerto Rican. But when I go to the island I'm something else to them. And in New York, when I had to get documents, I was always asked: "Where are you from?" "I'm American. "Yeah, but from where?" They led me to believe that I wasn't from America, even though I have an American birth certificate and citizenship... I live between both worlds, but I also had to find my roots and that's why I got into salsa.[73]

Finding one's "roots" in salsa means more creating them from the heteroge-neous sounds that traverse the barrio than going back to some place that guarantees authenticity. Salsa *is* the salsero's homeland and the means to self-validation.[74]

Despite its popularity and certain minor breakthroughs, salsa has not (yet?) "made it" in mainstream U.S. culture. Latino artists and entrepeneurs have had to form their own labels, an alternative recording industry. Only in recent years, especially with the impetus of Rubén Blades' thematization of "crossing over" in the film "Crossover Dreams," has the dominant recording industry not only taken on salseros on national labels (Blades' *Agua de Luna*, based on the stories of García Márquez, is on Elektra) but also marketed them nationally. Furthermore, the alternative public spheres of contemporary rock, such as "Rock Against Racism," have been opened up by the collaborations of such "mainstream" musicians as the Rolling Stones, David Byrne and Paul Simon with salseros, Chicano rockers like Los Lobos, and Latin American stars like Milton Nascimento and Caetano Veloso.[75] Hip Hop has also brought together Afro-Americans, Latinos, and Afro-Latin Americans.[76]

6 Trans-creating A Multicultural America

Rubén Blades has insisted that a culturally effective crossover, which he prefers to call "convergence," is not about "abandonment or sneaking into someone else's territory. I propose, rather, convergence. Let's meet half way, and then we can walk either way together."[77] At the end of the interview he adds that he does "not need a visa" for the musical fusion which he seeks. He does not want "to be *in* America" but rather participate in the creation of a new America. The lyrics of the title piece of his *Buscando America* (Elektra/Asylum, 1984) make this point:

Estoy buscando América,	I'm searching forAmerica,
Estoy llamando América,	I'm calling for America,
luchando por la raza	Struggling for our people
y nuestra identidad.	and our identity.
Estoy buscando América,	I'm searching for America,
Esta es mi casa,	This is my home,
Estoy llamando América	I'm calling for America
y vamos a encontrarte	and we're going to find you

entre esta oscuridad.
Estoy buscando América,
Estoy llamando América,
Te han desaparecido
Los que niegan la verdad.
Estoy buscando América,
Estoy llamando América,
y a nosotros nos toca,
hoy ponerte en libertad.

in all this darkness.
I'm searching for America,
I'm calling for America,
Those who deny the truth
have disappeared you.
I'm searching for America,
I'm calling for America,
It's up to us today
to give you your freedom.

Latinos, then, do not aspire to enter an already given America but to participate in the construction of a new hegemony dependent upon their cultural practices and discourses. As argued above, the struggle over language signals this desire and the opposition to it by dominant groups. This view of language, and its strategic operationality in achieving a sense of self-worth, is the organizing focus of Gloria Anzaldúa's *Borderlands/La Frontera. The New Mestiza.*[78] "Ethnic identity is twin skin to linguistic identity—I am my language. Until I take pride in my language, I cannot take pride in myself."[79] Like Rondón's arguments about salsa,[80] the language of the new mestiza is the migratory homeland in which "continual creative motion [...] keeps breaking down the unitary aspect of each new paradigm."[81] Anzaldúa acknowledges that her projection of a "new mestiza consciousness" may seem cultureless from the perspective of "male-derived beliefs of Indo-Hispanics and Anglos;" for her, on the contrary, she is

> participating in the creation of yet another culture, a new story to explain the world and our participation in it, a new value system with images and symbols that connect us to each other and to the planet.[82]

Another way of constructing Anzaldúa's mestiza poetics is as follows: all cultural groups need a sense of worth in order to survive. Self-determination, which in this case focuses on linguistic self-determination, is the category around which such a need should be adjudicated and/or legislated as a civil right. In order for this right to be effective, however, it would have to alter the nature [or, to be more exact, the social relations] of civil society.

Such a claim, constructed in this way, only makes sense in a social structure that has shifted the grounds for enfranchisement from one of rights discourse to the interpretations that underpin such discourse. What is the justification, however, for needs interpretation? Our claim is that group ethos, the very stuff (or the "ethical substance," in Foucault's terminology)[83] of self-formation, is what contingently grounds the interpretation of a need as legitimate so that it can be adjudicated or legislated as a right. Another claim is that group ethos is constituted by everyday aesthetic practices such as the creative linguistic practices of Latinos which in the current historical conjuncture do not amount to subalternity,

but rather to a way of prying open the larger culture, by making its physical, institutional and metaphorical borders indeterminate, precisely what we have seen that the dominant culture fears.

Latino self-formation as trans-creation — to "trans-create" the term beyond its strictly commercialist coinage — is more than a culture of resistance, or it is "resistance" in more than the sense of standing up against concerted hegemonic domination. It confronts the prevailing ethos by congregating an ethos of its own, not necessarily an outright adversarial but certainly an alternative ethos. The Latino border trans-creates the impinging dominant cultures by constituting the space for their free intermingling — free because it is dependent on neither, nor on the reaction of one to the other, for its own legitimacy. Dialogue and confrontation with the monocultural other persists, but on the basis of what Foucault has called "the idea of governmentality," "the totality of practices, by which one can constitute, define, organize, instrumentalize the strategies which individuals in their liberty can have in regard to each other."[84]

It is in these terms that the positing of a relatively self-referential cultural ethos for oppressed groups can evade the attendant essentialist or exceptionalist pitfalls. For this ethos is eminently practical, not an alternative to resistance but an alternative form of resistance, not a deliberate ignorance of multicultural realities but a different and potentially more democratic way of apprehending them. The strategic value of this "relationship of self to self" is of utmost importance, since it defines the position from which to negotiate the existing relations of power as domination. For rather than aiming at some maximally transparent communication among hierarchically divergent subject positions, in Habermas' sense, the goal of this cultural-ethical self-formation is the adequate constitution and definition of the subject position itself. As Foucault explains in his critique of Habermas:

> I don't believe there can be a society without relations of power, if you understand them as means by which individuals try to conduct, to determine the behavior of others. The problem is not of trying to dissolve them in the utopia of a perfectly transparent communication, but to give one's self the rules of law, the techniques of management, and also the ethics, the ethos, the practice of self, which would allow these games of power to be played with a minimum of domination.[85]

"Practice of self" is understood here to refer to individuals, but is readily transferable to collective self-conducts; the relations of power are called strategic "games,"but the re-writing of the rules, or the playing out of other games with other rules, clearly interfaces with the dynamics of political and cultural struggle. And the utopian horizon, which Foucault discards in its Habermasian version, is still present in this strategy of minimizing domination, especially when the view is toward the process

of collective self-formation among oppressed and "other" groups. Gómez-Peña, that reliable voice of the border perspective, addresses this futuristic dimension in terms which also suggest the content and tactics of the new ethos, the alternative, multicultural "practice of self":

> The U.S. suffers from a severe case of amnesia. In its obsessive quest to 'construct the future,' it tends to forget or erase the past. Fortunately, the so-called disenfrachised groups who don't feel part of this national project have been meticulously documenting their histories. Latinos, blacks, Asians, women, gays, experimental artists and non-aligned intellectuals have used inventive languages to record the other history from a multicentric perspective. Our art functions both as collective memory and alternative chronicle,' says Amalia Mesa-Bains. In this sense, multicultural art, if nurtured, can become a powerful tool to recapture the desired historical self. The great paradox is the fact that without this historical self, no meaningful future can ever be constructed.[86]

Ethnicity-as-practice is primordially genealogical, intent as it invariably is on a recapturing and re-constituting of the past. It relies, as Michael M.J. Fischer terms it, on the "post-modern arts of memory," the collective power of recall which is only a power if it functions actively and constitutively. This retrospective, testimonial search is for Fischer "a (re)invention and discovery of a vision, both ethical and future-oriented. Whereas the search for coherence is grounded in a connection to the past, the meaning abstracted from that past, an important criterion of coherence, is an ethic workable for the future."[87] The "alternative chronicle" is more than merely recuperative: it is eminently functional in present self-formative practice and anticipatory of potential historical self-hood. Sandra Maria Esteves, in a poem cited earlier ("I am two parts/a person boricua/spic"), bemoans the forcible, physical loss of her antecedence: "I may never overcome the theft of my isla heritage... I can only imagine and remember how it was." But that imagination and remembrance enliven her dream-work, which in turn "realizes" that lost reality in a way that leads to eventual and profound self-realization. Her poem ends, "But that reality now a dream teaches me to see, and will bring me back to me."[88]

In the post-modern context, the mnemonic "arts" of border expression are conducted in "inventive languages," a key phrase of Gómez-Peña signalling the characteristic expressive tactic of this process. Language itself, of course, is the most obvious site of Latino inventiveness. Whether the wildest extravagance of the bilingual poet or the most mundane comment of everyday life, Latino usage tends necessarily toward interlingual innovation. The interfacing of multiple codes serves to de-canonize all of them, at least in their presumed discrete authority, thus allowing ample space for spontaneous experimentation and punning. Even for the most monolingual of Latinos, the "other" language looms constantly as a potential resource, and the option to vary according to different speech contexts is used far more often than not. "Trans-creation," understood in

this sense of intercultural variability and transferability, is the hallmark of border language practice.

The irreverence implicit in trans-creative expression need not be deliberately defiant in motive; it reflects rather a largely unspoken disregard for conventionally bounded usage insofar as such circumscription obstructs the need for optimal specificity of communicative and cultural context. The guiding impulse, articulated or not, is one of play, freedom, and even empowerment in the sense that access to individual and collective referentiality cannot ultimately be blocked. Interlingual puns, multidirectional mixing and switching, and the seemingly limitless stock of borrowings and adaptations attest to a delight not only in excluding and eluding the dominant and exclusionary, but in the very act of inclusion within a newly constituted expressive terrain. Rather than rejecting a language because of its association with a repressive other, or adopting it wholesale in order to facilitate passage, Latino expression typically "uses" official discourse by adapting it and thereby showing up its practical malleability.

Nuyorican vernacular includes the verb "gufear," from which has derived the noun "el gufeo." The colloquial American word "goof" is clearly visible and audible, and certainly the "Spanglish" usage has its closest equivalent in the phrase "goofing on" someone or something. But as a cultural practice, "el gufeo" clearly harkens to "el vacilón," that longstanding Puerto Rican tradition of funning and funning on, fun-making and making fun. Popular culture and everyday life among Puerto Ricans abound in the spirit of "el vacilón," that enjoyment in ribbing at someone's or one's own expense, for which a wider though overlapping term is "el relajo." We might even speak, in fact, of a Puerto Rican ethos of "el relajo" which, in its interplay with "el respeto," serves to mark off consensual guidelines for interpersonal behavior.[89] Setting limits of "respectability" and testing them, "relaxing" them, defines the dynamic of Puerto Rican culture at the level of behavioral expression. The role of "el relajo," often practiced of course by the subaltern classes in their interaction with their masters, is not derivative of or conditioned by "el respeto"; rather, the delineation of individual and group dignity draws its power from the ability to "relax (on)" the prevalent codes of "respect."

Terms and preactices like "el vacilón" and "el relajo" are the Puerto Rican version of the Cuban "choteo," perhaps the most widely understood usage among the Latino nationalities and having its particular variants in the diverse national cultures. In all cases, "el choteo" involves irony, parody and many of those elements which Henry Louis Gates, Jr. has identified as constitutive of "signifyin(g)" in the African-American tradition: repetition, double-talk and semantic reversals and, most generally, gestural imitation for the sake of re-figuring.[90] Colonial and elite cultures in Latin America have been constant prey to "el choteo," which also

operates within and among the group to bolster or deflate spirits, whichever seems appropriate. The "signifying monkey" might instead be a dog or a mule or a pig, or even "un bobo," a town fool or simpleton. But like "signifyin(g)" "el choteo" does have its agent, some unsuspected, improbable master of the trope who embodies the arts of memory and (re-)invention.

"El gufeo" takes the process even one step further: Latino "signifyin(g)" in the multicultural U.S. context adds to the fascination of its home-country or African-American counterparts because of its interlinguality. Double-talk in this case is sustained not merely by the interplay of "standard" and vernacular significations but by the crossing of entire language repertoires. Border vernacular in fact harbors a plurality of vernaculars comprised of their multiple interminglings and possible permutations. The result is not simply an extended range of choices and juxtapositions, the kind of "splitting of tongues" exemplified by border poet Gina Valdés at the end of her poem "Where You From?:

> soy de aqui
> y soy de alla
> I didn't build
> this border
> that halts me
> the word fron
> tera splits
> on my tongue.[91]

The real "signifyin(g)" potential of this discourse resides in the actual interpenetration of semantic and syntactic fields, when meanings and structures become destabilized and their referential uniformity discarded. The poetry of bilingual practitioners like Alurista and Tato Laviera abounds in this kind of doubling, another striking example being the play on the words "sunrise"-"sonrisa" (smile) which occurs in the writings of both Victor Hernandez Cruz and Louis Reyes Rivera. Hernandez Cruz ends his often-cited poem "You gotta have your tips on fire" with the lines,

> You never will be in the wrong place
> For the universe will feel your heat
> And arrange its dance on your head
> There will be a Sun/Risa
> on your lips
> But
> You gotta have your tips on fire
> Carnal.[92]

In "Problems in Translation" Reyes Rivera takes up the same interlingual pun to dramatize his "discovery" of a connotative richness in his effort to adopt a new-found Spanish vocabulary:

Esa sonrisa
is not just a smile
but a brilliance you lend
from the life in your eyes
the width of your mouth
as they both
give rise to the meaning of sunfilled
  spread
across
  your
high
  boned
gentle
  face.[93]

Poetic and colloquial language use is of course only the most obvious and readily illustrated case of re-figuration in Latino cultural expression. Examples are multiplied when account is taken of the traditions of musical "signifyin(g)" in salsa, Latin jazz, Tex-Mex and Latin rock, or the characteristic interplay of Caribbean or Mexican visual worlds with North American settings among Nuyorican and Chicano artists. One thinks of Jorge Soto and his "signifyin(g)" on that classical work of Puerto Rican painting, Francisco Oller's "El Velorio" (1893). Soto reenacts and transfigures the jíbaro wake of the original by populating the scene with the trappings of New York tenement life. A particularly suggestive example from recent years is provided by the "casitas," the small wooden houses which have proliferated in the vacant lots of the South Bronx, El Barrio and other Puerto Rican neighborhoods. Though modelled after working-class dwellings on the Island of the earlier decades, before the industrialization process overran the neighborhoods with concrete boxes, the "casitas" are typically decorated and furnished with objects pertinent to the immediate New York setting: billboards, shopping carts, plastic milk cartons and the like. The effect is a remarkable pastiche in which otherwise disparate visual and sculptural worlds cohabit and collapse into one another in accordance with the intergenerational historical experience of the Puerto Rican migrant community. Perhaps most impressive cultural "signifyin(g)" occurs as the contrasting of urban spatial languages, as the tropical "casita" with its strong rural reminiscences in the form of open porches, truck gardens and domestic animals jars with and yet strangely complements the surrounding scene of strewn lots and gutted buildings. Nostalgia and immediacy parody each other in the "invention" of a tradition which captures, in striking and cogent ways, the texture of "multiculturalism" in contemporary "America."[94]

For, as Gómez-Peña suggests, in order for the "multicultural paradigm" to amount to more than still another warmed-over version of cultural pluralism, the entire culture and national project need to be conceived

from a "multicentric perspective." It is at the border, where diversity is concentrated, that diversity as a fact of cultural life may be most readily and profoundly perceived and expressed. It is there, as Gloria Anzaldúa describes it in her work *Borderlands/La Frontera*, that the mestiza "learns to juggle cultures. She has a plural personality, she operates in a pluralistic mode.... Not only does she sustain contradictions, she turns the ambivalence into something else."[95] Renato Rosaldo sees in Anzaldúa's Chicana lesbian vision a celebration of "the potential of borders in opening new forms of human understanding": "She argues that because Chicanos have long practiced the art of cultural blending, 'we' now stand in a position to become leaders in developing new forms of polyglot cultural creativity. In her view, the rear guard will become the vanguard."[96]

Understood in this sense, multiculturalism signals a paradigmatic shift in ethnicity theory, a radically changed optic concerning center and margins of cultural possibility. The presumed "subcultural" tributaries feel emboldened to lay claim to the "mainstream," that tired metaphor now assuming a totally new interpretation. Tato Laviera once again is playing a pioneering role in this act of resignifying: in his new book, entitled *Mainstream Ethics*, Laviera demonstrates that it is the very concurrence of multiple and diverse voices, tones and linguistic resources that impels the flow of the whole culture of "America." The challenge is obviously aesthetic and political in intent, but it is also, as the title indicates, an eminently ethical one. "It is not our role," the book's introduction announces, "to follow the dictates of a shadowy norm, an illusive *main* stream, but to remain faithful to our collective and individual personalities. Our ethic is and shall always be current."[97] Appropriately, the Spanish subtitle of the volume, "*ética corriente*," is more than a translation; it is a "trans-creation" in the full sense, since "current" or "common," with its rootedness in the cultural ethos of everyday life, stands in blatant contrast to the fabricated, apologetic implications of "mainstream" in its conventional usage.

The Chicano poet Juan Felipe Herrera has an intriguing gufeo fantasy. "What if suddenly the continent turned upside-down?" he muses.

> What if the U.S. was Mexico?
> What if 200,000 Anglosaxicans
> were to cross the border each month
> to work as gardeners, waiters,
> 3rd chair musicians, movie extras,
> bouncers, babysitters, chauffers,
> syndicated cartoons, feather-weight
> boxers, fruit-pickers & anonymous poets?
> What if they were called waspanos,
> waspitos, wasperos or wasbacks?
> What if we were the top dogs?
> What if literature was life, eh?

The border houses the power of the outrageous, the imagination needed to turn the historical and cultural tables. The view from the border enables us to apprehend the ultimate arbitrariness of the border itself, of forced separations and inferiorizations. Latino expression forces the issue which tops the agenda of American culture, the issue of geography and nomenclature.

> Let's get it straight: America is a continent not a country. Latin America encompasses more than half of America. Quechuas, Mixtecos and Iroquois are American (not U.S. citizens). Chicano, Nuyorrican, Cajun, Afro-Caribbean and Quebeqois cultures are American as well. Mexicans and Canadians are also North Americans. Newly arrived Vietnamese and Laotians will soon become Americans. U.S. Anglo-European culture is but a mere component of a much larger cultural complex in constant metamorphosis.[99]

For the search for "America," the inclusive, multicultural society of the continent, has to do with nothing less than an imaginative ethos of re-mapping and re-naming in the service not only of Latinos but all claimants.

Notes

1. We agree with Guillermo Gómez-Peña that "[t]erms like 'Hispanic,' 'Latino,' 'Ethnic,' 'minority,' 'marginal,' 'alternative,' and 'Third World,' among others, are inaccurate and loaded with ideological implications.... In the absence of a more enlightened terminology, we have no choice but to utilize them with extreme care." "The Multicultural Paradigm: An Open Letter to the National Arts Community," *High Performance* (Fall 1989): 20.

2. We have decided to emphasize "Latino" for, unlike "Hispanic," it is not an identity label imposed by the politicized statistics of the Census Bureau and the market who seek to target particular constituencies for political and economic manipulation. As for the shortcomings of "Latino," we hope that this article contributes to their critique. In a nutshell, the term "older immigrants" refers to the way in which assimilationalist or "melting pot" sociologists (from Robert Park to Milton Gordon) constructed the experiences of late nineteenth and early twentieth century immigrants according to a dynamic of contact, accommodation, and assimilation that eventually amalgamated them into the dominant culture. The term "new ethnics" refers to the period of (white) ethnic revival, largely coinciding with civil rights struggles and their aftermath, in which "racial minorities and white ethics became polarized on a series of issues relating to schools, housing, local government, and control over federal programs." This revival has also been understood as the dying flash of white ethnicity in a longer historical process of acculturation. Cf. Stephen Steinberg, *The Ethnic Myth. Race, Ethnicity, and Class in America* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1982), pp. 48-51.

See also Richard H. Thompson, *Theories of Ethnicity. A Critical Appraisal* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1989), for whom the "rediscovery of ethnicity [by its American observers] is largely a response to the black protest movement of the 1960s, the state's subsequent definition and legitimation of that movement as an ethnic (but not primarily a class) movement, and the resulting increase in the United States of other ethnically defined movements by Hispanics, Asian-Americans, and "white ethnics," who, observing the 'success' of black organization and the state's receptivity to it, have quite unmysteriously followed a similar tack." (p. 93)

3. "Racial minority" is a term used to distinguish the historical experiences (enslavement and/or institutional exclusion from political, economic, and especially social enfranchisement) of certain groups (viz. African-Americans, Latinos, Asian-Americans, and Native-Americans) from those of European immigrant groups for whom the dynamics described by ethnicity theories made possible the enfranchisements denied to the former. Cf. Michael Omi and Howard Winant, *Racial Formation in the United States. From the 1960s to the 1980s* (New York: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1986).

4. The historical discrimination against Mexican-Americans and Puerto Ricans is an experience which cannot be permitted to disappear by projecting Latinos as an overarching group. Such discrimination involves a complex of racial, class, and "otherness" factors which often make middle-class sectors of other Latino groups anxious and seek to dissaciate themselves. On the other hand, the fact that discrimination has been directed at all Latino groups contributes to a pan-Latino rejection of discrimination aimed at any particular group.

5. Cf. Steinberg, pp. 24, 40 *et passim.*

6. The increase in the Latin American population in the United States can be more accurately compared with the *overall* European influx rather than with the numbers of any one particular group. If Latin American immigration, in conjunction with the high fertility rate of U.S. Latinos, continues into the next century (which is likely), then proportionately the number of Latinos will rival or supersede that of the European immigrants since the turn of the 19th century. From 1820 to 1930, the estimated "net immigration of various European nationalities" is as follows: Germans, 5,900,000; Italians, 4,600,000; Irish, 4,500,000; Poles, 3,000,000; Canadians, 2,800,000; Jews, 2,500,000; English, 2,500,000; Swedes, 1,200,000; Scots and Scots-Irish, 1,000,000. Cf. Steinberg, ibid., p. 41.

7. Cf. Michael Lev, "Tracking The Hispanic TV Audience," *The New York Times* (Dec. 13, 1989): D 17. Lev's figures are taken from a Nielsen Hispanic Television survey funded by two of the largest Spanish TV networks, Univisión and Telemundo Group, Inc.

8. Such decreases are comparable for other European immigrant populations in the United States. Cf. Joshua Fishman, *et al.*, *Language Loyalty in the United States* (The Hague: Mouton, 1966), pp. 42-44.

9. Stanley Aronowitz, "Postmodernism and Politics," *Social Text*, 18 (Winter 1987/88): 108. Reprinted in Andrew Ross, ed., *Universal Abandon? The Politics of Postmodernism* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1988), pp. 46-62.

10. Ibid.

11. Edmundo O'Gorman, *The Invention of America. An Inquiry into the historical nature of the New World and the meaning of its history* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1961).

12. Frederick Jackson Turner, "The Significance of the Frontier in American History," *The Frontier in American History* (New York: Holt, 1920), p. 11.

13. Richard Slotkin, *The Fatal Environment. The Myth of the Frontier in the Age of Industrialization, 1800-1890* (New York: Atheneum, 1985), p. 40.

In the case of African-Americans, of course, it was not such a "safety valve" but the racist state which contained their discontent.

14. Guillermo Gómez-Peña, "Documented/Undocumented," in *Multi-Cultural Literacy. Opening the American Mind*, eds. Rick Simonson and Scott Walker (Saint Paul, MN: Graywolf Press, 1988), p. 127.challenges.

15. "The Multicultural Paradigm," p. 20.

16. Tato Laviera, *AmeRícan* (Houston: Arte Público, 1984), p. 95.

17. Sandra María Esteves, *Yerba Buena* (Greenfield Center, NY: Greenfield Review, 1980).

18. Sandra María Esteves, *Tropical Rains* (New York: African Caribbean Poetry Theater, 1984).

19. Jacques Derrida, "The Parergon," *October*, 9 (Summer 1979): 20.

20. Cf. Jean Baudrillard, *De la Séduction* (Paris: Galilée, 1979). Apropos of the simulacrum, Latin Americans have dealt with problems of cultural identity in terms of the "neither-nor" since the conquest. The difference between "neither-nor" and "not neither" (or "not nowhere") is that the former is usually expressed by elites who feel in an ambivalent position vis-à-vis metropolitan cultural valuation while the latter is situated in the struggles of subordinated groups against a cultural "nonexistence" which elites are too often willing to exploit.

Enrique Lihn has parodied the *ninguneísta* discourse in *El arte de la palabra* (Barcelona: Pomaire, 1979). "We are nothing: imitations, copies, phantoms: repeaters of what we understand badly, that is, hardly at all: deal organ grinders: the animated fossils of a prehistory that we have lived *neither here nor there*, consequently, anywhere, for we are aboriginal foreigners, transplanted from birth in our respective countries of origin" (p. 82; our emphasis). This is a parody of the anxious discourse of those elites who seek to define the nation. Roberto Schwarz has written an in-depth critique of this kind of "national problem." "Brazilian Culture: Nationalism by Elimination," *New Left Review*, 167 (Jan./Feb. 1988): 77-90.

21. Cf. R. Butler, "On Creating a Hispanic America: A Nation Within a Nation?" quoted in Antonio J. Califa, "Declaring English the Official Language: Prejudice Spoken Here," *Harvard Civil Rights-Civil Liberties Law Review*, 24 (1989): 321.

22. Terry Robbins, Presentation at Florida International University (Oct. 8, 1987), quoted in Califa, p. 321. Terry Robbins is a former head of U.S. English operations in Florida.

23. Deutsch, "The Political Significance of Linguistic Conflicts," in *Les Etats Multilingues* (1975), quoted in Antonio J.

24. An English First analysis of Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986, Pub. Law No. 99-603, 1986 U.S. Cong. Code & Admin. News (100 Stat.) 3359, quoted in Califa, p. 313.Califa, "Declaring English the Official Language: Prejudice Spoken Here," *Harvard Civil Rights-Civil Liberties Law Review*, 24 (1989): 328.

25. Cf. Joshua Fishman, "'English Only': Its Ghosts, Myths and Dangers," *International Journal of the Sociology of Language*, 125, 132 (1988), quoted in Califa, p. 329.

26. "Government and private experts agree that the threat of war with the Soviet Union is diminishing. As a result, the nation's military services argue that a portion of the Pentagon budget in the 1990's must be devoted to combating drugs and being prepared to bring American military power to bear in the third world." Stephem Engelberg, "In Search of Missions to Justify Outlays," *The New York Times* (Jan. 9, 1990): A14.

27. Thompson, p. 90.

world." Stephem Engelberg, "In Search of Missions to Justify Outlays," *The New York Times* (Jan. 9, 1990): A14.

27. Thompson, p. 90.

28. Cf. Jürgen Habermas, "Modernity—An Incomplete Project," in *The Anti-Aesthetic. Essays on Postmodern Culture*, ed. Hal Foster (Port Townsend, WA: Bay Press, 1983), p. 14.

29. Daniel Bell, "Ethnicity and Social Change," in Nathan Glazer and Daniel P. Moynihan, eds., *Ethnicity: Theory and Experience* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1975), p. 169, as quoted in Thompson, op. cit., p. 99.

30. According to Michael Omi and Howard Winant, the formation of the concept of ethnicity in the United States is rooted in a different historical conjuncture than ours and, thus, occludes this difference if invoked to account for the negotiation of value by non-European immigrants: "But both assimilationist and cultural pluralism had largely emphasized European, white immigrants, what Kallen called 'the Atlantic migration.' The origins of the concepts of 'ethnicity' and 'ethnic group' in the U.S., then, lay outside the experience of those identified (not only today but already in Park's and Kallen's time), as *racial* minorities: Afro-Americans, Latin Americans, Native Americans and Asian Americans (blacks, browns, reds and yellows). The continuity of experience embodied in the application of the terms of ethnicity theory to both groups—to European immigrants and racial minorities—was not established; indeed it tended to rest on what we have labelled the *immigrant analogy*." *Racial Formation in the United States*, pp. 16-17.

31. As Stephen Steinberg argues, "Kallen's model of a 'democracy of nationalities' is workable only in a society where there is a basic parity among constituent ethnic groups. Only then would ethnic boundaries be secure from encroachment, and only then would pluralism be innocent of class bias and consistent with democratic principles." *The Ethic Myth*, pp. 260-61. The reference is to Horace Kallen, "Democracy Versus the Melting Pot," in *Culture and Democracy in the United States* (New York: Boni and Liveright, 1924). This critique extends to later studies like Nathan Glazer, *Affirmative Discrimination* (New York: Basic Books, 1975).

32. "[N]umerous new struggles have expressed resistance

33. Laclau and Mouffe, p. 184. See also Martha Minow, "We, the Family: Constitutional Rights and American Families," in *The Constitution and American Life*, ed. David Thelen (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1988), p. 319. Against the new forms of subordination, and this from the very heart of the new society. Thus it is that the waste of natural resources, the pollution and destruction of the environment, the consequences of productivism have given birth to the ecology movement. Other struggles, which Manuel Castells terms 'urban', express diverse forms of resistance to the capitalist occupation of social space. The general urbanization which has accompanied economic growth, the transfer of the popular classes to the urban periphery or their relegation to the decaying inner cities, and the general lack of collective goods and services have caused a series of new problems which affect the organization of the whole of social life outside work. Hence the multiplicity of social relations [not subordinatable to "class"] from which antagonisms and struggles may originate: habitat, consumption, various services, can all constitute terrains for the struggle against inequalities and the claiming of new rights." Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe, *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy. Towards a Radical Democratic Politics* (London: Verso, 1985), p. 161.

Given that these new forms of subordination and terrains of struggle were not in place before World War II, the conditions of possibility for group self-understanding are no longer those which made prior theories of ethnicity socially and politically operational.

34. "We, the Family," p. 322.

35. Nancy Fraser, "Women, Welfare, and Politics," in *Unruly Practices. Power, Discourse and Gender in Contemporary Social Theory* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1989), p. 154.

36. For example, "[I]n the 'masculine' subsystem...claimants must prove their 'cases' meet administratively defined criteria of entitlement; in the 'feminine' subsystem, on the other hand, claimants must prove conformity to administratively defined criteria of need." Ibid.

37. "[I]n a given context the presence of a particular unit is in contrast with its absence. When this situation holds it is usually the case that the unmarked form is more general in sense or has a wider distribution than the marked form." John Lyons, *Introduction to Theoretical Linguistics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1969), p. 79. The example chosen by Lyons demonstrates that markedness is directly related to socially instituted norms of "generality." One can say "Is the dog a he or a she?" but one would not ask the same if referring to a "bitch," whose gender is necessarily female. Markedness relies on already instituted norms of generality; the theory, however, does not question the grounds on which such a generality is instituted. As regards ethnicity, "WASP"s are taken to be the unmarked form, while other groups are understood as "unmarked." And yet, nearly 90% of U.S. citizens are not WASPs.

38. In an April 1988 study —"New Voices: Immigrant Students in the U.S. Public Schools," financed by the Ford Foundation, it was argued that "schools were doing a poor job of meeting the immigrant students' *needs*" (our emphasis). Cf. Associated Press, "Study Finds Obstacles Exist For Immigrant Schoolchildren," *The New York Times* (May 10, 1988). Both this and another study advocated increasing the number of Hispanic teachers to meet the cultural needs of students and thus ease the increasing dropout rate and other apparent education dysfunctionalities. Cf. Peter Applebome, "Educators Alarmed by Growing Rate of Dropouts Among Hispanic Youth," *The New York TImes* (March 15, 1987): 22.

39. Quoted in Thomas Weyr, *Hispanic U.S.A. Breaking the Melting Pot* (New York: Harper & Row, 1988), pp. 62-63.
40. Ibid.
41. Jürgen Habermas, *The Theory of Communicative Action. Vol. II. Lifeworld and System: A Critique of Functionalist Reason*, trans. Thomas McCarthy (Boston: Beacon Press, 1987), p. 365.
42. Fraser, p. 156.
43. Oskar Negt and Alexander Kluge, "The Public Sphere and Experience: Selections," trans. Peter Labanyi, *October*, 46 (Fall 1988), p. 60, translator's note.
44. Fredric Jameson, "On Negt and Kluge," *October*, 46 (Fall 1988): 159.
45. Cf. V.N. Voloshinov, *Marxism and the Philosophy of LAnguage*, trans. Ladislav Matejka and I.R. Titunik (New York: Seminar Press, 1973), pp. 91-97 and M.M. Bakhtin, "The Problem of Speech Genres," in *Speech Genres and Other Late Essays*, trans. Vern W. McGee (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1986), pp. 61-102.
46. Oskar Negt and Alexander Kluge, *Geschichte und Eigensinn* (Frankfurt: Zweitausendeins, 1981), p. 944, quoted in Jameson, p. 172.
47. Jameson, p. 171.
48. Ibid., p. 78. 49. Ibid., p. 79. 50. Ibid., p. 76. 51. (Boston: David R. Godine, 1982).52. Ibid., p. 19. 53. Ibid., p. 187. 54. Ibid., p. 182. 55. Ibid., p. 124. 56. Ibid., p. 137. 57. Ibid., p. 151.
58. Thomas B. Morgan, "The Latinization of America," *Esquire* (May 1983): 56.
59. Ibid., p. 3.
60. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), pp. 46, 153, and 241.
61. Ibid., p. 259. 62. Ibid., pp. 54-55. 63. Ibid., p. 7.
64. (April 18, 1989), p. 16.
65. Patrick Barry, "When translation isn't enough, try 'trans-creation'," Special supplement on "The Hispanic Market," *Advertising Age* (Feb. 14, 1983): M-21.
66. Ibid., p. M 26. 67. Ibid.
68. Susan Dentzer, "Learning the Hispanic Hustle," *Newsweek* (May 17, 1982): 84.
69. Barry, p. M 26.
70. "[A] show of disregard can cost a firm heavily in lost sales, as the Adolph Coors Co. discovered several years ago. Charged by Hispanic groups with discriminatory hiring practices that led to a boycott of its products, the brewer has fought to rebuild its image, in part by making donations to Hispanic causes." Dentzer, p. 86.
71. Letter from Gerda Bikales, executive director of U.S. English, to the Secretary of the Federal Communications Commission ("FCC") (Sept. 26, 1985), quoted in Califa, pp. 319-20. Cf. also Associated Press, "Group Wants to Stop Ads in Spanish," *San Jose Mercury News* (Dec. 23, 1985).
72. "[E]l barrio es el hilo conductor"; "[la salsa] representa plenamente la convergencia del barrio urbano de hoy [porque asume] la totalidad de ritmos que acuden a esa convergencia"; "La salsa no es un ritmo, y tampoco es un simple estilo para enfrentar un ritmo definido. La salsa es una forma abierta capaz de representar la totalidad de tendencias que se reúnen en la circunstancia del Caribe urbano [incluyendo Nueva York] de hoy; el barrio sigue siendo la única marca definitiva." Cf. César Miguel Rondón, *El libro de la salsa. Crónica de la música del caribe urbano* (Caracas: Editorial Arte, 1980), pp. 32-64 *et passim*. "We object to Philip Morris or any other companies who are advertising in languages other than English," said Stanley Diamond, head of the California chapter of U.S. English, an advocacy group. "What they are doing tends to separate out citizens and our people by language."... This fall Diamond'...chapter launched a coupon mail-in protest against a Spanish-language Yellow Pages...."We certainly would feel that the corporations, the telephone company with the Spanish Yellow Pages should change.... We will do everything we can to put this advertising in English only... and in no other language," said Diamond. In Florida, U.S. English spokeswoman Terry Robbins...has written as a private citizen to McDonald's and Burger King protesting Spanish in fast-food menus. "Why does poor Juan or Maria have a problem ordering a Whopper?" she asked. "It isn't that they aren't able to, they don't want to."
73. Humberto Márquez, "Willie Colon inventa cosas para que la vida no duela," *El Diario de Caracas* (Feb. 23, 1982): 14-15.
74. Ibid.
75. Cf. Jon Pareles, "Dancing Along with David Byrne," *The New York Times* (Nov. 1, 1989): C 1. George Lipsitz makes a similar argument about Los Lobos' newtorking with other groups to create a new mass audience, a new public sphere: "For [drummer] Perez, the world of rock-and-roll music is not aplace that obliterates local cultures by rendering them invisible; rather it is an arena where diverse groups find common ground while still acknowledging important differences. The prefigurative counter-hegemony fashioned by Los Lobos has indeed won the allegiance of musicians from other marginalized cultures. Their songs have been recorded by country and western star Waylon Jennings as well as by polka artist Frankie Yankovic. The Cajun accordian player and singer Jo-El Sonnier views Los Lobos as artists whose cultural struggles parallel his own." "Cruising Around the Historical Bloc—Postmodernism and Popular Music in East Los Angeles," *Cultural Critique*, 5 (Winter 1986-87), p. 175.
76. Cf. Juan Flores, "Rappin', Writin', and Breakin': Black and Puerto Rican Culture in New York, *Dissent*, (fall 1987): 580-84.

77. *Chicago Sunday Times* (Jan. 26, 1987).
78. (San Francisco: Spinsters/Aunte Lute, 1987).
79. Ibid., p. 59.
80. See note 71.
81. Ibid., p. 80. 82. Ibid., p. 81.
83. The "ethical substance" is one of the four dimensions that comprise "ethics." It delimits what moral action will apply to: for example, the pleasures among the Greeks, the flesh among the early Christians, sexuality in Western modernity, and, we argue, group ethos —ethnic, feminist, gay, lesbian, etc.— in multi-cultural societies. Cf. Michel Foucault, *The Use of Pleasure* (New York: Vintage, 1986), pp. 26-28.
84. Michel Foucault, "The Ethic of Care for the Self as a Practice of Freedom," in *The Final Foucault*, eds. James Bernauer and David Rasmussen (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1988), p. 19.
85. Ibid., p. 18.
86. Gómez-Peña, "The Multicultural Paradigm," p. 22.
87. Michael J. Fischer, "Ethnicity and the Post-Modern Arts of Memory," in James Clifford and George E. Marcus, eds. *Writing Culture: The Poetics and Politics of Ethnography* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986), p. 196.
88. Esteves, *Yerba Buena*, p.?.
89. Cf. Antonio Lauria, "'Respeto,' 'Relajo' and Interpersonal Relations in Puerto Rico," *Anthropological Quarterly*, 37, 2 (1964): 53-67.
90. Henry Louis Gates, Jr., *The Signifying Monkey: A Theory of Afro-American Literary Criticism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988).
91. Gina Valdés, "Where You From?" *The Broken Line/La Linea Quebrada*, 1, 1 (May 1986).
92. Víctor Hernández Cruz, *Snaps*.
93. Louis Reyes Rivera, *This One For You* (New York: Shamal, 1983).
94. For discussions of casitas see the planned volume sponsored by the Bronx Council on the Arts, especially Luis Aponte, "Casitas as Place and Metaphor" and Joseph Sciorra, "We're not just here to plant. We have culture': A Case Study of a South Bronx Casita, Rincón Criollo." Cf. the discussion of Sciorra's work in Dinita Smith, "Secret Lives of New York: Exploring the City's Unexamined Worlds," *New York* (Dec. 11, 1989): 34-41.
95. Anzaldúa, p. 79.
96. Renato Rosaldo, *Truth in Culture: The Remaking of Social Analysis* (Boston: Beacon, 1989), p. 216.
97. Tato Laviera, *Mainstream Ethics* (Houston: Arte Público, 1988).
98. Juan Felipe Herrera, "Border Drunkie at 'Cabaret Babylon-Aztlán'," *The Broken Line/La Linea Quebrada*.
99. Gómez-Peña, "The Multicultural Paradigm," p. 20.

The Future of Socialism?

STANLEY ARONOWITZ

February 1990 or February 1917?

On Sunday evening February 4, the largest Soviet protest demonstration in more than seventy years was held in Moscow to demand the end of the Communist party's monopoly over political power. Naturally, one cannot fail to have noticed that the event was called on the eve of the opening of a meeting of the party's Central Committee, where President Mikhail Gorbachev was widely rumored to plan to call for the end of the one party state. At the demonstration of 200,000, some people carried signs with the simple phrase "February, 1990, " an unmistakable reference to the February, 1917 revolution. [1] Some Russians were hoping that the unfulfilled promise of that democratic uprising, cut short by the Bolshevik October would be redeemed. Nevertheless, even if the demonstration was not oppositional to the leading party group's program, recalling the February revolution in which the popular goal was to establish a republic, a multiparty political system, civil liberties, and greater popular participation in processes of governance — implied a severe critique of the Great October Revolution, which introduced the principle of proletarian dictatorship, a complex doctrine in whose name the Soviet state and party oligarchy ruled in Eastern Europe and in the Soviet Union. Gorbachev's call for a multiparty political system and for the return of limited market relations has followed a year during which all of the Communist regimes in Eastern Europe collapsed.

The explanations for this astonishing turn of events are, by now, fairly well known: the palpable failure of really existing socialist economies to meet the basic needs of the underlying population, especially after the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund eliminated loans to many countries in the mid '80s; visible corruption by a decrepit oligarchy softened by generations of largely unchallenged power; the disaffection of intellectuals after Khruschev's downfall in 1964 and, more comprehensively, after the brief spark of Czech "socialism with a human face" was ruthlessly snuffed out by Soviet tanks in 1968; and, of course, the surfacing of the unresolved nationalities question, particularly within the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia. Most of these weaknesses might have been controlled and displaced if the working classes of Eastern Europe had not demonstrated their own impatience and protest. Beyond the well-known Polish Solidarity movement which holds majority government power today, Soviet Miners and Czech and East German workers developed their own grievances which became the basis for strikes and demonstrations.

For it cannot be forgotten that in the industrializing countries of really existing socialism the consent of the industrial working class is especially important to any regime that rules in the name of socialism and development. When significant working class fractions both refuse to defend the regime and, moreover, generalize their demands from economic grievances to a refusal to consent to established social and political power, only force or serious compromises by the ruling groups can stop them. The steady evolution of the Gorbachev group from Khruschev-type reforms to what he now calls a program of "democratic socialism, " by which he means republican reforms within a predominantly state socialist economy, can be understood only in the context of the spiritual pall that overtook all of the societies of real socialism in the '80s and, more concretely, the crisis of consent. The conjunctures that produced this state of affairs became the sufficient reason for the collapse, and even accounts for the clearly articulated Soviet policy of non-interference.

Theoretically, the democratic revolution in Eastern Europe affirms Gramsci's argument that ruling groups can issue "directives, " but unless they receive the "spontaneous" consent of those charged with carrying them out, even the most authoritarian regime may not survive. Gramsci's concept of consent is not identical to Weber's category of legitimation, for consent implies active participation by the population in the production and reproduction of society:

> In general it may be said that the distinction between ordinary men and others who are more specifically legislators is provided by the fact that this second group not only formulates directives which will become a norm of conduct for others, but at the same time creates the instruments by means of which the directives themselves will be "imposed" and by means of which it will verify their execution. The maximum of legislative capacity can be inferred when a perfect formulation of directives is matched by a perfect arrangement of organisms of execution and verification and by a perfect preparation of the "spontaneous" consent of the masses who "live" these directives, modifying their own habits, their own will, their own convictions to conform with those directives and with the objectives which they propose to achieve. If everyone is a legislator in the broadest sense of the concept he continues to be a legislator even if he accepts directives from others — if as he carries them out he makes certain that others carry them our too; if having understood their spirit, he propagates them as though making them into rules specifically applicable to limited and definite zones of living.[2]

Gramsci's conception of consent may be articulated with Rosa Luxemburg's criticism of Leninism: the distinction between the leaders and the led, maintained in Lenin's theory of the party, is precisely what Marx's politics challenges. [3] The question is whether the revolution seeks to abolish this distinction and intervene in social relations to reduce, if not immediately abolish, the divisions that perpetuate economic and political inequality. For

Gramsci, this is not an ethical question alone, but a condition for a new type of social rule. Bourgeois societies win consent by manipulations such as patriotism, nationalism, a certain version of consumer society and/or republicanism in which important segments of the population, especially the working, class possess their own organs of political and economic representation, even limited power. For Gramsci the socialist alternative entails the development of a rich civil society, rich because it no longer follows Hegel's conception according to which civil society is nearly identical to economic relations. Recall Gramsci includes what may be called ideological and cultural struggle where citizens debate issues bearing on the rules of governance, and insists that modernity entails the requirement that the subaltern classes and social categories are constitutive of it.

The Communists, lacking the resources of consumer society and unable to rely on the "spontaneous"consent of increasingly estranged nations, intellectuals, and workers, found themselves with a shell of power without its living conditions. The oligarchy, which had relentlessly shriveled civil society, could issue directives, but only the army and the party cadre were prepared to carry them out — without, however possessing the capacity to "impose" these rules on others except by coercion and, in the case of the working class, a de facto contract which always implies a mechanical relation between power and its subjects. By the '70s, the party had ceased to exercise moral and intellectual leadership within society; "others" were inventing their own rules, in a shifted context from the party/state monopoly to social movements, principally the democratic and nationalist movements but also, in Poland, the independent trade unions.

What I want to explore in this essay is how these and other sweeping changes may affect the prospects for socialism, not only in Eastern Europe and the post-colonial world but in the countries of advanced or late capitalism. Clearly, if what we mean, in the practical sense, by socialism is identified with the system that evolved in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe in the 20th century, the prospects are dim indeed. Under these circumstances "democratic" socialism is destined to remain, for all intents and purposes, a variety of republicanism with a human face — principally that of redistributive justice — without entailing the Gramscian idea that every person is a philosopher in a civil society constituted in the broad sense by popular opinion expressed in direct dialogue rather than in polls; every person is a legislator whose will is embodied in the rules of public conduct. The question for this essay is how is it possible to envision, in any practical way, a radical democracy in which socialism occupies an important, if not a privileged place in its discourse.

1 Breaking the Party Monopoly

In hindsight, it is now fairly clear why the party monopoly that had dominated East European political life was finally broken. Under the weight of an

apparently intractable economic crisis and the widespread popular perception that the ruling oligarchy had entrenched itself arbitrarily. Communist parties had, long before the mass demonstrations, lost the confidence of a substantial segment of the political and cultural intellectuals. In addition, quite unexpectedly, they found that their once considerable working class base had also disintegrated. [4] Further, and perhaps equally important, the events leading up to the multiple crises of power were abetted by the apparent Soviet refusal to intervene militarily to stem the tide of democratization.

The conjunction of Soviet will to radically reduce its economic and political responsibility in Eastern Europe and the popular democratic upsurge produced the astounding historical changes, not only in Eastern Europe but also in the world system of economic and political relationships. At the most immediate level, the organization of world military power into two great blocs is suddenly in question. Naturally, as the Soviets take steps to divest large chunks of their European empire, even of those nations such as the three Baltic States — Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania annexed during the Nazi-Soviet pact — the raison d'etre for NATO and the Warsaw Pact is no longer clear. Nor is the still enormous US arms buildup which is increasingly under attack by congress, labor, black, and Latino organizations, and feminists who have felt obliged to postpone their respective domestic agendas for retributive justice for two decades.

Of course, the most volatile issue raised by the democratic movement's extension to East Germany is the question of German reunification which appears to have gathered a virtually unstoppable head of political steam within the two countries, but is still viewed with skepticism by both the United States and the Soviet Union. Already buffeted by the disarticulation in the recent past, of its world economic and political hegemony, the US political and economic directorates fear, with good reason, that a united Germany would dominate the European Community and insure its development into a third global power. This turn of events is already anticipated by plans for European integration to take effect in 1992, but a united Germany presents a strong possibility for basic change in the configuration of power relations with the Community. U.S. diplomatic policy has been determined by the more-or-less explicit perspective of a weaker European community, and if Eastern Europe and even the Soviet Union federate, into this new power group, the United States may find itself increasingly isolated.

Consider the consequences of Gorbachev's avowed intention to reduce Soviet backing for national liberation and revolutionary regimes and movements in the post-colonial world. Edward Said has recently expressed understandable alarm at this development regarding the prospects for a Palestinian state and, for a general agreement on the Middle East.

Similarly, India which has benefitted from the Cold War by gaining capital investment from both superpowers, in recent years especially from the Soviet Union, has much to lose from an inward-turning Soviet Union. Taken together with the phased withdrawal of Cuban troops from Angola and Mozambique, the reduction of direct and indirect Soviet Aid to Nicaragua and the Salvadoran rebels among other "hot" spots, the future of liberation struggles is certainly in the balance.

One of the more important consequences of transition from the stifling central planning systems of Eastern Europe and the introduction of market relations in the production and distribution of commodities is the entrance of Eastern Europe including the Soviets into the world capitalist market. For years, scientific and technology transfer from West to east has been among the worst kept secrets even during the height of the cold war. And, during the '70s Richard Nixon expanded trade with Eastern Europe, especially in agricultural products. But, the new feature of the current situation is the probability for considerable western capital investment in new enterprises as well as some of the older products of lemon socialism. For example, Poland is openly flaunting the competitiveness of its low-wage labor force with respect to countries such as Korea and Malaysia and Hungary has had some success attracting General Motors as well as European investors to establish new plants.

2 The Return of Civil Society

The world Left and professional Communist observers could not have been more unprepared for the implications of Gorbachev's promises to "restructure" Soviet society, including its international relations. For, as we learned from the Yugoslav and Hungarian examples, it is possible for a one party regime to permit considerable public criticism without immediately changing the economic and political system. But the new Soviet Communist party majority had assessed their internal problems and concluded that fundamental changes were necessary. Although most of the economic reform proposals remain to be implemented, significant changes have occurred in foreign policy and in the shape of the political system.

In late '80s, the Poles finally got the news that the Soviets were not about to send troops to repress a second general strike, the reformers in the party bureaucracy such as Gen. Jerulzelski were forced to give up a considerable portion of their power to a mass workers movement which, in a swift series of strikes, led to the formation of a national unity government in which the Communists were in the minority. East Europe waited to see whether the Soviets would aggressively respond. After all, Poland borders the Soviet Union and, given the long history of antagonisms, specifically the Napoleonic, German and the Nazi invasions, all of which used a subordinated Poland as a passageway, Gorbachev could have been reasonably expected, at a minimum, to issue grave warnings.

When neither these nor the troops arrived and, moreover, the Polish Communist leadership had been summoned, for fraternal discussions no doubt, to Moscow prior to the formation of the government, party reformers and oppositionists in Hungary, whose plans for a multiparty polity predated the second Solidarity strikes, prepared for a new experiment in democracy. In the DDR and in Czechoslovakia the conservatives in power held their breath, but made no overtures to the opposition which, in the Czech case had a history and considerable popular support.

In Spring 1989, the long time Hungarian Communist liberal who, nevertheless was unable to shed his own Leninist upbringing, Janos Kadar, was forced to step down and gave way to a process, if not a firm leadership which promised the liquidation of the old forms of rule. Recall that even before this palace shift, the traditional prohibitions against private ownership of productive property had been considerably relaxed. Already at the Hungarian party congress "conservatives" among the workers delegates were reported to have complained that a new class of rich entrepreneurs had arisen in the previous few years. This development failed to deter the resolve of the reformers whose program remains, in part, to restore market relations especially in service industries and in light manufacturing.

In the fall of the same year, the day of reckoning finally arrived for the powerful bastions of Brezhnevism — Czechoslovakia and DDR. I employ the "Brezhenevism" label rather than the conventional term "Stalinism" because it is a more accurate characterization of the nature of these regimes after Khruschev's demise 25 years ago. For Khruschev was, undoubtedly, the progenitor of all but the parliamentary aspects of the Gorbachev reforms. Until last year, Gorbachev's human rights and economic reforms had failed to match the extent of those proposed, and, to a degree, implemented by Khruschev. To this day, for example, the new Soviet leadership has not replicated any version of the so-called "Liberman" economic proposals of the early 60s which called for enterprise based decision-making, internal market relations and decentralized planning to operate alongside a much looser national planning mechanism.[5]

But Khruschevism was by no means completely expunged from Soviet policy in the twenty years preceding Gorbachev's assumption of power. Khruschev's successors remained faithful to the pledge to abolish the labor camps and cease mass murders of dissenters, although the habit of imprisoning the opposition remained, sometimes in the form of remanding them to mental hospitals. Moreover, Brezhenev tolerated a degree of dissent unknown during the Stalin regime but maintained the addled central planning system and the party monopoly over political power. Equally important from the perspective of current events, after Khruschev's faltering efforts, the post-Stalin years have not been marked by restoration, in any country of "real" socialism, of the fundamental

elements of civil society. I use this term, not only as it appears in Hegel's *Philosophy of Right* and Marx's early writings as the sphere of market-based economic relations but also in the Gramscian sense: where social movements and classes contend for political power and, on the ideological plane intellectuals, in their behalf, wage wars of position, that is seek moral and intellectual leadership for competing classes and movements with which they are affiliated.[6] Nonetheless, a shadow of civil society, labelled the "thaw," emerged in the late 50s which was not entirely eradicated with Khruschev's fall from power. These shadows of civil society were exemplified by fact that writers, scientists and other oppositionists spoke out publicly in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe in the 70s, and were subjected only intermittently to jailings and exile. And, such groups of intellectuals as the Czech Charter 77, regularly defied authorities despite their illegal status. Even during the Polish martial law of 1982-88, intellectuals acted as semi-secret couriers for the Solidarity movement, published their works abroad and barely restrained themselves from public opposition. In Yugoslavia and Hungary, dissenters of the Left (although not the nationalists) were able to print, with official sanction, albeit in limited editions, sharp critiques of the regime and the Communist system. As the 80s wore on the crucial issue in these countries was no longer the validity of (limited) markets especially in agricultural products and services, or even the rights of individuals to dissent without penalty. Retrograde governments still jailed their opponents but these acts were viewed, even by the opposition, as relics of the old policy rather than serious and sustained acts of repression.

What remained sacrosanct, from the party's standpoint, was the principle of the party monopoly over economic and political power and, at least officially, the social sphere. No genuine public sphere of political and cultural debate was possible where groups as well as individuals could openly contest one party, oligarchical rule. As Heller and Feher have rightly argued, the party exercised a "dictatorship over needs" by controlling the spiritual as well as economic life of the country.[7] Even in Yugoslavia agitation by representatives of an organized group at a factory gate was an invitation to imprisonment, although in many other respects, especially intellectually, the party monopoly had long since been abdicated.

But intellectual and student dissent, however embarrassing from the perspective of international relations, produced discomfit but did not immediately threaten the stability of these regimes. In Czechoslovakia, mass demonstrations by the urban middle class met with party resistance until the Civic Forum movement, the leading opposition voice, successfully called a general strike and production, transportation and services stopped. Similarly, strikes by Polish, East German and Soviet workers signified that the Communist party could no longer, with confidence,

claim a proletarian base. These instances demonstrate that intellectuals and students can detonate revolutionary action, but decisive changes, at least in the form of political rule, depend upon winning the support of the working class and at least neutralizing the army. These conditions are especially important in DDR, Poland and Czechoslovakia which, despite elements of economic underdevelopment (especially Poland whose technological level is somewhere in the early 20s), are substantially urban and industrial societies and where a strong socialist tradition remains among the working class.

3 The Crisis of Socialism

There is no doubt that many among the western Right are gloating over the breakup of the Communist world and wish to identify the political crisis with the eclipse of socialism. Moreover, many socialists may draw similar conclusions, both those within the social-democratic tradition and those whose roots are either in Leninist formations or the New Left. The prospects for socialism do appear dim, in the light of more than 40 years of brutal repression of the democratic movement by the Communists and the manifest economic and political failures of East European "socialism." We must also take account of the steady retreat back into the world capitalist system of many third world national independence movements which had bravely declared one or another versions of socialist economic programs in the 60s and 70s after the conquest of power. We have entered a period of socialist exhaustion of all "really existing" models marked by state ownership of the means of production and the party monopoly over politics and civil society. For once we may safely employ the characterization "crisis" to describe the situation. What we shall have to discern is whether the Marxist meaning of the term applies: "crisis" implies the conditions of resolution are immanent in its own categories. In any case, we must admit that, even if not discredited, all of the current socialist alternatives are either purely intellectual (in the sense they have no mass base), or as in the case of Western social-democracy hardly qualify as genuinely socialist.

For the most part, the new democratic governments of Eastern Europe do not intend to return to any conceivable version of unbridled capitalism, even Poland and Hungary which promise to move furthest by encouraging entrepreneurial initiatives to include large-scale industry. Nevertheless, there is a genuine Thatcherite wing of the democratic movement. Many intellectuals in Poland, Hungary and Czechoslovakia advocate policies of wholesale privatization even of basic capital goods and, moreover, want to limit the public sector to only those services for which private capital is (as yet) unavailable. There is a nascent propaganda effort to persuade these newly democratic states that, when compared to really existing socialism, liberalism (in the European sense of free markets) is both efficient and humane. Like a substantial number of Soviet dissident exiles

of the post-Khruschev era, many intellectuals, if not suffused with newly found religious fervor have adopted the religion of the free market as their creed. (Although others in the American expatriate Russian community have become disillusioned about the efficiency of free enterprise when it comes to health care and education, but also employment.) While in most of Eastern Europe this new Right is still marginal, except in its anti-semitic and other nationalist manifestations, we cannot rule out the possibility that if the various experiments in "mixed" economic arrangements fail, the chief beneficiaries will be the both old Communists and the new liberals. For as we have learned from the British and American examples, economic liberalism, bankrupt in the practical world of finance and industrial development since the beginning of this century, became a surprisingly robust ideology in the '80s.

Conservative resurgence has not taken place in an economic and political vacuum. For most of the world the Soviet Union, China, Eastern Europe and Cuba represent "real" socialism as opposed to the models proposed by its mostly powerless critics. And the successes and failures of these systems have become nearly identical with what most people understand by socialism.

The social-democratic tradition has settled for managing capitalism more humanely, and even the most "mixed" welfare state societies such as the Scandinavian countries are not clearly identified with contemporary socialism.[8] Further, the cultural and political ideal of democratic socialism is represented, for better or worse, by the Sweden which, despite nearly continuous Social-Democratic rule has a huge private sector embracing most of the country's decisive industries. The outstanding achievement of Swedish Social-Democracy is its development of a comprehensive social security system within the framework of a parliamentary democratic state. There is little significant state ownership much less social ownership of crucial industries even compared to Italy. And Sweden harbors a considerable number of transnational corporations. But the powerful labor movement negotiates, on a national basis, for wages and a wide agenda of social issues. When many leaders of the East European democratic movements contemplate what to do after they attain power, the Swedish and West German models which in many ways are similar, are prior to any version of really existing socialism.[9]

After parliamentary democratic power is consolidated in many Eastern European countries, the central debate will turn to the economic rather than the political form. Undoubtedly, apart from the ideological liberals, strong forces have already emerged that wish to dismantle the central planning system and sell off to private capital many leading state owned enterprises. These forces favor creating a substantial private sector in order to attract new capital and raise living standards without which the democratic reforms will remain endangered. Some among the liberal

fractions of the democratic movement advocate making the economy market-driven, a transformation which would entail divestiture of most state-owned industrial enterprises and effectively reduce the planning mechanism to something less than guidance rather than command. For reasons linked, mainly, to low living standards, this tendency is particularly strong in Poland where the chief economic advisor to the prime minister has boldly advanced proposals for a fire-sale of many technologically archaic enterprises, lifting subsidies from food and some rents, and focusing economic production in export sectors.

The initial moves by the Solidarity-led Polish government have already encountered working class resistance and it is not clear whether, despite their enormous prestige, they can pull off a new austerity program which, among other things, would tie new capital investment to reduced wages and softening the welfare state. The liberal regimes in Hungary and Poland are already confronting the fact that despite all, there is a welfare culture in even the most economically retarded societies of Eastern Europe that will be difficult, if not impossible, to dislodge.

But the new democracy in Eastern Europe also embraces a considerable fraction of intellectuals and workers for whom the growth of a limited private sector and the expansion of the market for agricultural products constitutes the boundary of privatization. For many in the DDR and Czechoslovakia, but also Hungary, the end of the Communist monopoly signals not at all the end of socialism, but provides a new opportunity for socialist renewal in which democratic institutions may be built, not only at the state level but in the neighborhoods and workplaces as well. Given the strength of socialist ideology in these countries, we may expect, soon after the euphoria of democratization subsides, the emergence of political divisions within the public sphere based on one or another variant of the clash of liberal and socialist discourses. These divisions could lead to a more or less protracted series of political struggles, the outcome of which is currently undecidable.

Certainly, the major obstacles facing the democratic socialist project in countries marked by economic paralysis are linked to capital accumulation. Having decided, for better or for worse to reintegrate their economies with the world capitalist market, there are only two paths available in East Europe to genuine economic restoration: attracting external investment aimed at expanding the productive forces, especially modern technologies, and/or initiating austerity policies to accumulate capital through the state (the current Polish austerity is oriented to repaying the massive debt to the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund in hopes of procuring new loans. This path will not, in the short run, lead to real accumulation.) In both cases, the working class and the whole population — except entrepreneurs — would be required to make sacrifices in living standards. Need we recall that these were the precise policies of the

Communist reform government of 1981 that led to mass strikes? Under the strategy suggested by efforts to attract foreign capital, workers would be asked, in effect, to compete with low-wage labor in Asia and Latin America. Under an austerity program it would feel identical even if the state retained enterprise ownership. Self-imposed austerity would be successful only under conditions of democratically controlled workplaces as well as a genuinely democratic public sphere where all types of policies were submitted to debate. It is far too early to expect Communist resurgence on the basis of opposition to these measures, especially because of the already apparent liquidationist tendencies among the communist reformers. But, who can doubt that we are in for more "surprises" if the working class can find no ideological basis for making these sacrifices? And it cannot yet be predicted whether the workers will permit technocratic liberal intellectuals perched in high government places to induce substantial unemployment and other types of economic privation in their pursuit of capital accumulation. The economic "planners" in Poland and Hungary may have developed sophisticated computer simulations which demonstrate the incontrovertible necessity of "making hard choices" to reconstruct the economy, but they will have to face 40 years of a contrary economic culture. Food shortages may have been frequent and productivity slack, but under Communist rule the plants stayed open and workers enjoyed a relative equality of deprivation. These "benefits" were certainly unacceptable to the majority, but unsubsidized joblessness may be perceived as the greater evil. To impose austerity without popular democratic alternatives to electoralism and an enlarged public welfare sector to cushion the blows of plant closings, Solidarity and reformers in other Eastern European countries face swift delegitimation.

In the '60s and '70s many Polish and Yugoslav workers migrated westward, just as they flooded the mines and mills of industrializing America a century earlier. But even as America clamped down on immigration after the first world war, EEC nations in the 80s no longer welcomed unskilled Polish, Yugoslav and Turkish labor. The decision to close a plant is an invitation to migrate when the state is unwilling or unable to provide long-term social security income for the unemployed. The trouble is, as Poland and Hungary prepare themselves for the "free market" by becoming mean and lean there is nowhere for the labor freed from the unproductive bureaucratic system to go.

4 The New Economic Policy — Again?

A combination of austerity and market-driven economic production was, of course, the policy of the post-revolutionary Bolshevik government of 1921-26 until Stalin imposed his policies of statification after 1927. The Bolsheviks under Lenin's New Economic Policy (NEP) encouraged both foreign investment and privatization of a considerable portion of the economy ex-

cept, of course, key industries which were held by the state. Private capital was invited to invest on condition it could not own productive property but only earn a dividend higher than the world market rates. But guaranteed high profits implied reduced wages and reduced employment. Domestic capital was accumulated through the enlargement of market relations after the civil war and foreign intervention which ended in 1921. This was, of course, the Punkah prescription which was opposed by Trotsky and supported by Stalin, who reversed himself after Lenin's death.[10] Although, during the NEP the country remained dirt poor, living standards rose quite rapidly, food supplies increased and unemployment was, finally, reduced. The sharp reversals of the Stalin era after 1927 served to identify socialism with a system of state ownership of both agricultural and industrial enterprises and central planning directed toward developing the means of production at the expense of consumer goods. Living standards plummeted and the militarization of labor, Trotskyist solution to the economic crisis during the period of war communism and civil war was rapidly implemented by Stalin after Trotsky was exiled, his group expelled from the party and the main threats to Soviet security removed. "Forced" industrialization remained the key Soviet economic policy until the early '50's when, a weary working class and peasantry exacted some concessions in the direction of consumer goods production and higher wages from the state. In Eastern Europe, undoubtedly, a careful study of the NEP period is currently underway. Its key features — individually owned farms but cooperative ownership of machinery, market-driven consumer goods prices, private ownership of some production, and public ownership of major industries which, however, did not exclude private investment — were undertaken under fairly rigorous state supervision. To be sure, these policies led to more inequality between managers and owners and proletarians, intellectual and manual labor, town and country. The regime openly sanctioned the exploitation of wage labor and encouraged the formation of a broad stratum of petty bourgeois enterprises. The key debate of the early period, whether and to what extent the working class could claim actual control over production, and especially whether the Soviets, which Lenin had rendered powerless in the face of the prolonged defense of Bolshevik power, should be restored to political sovereignty, was never really revived as a public debate. After 1922, the question of direct, much less representative, democracy was permanently shelved. [11] Gradually, the oligarchy was formed around the Communist party. Recall Trotsky's prescient pamphlet *The New Course* (1923), in which he warns against such a bureaucratic formation). During the period 1917-29 all of the key issues of socialist construction were raised and answered for the nearly the rest of the century. "Real" socialism in contrast to its ideological form was identified with the party and state monopoly over economic, political and social power.

However, two features of State "socialism" remained immensely attractive to trade unionists and other political activists and intellectuals.

The first was, of course the fact that the Bolsheviks, despite all, had abolished private property and established a system of (rough) distributive justice unequalled in the capitalist world. Neither later revelations of the existence of a new class of party and state bureaucrats and oligarchs succeeded in shaking the ultimate admiration of even some of the Soviet Union's most severe Left critics. The second was the substantial support, especially after the second world war by the Soviet Union and Eastern European countries for national liberation struggles.

The section of the Left that is oriented to solidarity with Third World revolutions has reason to be concerned about the prospect for a new Soviet inwardness in the 90s. The Central American powder keg has blown; Nicaragua and the popular forces in El Salvador remain beleaguered and the US invasion of Panama serves as a grim reminder that the Monroe Doctrine lives, detente or no detente. It is surely no secret that the Soviets have, in the recent past, provided stellar support to Latin American, African and Asian liberation movements, support which has had its dark side, particularly on the political level. With few exceptions, the Leninist model of revolutionary transition, namely, the doctrine that a one party dictatorship is necessary to repress anti-independence and anti-socialist forces, remained the leading example for many of the new anti-capitalist regimes. Even taking into account that the Soviet largesse emanates, in the main, from geopolitical and Cold War considerations rather than those of revolutionary internationalism, independence movements have received substantial resources which are not likely to emanate from the social-democratic and labor governments of the West.

However, despite these issues, I want to argue that removing the Soviet example from the equation of the prospects for socialism is heavily balanced on the side of the good. For the first time in more than seventy years, since the Bolsheviks seized the moment to shake the capitalist world to its foundations, the Left is on its own: the Soviet question need no longer be the basis of a divided Left. If the Left remains fractured, the divisive issues will be, at the same time, more theoretical and practical than the question of whether socialists are duty bound to defend Soviet power. Although it will take some time before the problematic of the Bolshevik revolution and its aftermath will be thoroughly separated from the socialist legacy, world socialism need no longer take its stand on current and future politics on the basis of its orientation toward the state form, economic relations and conception of social life that became "really existing socialism. " For many the collapse of the party monopoly, centralized state planning and the bureaucratization of social life represents a defeat unparalleled any of our lifetimes. These individuals, groups and parties will spend the next decades vainly striving to revive the complex traditions of Trotsky, Lenin and Stalin (who are incommensurable on other grounds). In the absence of a radical democratic socialist alternative

they will disappear neither in Eastern Europe nor in the rest of the world because of the serious deficiencies of both liberal and social-democratic solutions that gave rise to them in the first place. They will likely cling to one or another versions of really existing socialism on the judgement that these regimes embody progressive historical achievements, particularly the abolition of private ownership of the means of production and remain the most reliable sources of support for liberation movements. As long as the Chinese and Cuban regimes survive in their present form, they will continue to provide material and ideological sustenance, especially in the subaltern world, for guerilla as well as legal forces which explicitly or tacitly adhere to one version or another of the old Soviet model. In the euphoria of the democratic movements, we need to remind ourselves of Mark Twain's wry comment that reports of his death were premature. The old Left is wounded, but it is premature to proclaim its demise. Even in Eastern Europe, especially those countries in which "socialism" is plainly off the agenda of the emergent regimes, their failure to find the way out of the searing economic crisis, may lead to the eventual restoration of the credibility of Communist parties.

In western Europe it was the "social contract" between militant trade union movements led by communists and socialists and a liberal state willing to transfer considerable resources to assist by rebuilding infrastructures such as roads and power as much as massive US investment which permitted Capital to restore itself. The contract did not provide, until the mid-'50s for major improvements in the individual wage and therefore in consumption of "private" goods but did establish a powerful social wage supported by the institutionalization of the Welfare State throughout Europe and, in Germany a system of codetermination of key industrial policies. In other words, it took a decade in Western Europe to begin to raise living standards in any significant way. The major question for Hungarian and Polish reformers is whether they can pull it off without a new "Marshall Plan" for Eastern Europe. For there is no doubt that neither the Bush administration nor its likely successors will undertake such a program. In fact, the ambivalence the US president demonstrated toward the democratic upsurge signified extreme reluctance to upset the Deal with the Soviets, as well as reflecting the problems associated with the crushing US debt. Surely, we must not exclude the possibility that Poland will emerge as a major competitor for international capital with Malaysia, Hong Kong, Taiwan, and Korea because its wage levels are lower. The question is whether labor is willing without the incentives of dramatically improved living standards and workplace democracy. In other words, is democratic renewal a moral equivalent of the immediate promise of a better material life? We remember the brave and ultimately unsuccessful Cuban experiment in substituting revolutionary ideology for material gain. But, of course the Cuban Revolution was a popular, but not

a democratic struggle. Faced with reduced economic Soviet support, and the regime's refusal to accomodate to the world system, the regime has already taken the first steps towards an austerity program that signals the return to ideological incentives to maintain, if not improve productivity.

The situation is quite different in DDR and Czechoslovakia. In the Czech case, a developed industrial society with organized workingclass and socialist movements predated Communist rule or where the Communists as in DDR provided the singular post-war example of successful modernization. These countries were not only subordinated by Communist bureaucrats but benefitted from a long Marxist and socialist culture which has been, by no means, renounced. Living standards in both countries were considerably higher than in their neighboring states and DDR became one of the ten leading industrial countries by the 80s. The emergence of both liberal democracy and civil society can only improve the prospects for democratic socialism. Although one should be cautious about taking poll data as a measure of political ideology, 55% of a random sample of East Berliners told interviewers they wanted the new regime to be based on a policy of Socialist renovation rather than reverting to capitalist market relations. Similar sentiments have been expressed in Czechoslovakia by leading opposition leaders. And the new government contains a considerable fraction of "Left" dissidents of the Charter 77 group who made a socialist rather than a liberal critique of the oligarchy.

What "socialist" renovation entails, precisely, is a matter of conjecture. Surely, one may doubt that it means either the Swedish model or a refurbished version of the old bureaucratic state ownership and management. In the last instance the shape of renovation will be influenced if not shaped by the realities of world capitalist markets, but also the political will of workers, intellectuals and the democratic movement they have organized. In situations such as the DDR and Czechoslovakia where industrial production, agriculture and scientific and technological development are on a fairly high level in world market terms, the "logical" outcome of the institution of parliamentary democracy and civil liberties would be that the ideological struggle would shift, not to debates about whether to move toward market-driven economic life, that is, toward completing the classic formula for modernization, but how extensively to extend the democratic process: to the enterprise level, to issues of town planning and administration, and to the whole array of social issues which were formerly repressed or ignored. In this connection, it is important that a Polish feminist movement has emerged to protect abortion against Church-inspired efforts to introduce legislation to restrict it. What could be at stake in a post-"February" East European politics is the precise configuration of a new "October, " one in which foreign military encirclement or stark privation no longer distorted the economic and political landscape. Of course, there would be no question of abolishing the parlia-

mentary democratic forms that remain, together with generalized civil liberties, the firm achievement of the revolutions. Nor can market relations in petty production and agriculture be avoided. On the contrary, a democratic socialist program would benefit from a close study of the Bukharinist position at the end of the New Economic Policy that opposed state farms as well as the statification of retail, wholesale and small production.

But a second phase of the revolution would be required to reexamine policies that spurn autarky in favor of global integration. Either choice entails considerable modification of national work and consumer cultures. The problem is, naturally, how to spur productivity to insure a relatively independent economy. The simplest solution to pressing economic problems is to embark on a new round of loans from the US and Western European banks and to encourage foreign investment. But, owing to international economic volatility, these "solutions" are quite shaky. They may purchase a temporary period of plentiful supplies of consumer goods, but would generate long terms headaches that could prove intractable. In this connection, it is important to demarcate the Czech, Baltic, Russian and East German situations from those facing the rest of Eastern Europe, including a considerable portion of the Soviet Republics whose economic underdevelopment has remained during nearly three quarters of a century of Communist rule.

Needless to say, in addition to the dramatic revival of religious fervor, both Christian and Moslem, and the perennial demands for linguistic and cultural autonomy (which are not altogether admirable), the nationalist revivals in the Eastern Soviet republics are due, in no small measure, to the palpable inequalities of Soviet society.

In sum, a new democratic socialism must address, both theoretically and practically, the cultural as well as economic and political issues that divide peoples. For various reasons, reformers, including the socialists, have first tackled questions of state power and have, in pursuing the democratic alternative, a classic popular front policy which frequently, if not invariably, entails suppressing cultural differences. But as the events in the Baltic and Azerbaijan plainly demonstrate, "new" social movements, identified in the West with democratic struggles — feminism, ecology and racial justice — also embrace nationalism and cultural autonomy which are not always compatible with the aims of the other movements. On the contrary,.the debate concerning nationalism, long suppressed by Marxism's consensus, after the first world war, that national liberation was "progressive," must return with a vengeance. For, even if we can understand the reasons for its reappearance in the context of the collapse of Communist power, we should have learned from the deleterious outcome of the Iranian revolution, some African nationalisms, and the chauvinism of Great Power superiority (abundantly and regularly

illustrated by George Bush's adventure in Panama and other U.S. Central and Latin American interventions) that a new political and theoretical debate on the Left is urgently required.

5 Democracy, Nationalism, Socialism

I have already discussed the profound effects of the effective monopoly of stalinist-inspired conceptions on the crisis of socialism. Elsewhere, I have discussed in detail problems of Marxist theory in the 20th century.[12] Here I assert that Marxism is plagued by a pervasive economism in its party manifestations, a preoccupation with struggles for social justice and with working class demands that have effectively marginalized movements for cultural transformation when the leading forces of socialism have not aligned with social conservatives to oppose, for example, feminist and ecological demands or radical democratic, extra-parliamentary action. Economistic Marxism as well as economistic social-democratic pluralism have displayed indifference and even hostility to radicalism both of its cultural varieties and within working class struggles, a penchant that can be traced from Lenin's attack on Left-wing communism in the '20s, the repression of the Kronstadt revolt, and the party's antipathy to its own workers' opposition and feminists led by Alexandre Kollantai, in the name of practical considerations. These tendencies are also evident in the more recent events in Paris, 1968 and the Italian Communist Party's reluctance to support the feminist struggle for abortion and divorce rights. Nor have French and British socialists been more forthcoming in defending these demands.

The crises in Marxism and social-democratic parliamentarianism are connected to the rise of the new social movements, especially the new democratic movements in Eastern Europe, Latin America and Asia; and feminism, ecology, race and the revival of nationalism in both "advanced" societies and in the Eastern countries. Not all of these movements are the same with respect to ideological direction and significance; nor are the movements necessarily aligned with each other. Neither are some of their aims compatible with the objectives of democratic socialism. For example, the recent national independence struggles in Eastern Europe, especially the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia, harbor contradictory elements: on the one side, in the Soviet Union, the justifiable rage of the three western Soviet nations against the annexation that occurred at the time of the Nazi-Soviet pact in 1939, and the resentment by Georgians and Azerbaijanis against Great Russian chauvinism which has never disappeared despite the Soviet constitution's guarantees of equality. On the other, especially in the case of Serbian nationalism, the demand for independence is often intertwined with ressentiment against the ethnic Albanians in Kossova for their poverty and the Slovenians for their high living standards. Surely, Serbian chauvinism is not identical with the socialist principle of the right of nations to self-determination. Nor are

the nationalist sentiments underlying popular support for German reunification entirely consonant with the best interests of either the East Germans or the rest of Europe. For even if Rosa Luxemburg suffered some political blindness in her hostility to integrating national independence in socialist ideology and program, neither were Lenin's and Otto Bauer's strategic backing of nationalism an unmixed blessing.[13]

Nationalism is a legitimate response to oppression of national minorities such as American blacks and Latinos. As the black, Latino, Australian Aborigine, and Irish independence struggles attest, the nationalist movement has its Right and Left wings. And the Left is properly defined (a work undertaken nearly 80 years ago by the Irish nationalist and socialist James Connolly), by its insistence upon working-class demands in the context of the freedom struggle, a strategy which requires pursuing an internationalist perspective.[14] Nor are feminists and ecologists prepared to subordinate their struggles to nationalism. But this kind of subordination was precisely at issue in the turn of the century debates within Marxism on the Polish question. Luxemburg argued that the proletariat had no interest in separatism which was, in any case, a demand of a bourgeoisie seeking to consolidate its own national market. Accordingly, the rise of socialists to power would obviate any validity nationalism might retain under imperialist domination. Of course, history does not entirely bear out her claims. Bureaucratic power flying the socialist flag has been marked by its exercise of national oppression. When Estonian Communists declare their own independence from central authority, this act may taken as symptomatic of the persistence of oppression under really existing socialism.

The debate about tactics, particularly the question of the use of violence, has been among the historical issues dividing the Marxist Left from many of the social movements. One of the distinguishing features of Marxism has been its insistence that historically significant change can be made only by mass movements, particularly in the capitalist epoch marked by the emergence of the working class. Accordingly, however insufficient the trade unions are for propelling the forward march of history towards a more egalitarian social order, their rise has marked the entrance of the working class into history. To the extent that the institutions of the working class movement — unions, labor and socialist parties, social and cultural organizations — embody the practices of self-management, they are considered prefigurations of the new society. For Marxism, ends and means are inextricably linked. In contrast, nationalists, liberal or otherwise, have exhibited political styles in which "tactics" such as assassination, totalitarian nationalist rule, undemocratic movements are justified on the basis of the morality of ends. In the past century, these differences have ballooned to conflict between socialism and nationalism as well as its conflict with the anarchism of the deed. Socialists

are, in the first place, internationalist. They support liberal democratic institutions and condemn circumventions that undermine these institutions. Moreover, as Plekhanov argued against the Russian populists, terrorist acts strengthen the repressiveness of the authoritarian states and the Rightists within the liberal state. In contrast, some nationalist and anarchist movements contend that the political liberalism of contemporary socialisms has demobilized the mass movement. Terrorism, they insist, is never an end in itself but a way to demonstrate that the most visible symbols of established power — leading political, military and business officials — are mortal and that their power is itself mythic.

Then there is the fundamental question in all nationalisms between democracy and the formation of an independent totalitarian state. Before Leninism, socialists argued for democracy as the best political framework for the conduct of working class struggles and the preservation of the legality of workers and socialist organizations. There was good reason to doubt the good faith of the bourgeois parties whose commitment to liberalism often ended with the market. But, as we have seen, the hegemony of Leninism among revolutionary socialists after 1917 raises questions concerning Marxism's fealty to democracy and civil freedom. Revolutionary socialism is harnessed with the Leninist legacy on this question and the new democratic movements are right to interrogate the degree to which socialists are also firm democrats. Moreover, we have witnessed, with the development of Leninism as a set of theoretically informed political practices a Marxist version of the means/ends problem. Adopting the military metaphor of strategy and tactics, Lenin himself made a series of arguments that urged upon revolutionary socialism a series of compromises with capitalism: The Brest-Litovsk treaty that removed Russia from the world war; NEP and with it the policy of inter war Communist reformism which, more or less, reproduced the distinction and incommensurability between reform and revolution which became an integral part of second international ideology.

6 Democracy and Post-Colonial Movements

In recent years, we have borne witness to a radical shift in the ideologies and programs of popular movements in the countries of the semi-periphery. Where once these movements were clearly under Marxist hegemony, and attracted to Cuban and Chinese models of revolutionary combat and the Soviet model of rule, now they have adopted parliamentary democratic perspectives, such as in Brazil and Chile. The fundamental change is both theoretical and practical. Now, especially in Brazil and Chile, socialists and many former communists openly proclaim the priority of the struggle for democracy over the struggle for socialism and frame redistributive demands in Left-social democratic frameworks.

Many in the Workers Party (PT) in Brazil, and in the socialist parties of Chile were revolutionary Marxist-Leninists until the 70s, but have decisively shifted their ideological as well as their strategic perspectives towards democratic objectives. Of course, for some the democratic conversion is intimately linked to the harsh economic and political realities facing their respective societies, not the least of which are the problems associated with pressures of global capitalism and the ability of the Right to make alliances with the military. But there is also a resurgence of the older view that the development of socialist possibilities presupposes modernity-industrialization, human rights and democratic institutions. These judgements are derived from a specific reading of history rooted in the pre-Leninist Marxist tradition or radical republicanism of which such figures as Thomas Jefferson and Tom Paine occupy perhaps dominant positions. They represent a rejection of the possibility that Latin America and Africa may circumvent the need for a a more or less prolonged period of "bourgeois" democracy within which revolutionary socialists fight to extend democratic institutions to wider sectors of society, to win more equality especially for peasants and the urban poor, and to use the context of civil society to win the overwhelming majority to the view that capitalism is inimical to democracy and freedom. Such perspectives may be discerned among significant sections of the leadership of the African National Congress, the Korean labor and student movements, the democratic movement in China and, of course, in Eastern Europe.

Needless to say, the new democratic movement's ideology is at odds with Marx and Engels's own instrumental views of the question of parliamentary democracy.[15] In this respect, Lenin's reading of their skepticism regarding the application of parliamentary democracy to a new socialist order is accurate. Marx and Engels warned against working class reliance upon these institutions and to them opposed the alternative of the Paris Commune where workers exercised direct administrative as well as legislative control. While it would be foolish not to take advantage of parliament to win reforms and civil liberties to provide a framework within which organizing and agitation can take place, the founders of "scientific" socialism regarded parliaments as intrinsically "bourgeois" and ill-suited to socialist transition, especially in the light of the betrayals of British parliamentary liberalism. What has emerged from the last decade of liberation struggles is a new specifically democratic, even pluralist ideology within the Left that is significantly at variance with, and often opposed to all Leninism. For many who now take this position the opposition between representative political forms and socialist transition must necessarily be abolished. For even if parliamentary democracy is not sufficient to embrace the deepest conception of popular sovereignty its achievement must be regarded as a necessary and permanent legacy for any new socialist society. Socialism may radically transform the nature of

the institutions of parliamentary democracy by, say, making representatives recallable at any time by geographical or workplace constituents. And, institutions of direct popular decision-making may become the crucial instances of sovereign power, a measure which entails transformations in the scale of economic and political jurisdictions. However, in a complex society representation cannot be avoided or rationalized by a party bureaucracy or made redundant by institutions of direct self-management.

Radical democracy may be conceptually opposed to socialism only when the latter rejects a self-definition as the most radical and consistent democratic political philosophy. Not only Leninists but social-democrats are often hostile to radical democracy. But the political sympathies of new social movements are intrinsically democratic and radical. For them, as well as for insurgent rank and file workers movements, a social category ignored or denied by some of the proponents of the new social movements, liberal republicanism never exhausts the possibilities of democratic forms. I want to characterize the difference as one between formal and substantive conceptions of democracy. Direct democracy may be seen as an extension of representative institutions to the work place and the local community, but I want to insist that, taken historically as well as analytically, it is opposed to the former because of its challenge to the adequacy, from the perspective of conceptions of participation, of delegated bodies that are not directly accountable to those who sent them, but are loyal to their respective parties.

What is at issue here is the same question raised by the divergent party conceptions of Gramsci and Lenin and their respective understandings of the space occupied by intellectuals in civil society. Gramsci's frequent return to the phrase, "organic" refers both to the relation of intellectuals to the classes in whose behalf they speak, and to the breakdown of the distinction between leaders and the led. Liberal democracy shares with Leninism the identification of consent with legitimacy where the plebiscite is an adequate representation. From the Paris Commune to the 1905 Soviets and the Turin factory occupations to the anarchist communes in Spain and the New Left, an alternative conception has been articulated that democracy's base is the popular assembly upon which delegation may provisionally arise. This is an anti-bureaucratic, utopian formulation the modification of which is inevitable. Yet, what was heralded as a new vision in the East, democratic republicanism, cannot be accepted as the boundary condition for a new conception of democracy in the West, where republican traditions, even in the eyes of some of its most fervent advocates has been tarnished to the point of delegitimation by scandals, corruption, and bureaucratic domination. Socialism can only retain its vitality by proposing that only what may be called "ultra-democracy" is adequate to the Left republican aims of participation and equality.

7 Socialism and New Social Movements

The consequences of decentering the "subject" and positing, instead, multiple agents entails a radically different conception — not only of the path of opposition but of the nature of domination in the contemporary world. To describe the historical totality by the name "capitalism" implies the centrality of the "mode of production" for organizing all social relations. Althusserian Marxism by separating economic, political and ideological relations within the mode of production allows thereby, for the relative autonomy of each sphere and, for this reason, the underdetermination by the economic except in the last instance of the others. And since the last instance "never comes" because of the ubiquity of the symbolic order which masks the real, the category mode of production must be comprehended as a mechanism of periodization rather than an explanatory category.[16] Feminism's insistence that patriarchal and sexist relations has its own history, leads to the inference that we may speak of overlapping modes of domination which mediate and are, from each system's standpoint, part of their determination.

For this reason it does not follow that the end of capitalism and its replacement by a society in which the social ownership of the means of production prevails will end the domination of women by men and transcend the prehistory of sexual relations. For the project of transforming economic relations does not, in this perspective, constitute the end of a whole mode of life. Moreover, there is no reason to believe that socialism is the necessary condition for the liberation of women, the end of racial oppression or the beginning of the age of ecological harmony. Thus, the consequences of postmodern politics challenge all totalizations in which agency is named in advance and a certain path of historical action is predicted. But they must likewise insist upon a paradigm shift in social categories.

This is why ecological theory, for example, has hesitated before the Marxist claim that the pathologies of ecological destruction are largely a product of the distortions produced by the imperatives of capital accumulation. While social ecology comprehends the ways in which the compulsion for global capital expansion leads to large scale destruction of forests, pollution of the air and water and other disasters, perhaps equally important is its unique claim that the massive disruption in the ecological balance derives as much from industrialism and the scientific ideologies of the Enlightenment itself as it does from a particular regime of accumulation imperatives. It is in the critique of science and technology as forms of knowledge as well as social practices that Green politics unites feminism and ecology and distinguishes itself from hegemonic Marxism which, since its inception has described, but ultimately dismissed the costs of industrialism, holding that it is a necessary step toward the achievement of human freedom. According to critical accounts, science

has become a discourse like any other whose knowledge claims are inextricably linked to power. Thus, Marxism's wish to subject its claims to scientific reason must be understood in the context of its own will to power. Marxism in this light may be seen as a product of a high modernism which is currently in question.

Ecological theory consists not principally in the demand for environmental reforms but in its argument that systems based upon the domination of nature are implicated in systems of human domination. Just as it is not possible to separate exploitation of wage labor from ecological disaster — since the growth-oriented regime of industrial production bears considerable blame for the warming the earth's atmosphere, pollution of the workplace as well as the broader environment and its attendant health hazard, the many forms of cancer — one cannot accept the idea of the neutrality of science with respect to social divisions. Science is not only subsumed under capital and the state and fuels all modern industrial societies with by its merger with technology, but is itself constitutive of the system of domination. In the past half century, science is no longer, either in theory or in its practices, separated from its technological applications. Hence the term "techno-science" to describe this fusion. Scientific knowledge depends crucially on the technical means at its disposal and the results of science are virtually cathected to technical applications.[17] This process was accelerated by the militarization of science, but was inherent in the close ties between science and industry forged in the middle of the 19th century. Obviously, to "free" science from its social presuppositions then, is to transform its axiomatic structure, to change the aims and the methods of scientific investigation and, consequently, make technology into something else. The will to scientificity in the old sense implicates a given discourse, including Marxism, with the system it wishes to oppose. Consequently, if a revitalized Marxism is possible it must address science as a discourse of domination rather than confining its critique to the deleterious uses to which discoveries are put by the capitalist order. To raise socialist demands without addressing the difficult question of how to rationalize economic growth with the probability by impending ecological disasters amounts to a capitulation to the accumulation ethic. And this conflict, one wants to say "contradiction," constitutes one of the agonies of any possible Left revival. For, if we renounce the reformism of environmental regulation in favor of redressing the balance of nature, a shift that implies serious efforts to address human domination, much of the palaver about market socialism must be jettisoned. Moreover, it raises significant questions about patterns of production and consumption which democratic states ignore at the world's peril.

Moreover, if we take feminism to mean a basic challenge to the social and cultural subordination of women, this raises basic economic issues.

For example, the failure to explore how work relations would be transformed by the requirement that parents share child rearing and housework implicates socialism with the system of patriarchy and sexism. For it is painfully clear that Gorbachev's naive blundering statements about the condition of women under State Socialism is merely a more extreme example of the theoretical blindness of Marxist theory and socialist practice. Nor is it sufficient to note the valiant efforts of Marxist-feminists to rectify the policies of their parties and Marxist theory. After two decades of struggle, the male socialist Left has barely acknowledged these efforts, except at the tactical level. In short, absent the recognition of cultural radicalism within its conceptual apparatus, socialism remains part of the pre-history of domination and only provisionally part of human liberation.

Even a cursory survey of the experience of real socialism with respect both to ecological and feminist issues reveals the veracity of this critique. In the fall of 1989, Gorbachev deplored the fact that women in the Soviet Union are obliged to hold two full time jobs: one in the wage labor system and the other in the home. But, he called for reforms of the wage labor system that would send women back where they are naturally suited, to the home. That his generous statement did not provoke an uproar among Soviet women perhaps speaks to the weakness of feminism in that country. But, it was symptomatic of both the sexual vision of the Soviet reform leadership and conditions in the Soviet Union. No doubt in the current democratic euphoria in Eastern Europe feminist issues have taken a back seat. But, when movements emerge in these countries the depth of women's anger is likely to match that which has been directed to the Communist oligarchy.

Unhappily, the record of socialist regimes on ecological issues is not much better. Socialist vigilance to protect the ecological balance with nature has never matched the degree of public regulation characteristic of the United States and the Federal Republic. In this regard, it is important to take note of the statements of the new Czech government of its intention to remedy the abominable pollution of rivers, of the air and other ecological disasters that have plagued that country.

True, in the past two decades, the Soviet regime has retreated from its post-war celebrations of socialist domination of nature. In post-stalinist regimes we no longer hear how the socialist productive forces are reversing the course of rivers and levelling mountains. But, there is absolutely no discourse about environmental protection that goes beyond regulation, for to undertake a critique of the shape of industrialization and accumulation veers close to a fundamental critique of Marxist scientism. Plainly, the distinction between the Soviet and US/German situations can be explained by the presence of mass ecological movements in advanced capitalist countries and their underground, repressed status in Eastern

Europe and China. As with feminist issues which embarrassed the party in the 70s, the Italian Communists have been forced to become a bit greener in recent years, a change of policy which may not be ascribed to the scientific development of Marxian socialism, but to the growth of a new Green electoral challenge to the Party's Left hegemony. Similarly, the British Labor party has moved a bit on ecological issues after the Greens scored impressive victories in the European parliamentary elections in early 1989.

In Germany, the Greens are an established part of the political landscape and have influenced the greening of the Left-wing of the Social-Democrats which is, however, a minority tendency in the party. As Eastern Europe struggles to solve its economic problems through policies of growth, ecological issues are likely to be perceived as an obstacle to achieving a broader base of consumption. In this sense, the emergence of ecological issues in the least industrially developed countries in that region may reproduce aspects of the history of western capitalism except, of course, a century later. Undoubtedly, the world-wide emergence of Green concern will act as an external constraint on the new entrepreneurial spirit in the East as it has created a powerful, if subordinate, subaltern politics in parts of the south, especially in Africa and Brazil.

As with feminism, ecological issues are still placed in a reformist and therefore tactical context by all tendencies on the socialist Left. While socialists have supported feminist and ecological demands in the past decade, there is, apart from a (mostly academic) coterie of socialist and Marxist feminists, no concerted effort by the male Left theorists to explore the contradictions among the three different theoretical paradigms. The reason for this omission is that, in the main, Marxism views ecology and feminism as (celebrated) social movements rather than competing paradigms of historical and social explanation, blindness which exacerbate the conflicts between socialism and the new social movements.

The epithet "economism" was originally employed by Lenin to excoriate those like Vladimir Aksimov who held the workers capable, through their struggles against exploitation, of making the socialist revolution. Lenin invoked Kautsky's well-known argument that the working class by its own efforts could not transcend trade union consciousness, in effect, were imprisoned within the conditions of commodity production, "socialism comes to the working class from without," through the agency of revolutionary intellectuals organized in the party. We can hear echoes of this view in the condescension of Marxists towards the new social movements. The very idea that revolutionary democracy, feminism and ecology constitute different, if not competing, world-views to that of Marxism violates the modern physicalist scientific paradigm within which Marxism claims to be the social equivalent. We exclude for the moment a consideration of Engels's attempt to found a dialectics of nature in which

case Marxism is a universal metascience). I have argued elsewhere that Marx himself provides grist for his acolytes' will to scientificity.[18] Surely, as literary executor of Marx's legacy, Kautsky picked up this thread from the fabric. But, Rosa Luxemburg inspired a radically different tendency according to which revolutionary democracy was identical to socialism. In the 20th century this tendency was largely defeated — by Lenin whose support for Soviet democracy was always tempered by his conception of the necessity of the party dictatorship; by the Spanish popular front government which smashed workers and peasants communes because they were deemed antagonistic to the task of winning over to the Republic sections of the bourgeoisie; by the official French Socialist Left which, when it did not actively oppose the student and worker uprisings in May 1968, stood by in fear that it would be swept aside by the emergent forms of popular democracy. Of course, the Communists actively intervened to redirect the movement to parliamentary channels.)

The *New York Times* (12/25/89) asked of the Romanian uprising "who is in charge?" when no politically articulate elite emerges to set the terms of political discourse, fashioning a state form and setting an agenda for action. When the hierarchical division between intellectual and manual labor constitutes the social structure, capital and the state are the objectifications of the power/knowledge nexus that rules society. But we have witnessed a moment when the old government has been smashed but a new state has not emerged and where there is little or no repressive discourse except the freedom narratives which entail the destruction of the old power. This is the moment when rules are not reified but are made on the spot. We see in the East European events a challenge to one of the sacred "truths" of Marxist analysis: that the masses cannot, on their own, transform society. It cannot be named economism nor can it be fairly ascribed to the spontaneity of anonymous masses. What Engels called "sudden leaps" in history are prepared by a long cultural transformation that is ordinarily invisible to formal investigation. This culture of resistance was constituted by a flourishing underground market economy parallel to the bereft official version, but also by a phantom, but lively public sphere encoded in a plethora of jokes, most of which were at the expense of the regime, clandestine groups that published their own press (in the Soviet Union the apparatus was smuggled in during the early years of the Gorbachev reforms from the US and Europe, piece by piece); the aforementioned work culture that was the antithesis of official socialist morality. Just because there was an absence of public critical discourse, did not mean that the sinews of organization were absent.

We can see the logical connection between the prepared conditions for the uprising and the demand for markets. Of course, Western consumer society has become an ideological weapon for those pressing freedom demands. However, it is not only the plethora of goods that is at issue.

The commodity fetish has its own pleasures, the joys of which, except among some intellectuals, signify freedom for societies in which social gloom has nearly always masked the sun. It is not difficult to show that the free market has not existed for centuries, that behind the truly impressive capitalist expansion was prepared by governments ready to fight wars, provide subsidies in the form of "public" goods such as roads and communications but also capital for industrial production, expropriate peasants and other tenants and, after tremendous pressure, to pay the costs of expelling labor from the production process. Moreover, the destabilization of many Eastern European regimes was accelerated by the heavy debt incurred by regimes whose only weapons of consent were tied to foreign loans. The steps currently underway to establish market relations in a wide areas of economic life seem on several points to simply make official what has already existed for the last twenty years. No doubt selling off state owned plants will encounter opposition from both workers and Left-socialists since these remain important symbols of socialist culture. Further, as I have indicated, the Czech and East German situations are likely differ, considerably, from less industrially developed countries where the demand for currencies of international exchange is urgent. However, we may expect some fairly sweeping moves towards privatization before any majority can be mustered for democratic socialist economic and political forms. It is in this sense that the metaphor of "February" takes on its multiple significations. The real question now is whether after the first steps in democratization the new governments and their parties can mobilize for anything else.

What remains to be answered is whether the hastily assembled coalitions in many Eastern European countries can form more permanent organizations and political parties that offer genuine programs for change. Of course, as the East German case demonstrates, we are likely to see the emergence, perhaps to power, of strong parties linked to the Socialist International. However, whether the workers will transfer their allegiance from the discredited Communists to these parties remains an open question. Will they lead a move toward the disintegrating "Swedish" model of democratic, welfare state capitalism or will they insist upon maintaining social property? Can they become the agents of a new ideologically oriented austerity, the vanguard of which is the already troubled Solidarity government in Poland? More profoundly, is there evidence that any parliamentary socialist or communist party in the West has done more than defend the seriously weakened welfare state? This is no small accomplishment in an era of long term economic crisis and restructuring, but it hardly qualifies as the basis of a bold program. The simple fact is that in all advanced capitalist countries the Left, at least intellectually, is in full scale retreat. Where socialists show signs of life — beyond the ability to win elections — they present themselves as better and more

honest managers than their conservative opponents or, as in the case of France, adroitly straddle the fence between egalitarian rhetoric and unblushing policies geared to expanded private investment.

Clearly, the dialectic between structure and agency is far more complex than this description allows. All forms of social and discursive construction have difficulty establishing the basis for resistance; while it can account for domination, freedom appears as a moral imperative. Thus, any theory of agency requires a theory of needs — one which is both biologically and historically rooted. On the one side, who can deny the incredible late capitalist construction of needs in the image of its own accumulation/technological capacities? But the conflation of needs with the Apparatus must be taken, in the wake of the history of the past thirty years, as a tendency, not a signifier of the End of History. On the other side, the irrepressible needs, especially pleasure.

Recall that Freud transposes the problem of structure/agency to two terms within the psychic structure where the reality principle is taken as censor for the full expression of the pleasure principle, unsocialized, uncontrolled — in a word, wild.[19] Pleasure cannot be destroyed, it must be repressed in its pristine form and redirected to the necessary productive and "reproductive" activity without which our species might disappear. But, echoing Goethe's motto that for those who do not have art and science, let them have religion, Freud argued that in the necessary repression of sexuality, work is an unlikely outlet for the discharge of pleasure. Consumer society may be taken as an means to address this contradiction by providing a broad range of satisfactions (Marcuse calls them "pseudo" satisfactions because he is stuck in the ahistorical conventions of high culture). Since this means/ends relationship is globally recognized as a partial solution to estrangement and the damming of pleasure, achieving consumerism has become part of the telos of the revolutionary democratic movements in Eastern Europe and the third world where Communist morality condemns this cultural transformation as yet another incursion of bourgeois ideology into socialism. For it was one thing to provide consumption by procuring loans from Western Banks as a grim necessity to secure legitimacy for otherwise tottering regimes but quite something else to endow consumerism with moral validity.

Suffused with Western standards of rational action, socialism, including its Marxist variant, offers the protestant ethic, in revolutionary garb, as the moral equivalent to this capitalist cultural ideal. But, once exposed, the Crowd was not to be persuaded by this antiquated ideal. The next best alternative for the survival of really existing socialism became the loans. When they dried up and the bureaucracy stared illegitimacy in the face, the system died. Marx and Engels insisted that today's wants become tomorrow's necessities. One might argue that the construction of pleasure and freedom as "rights" corresponds to a specific historical conjunction

between the advent, at least tendentiously, of post-scarcity and the power of utopian yearning the origin of which are (not yet) fulfilled needs. And since, as Ernst Bloch following Pindar has reminded us, we live in different "nows," the appearance of new needs is by no means a universal event. Which helps explain the world system in relation to its disaggregation as well as its increasing integration: the celebrated end of organized capitalism corresponding to multiple economic and political power centers is counteracted by increasing cultural integration. This phenomenon used to be called The Revolution of Rising Expectations that referred to the distance between immediate material conditions for attaining what Marx called the historical level of material culture within "backward" societies and the widespread belief that significant elements of western consumption had become rights. What was once an impossible dream, mythologized in story and legend is transformed into demands the denial of which leads to revolt.

This phenomenon may be explained in many ways, not the least powerful of which is the labor theory of value. For if the value of a commodity is determined by the amount of socially necessary labor time embodied in its production it follows, for Marx, that the time taken by older methods for producing any article does not determine its value. The commodity's value must be determined by the most advanced methods of production. Thus, from the perspective of capitalist commodity production time is an historical and not an ontological category and this mediation has enormous economic and political consequences. Why would we expect that the same general process does not obtain in relation to the category of labor-power whose money form is wages? Recall Marx applied his theory of value to the question of wage determination. Wages are determined, in a general way, by the value of commodities required for the reproduction of the worker and her family. The ambiguous term is " reproduction" for this is intimately tied with the appropriate level of material culture. But since commodities, including labor-power exchange as never before on a global scale, we may no longer (if we ever could) evoke purely local standards to determine what a worker actually "needs. " The relative mobility of global labor expressed in mass migrations from the periphery to the center renders increasingly problematic national determinations of the value of labor power. The Yugoslav wage of, say, $150 a month is sustainable only if rent, food costs and other stark necessities are negligible and the state extends credit with which individuals can purchase cars and appliances. Socially produced needs, historically considered, entail an evaluation not only of such costs as rent, the price of food and clothing, considered abstractly. Does the household unit "need" a car? How can teenage kids afford clothes that correspond to prevailing international fashions? What about the television set? Can it be considered a luxury in the contemporary world?

Needless to say, the cultural ideal abstracted from the concrete material conditions under which perhaps a majority of the population in the West lives has been abetted to rise to the status of a new universal by the spread of mass communications. But can we deny that this ideal of consumerism subverts the old repressive, patriarchal conditions of traditional culture, or that grinding poverty, totalitarian rule, hierarchical culture appear increasingly irrational to people in ever larger regions of the world? In this respect, the contempt of intellectuals when reporting booming Coca-Cola sales in Latin America, the burgeoning global market for designer jeans, especially in Eastern Europe with its attendant implications for decadent lifestyle, the poignant critique by Mattelart and Dorfman of the popular dissemination of Walt Disney's cartoon characters in the Third World and other such neo-Marxist reprises of American cultural imperialism betray the one-sidedness of puritanical-Marxist demystification.

When it fails to rigorously employ its own categories, Marxist criticism of mass culture may be accused of having failed to be sufficiently Marxist. In fact, I would argue that the preponderant Marxist cultural analysis remains profoundly indebted to bourgeois morality and criticism, really an adjunct to the ethos of accumulation and its concomitant, labor discipline.

The future of socialism is entwined with its ability to become a liberationist politics and ideology in which, among other things, the question of the crucial bourgeois ideology — work as the ethical form of life — is put under interrogation. For if the history of workers' movements is honestly examined, its most subversive slogan since the 19th century remains "why work?" This antipathy to work refers not merely to estranged labor specific to capitalist social relations where workers struggle against capital to appropriate their most precious possession, time. The struggle to reduce necessary labor is, simultaneously, an expression of the yearning for freedom. Regardless of how pleasant technologically-mediated labor may be, it no longer expresses more an the objectification of abstract labor; its concrete existence is displaced by forgetting since the content of labor has been trivialized. This rationalization is only now spreading to most forms of intellectual labor which are themselves being "liberated" from the workplace by the computer: capital's increasing concentration which makes redundant several layers of professionals and middle managers; and by deterritorialization of production and administration, which reverses the historical centralization of capital even as mergers and acquisitions concentrate ownership in fewer hands.

Socialism will remain relevant when it recovers some of the themes of the early Marx, especially the light his writing shed on estranged labor, and when it frees itself from its puritanical political unconscious. This prescription by no means undercuts its claim to be the most reliable ideology of social justice. But, for the time being, the historical record of

recent "socialism" has tarnished this image. Moreover, its conception of what justice means needs to be overhauled in the light of the democratic and other new social movements. In any case, it must surrender its claim to be the master discourse of history whose narratives possess the status of governing myth. When defeated, ideologies and movements tend not to disappear, the prospects for socialist renovation are good so long as it recalls Marx's invocation to make ruthless criticism of everything, including its own history and experience.

Notes

1. *New York Times*, February 5, 1990
2. Antonio Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks* (New York International Publishers, 1971) p. 266
3. V. I. Lenin, *What is to be Done?*
4. Liberal anti-communists chronically underestimated the degree to which East European regimes enjoyed working class support in the 1960s and '70s. As I will argue below especially in the most industrially advanced countries-Czechoslovakia and East Germany (DDR), workers had comparatively higher living standards than others in the Eastern Bloc, but also had longer socialist traditions.
5. Myron Sharpe, ed. *Planning, Profit and Incentives in the USSR* (two volumes, White Plains, 1967) especially the articles by E. G. Liberman "The Plan, Direct Ties and Profitability" and "Profitability in Soviet Enterprises. " Also see the series of documents relating to changing the basis of management appended in the volume. These documents include a Communist Party Resolution concerning the reforms, a law of enterprise and other official codifications of the Liberman proposals which, among other things, establishes a considerable degree of managerial autonomy at the enterprise level in determining what and how goods are produced. Liberman's articles stress the applicability of the law of value i. e. making socially necessary labor time the basis for setting prices and production norms. It is important to note they were enacted after Khruschev's removal from power.
6. Gramsci, *op. cit.*
7. Ferenc Feher, Agnes Heller, Gyorgy Markus, *Dictatorship over Needs* (London: Basil Blackwell, 1983).
8. Walter Korpi, *The Working Class in Welfare Capitalism: Work, Unions and Politics in Sweden* (London, RKP: 1978). See especially chapter 11 where Korpi, articulating the position of the Swedish Social-Democratic Party that opines that capitalism's demise would not result from a revolutionary process but might come bout in classical gradualist chunks outlined in Eduard Bernstein, *Evolutionary Socialism* (Ann Arbor Paperbacks, 1970); see also John Stephens, *The Transition From Capitalism to Socialism* (London, Macmillan: 1979).
9. Of course the development of Swedish welfare capitalism differs in some respects from the Federal Republic's. One major distinction is practical. the power of the Swedish LO over state economic and welfare policy is far greater than that of the German labor movement whose party has been out of power for most of the post-war era. But, at least in comparison to the Anglo-American French and Italian arrangements they are more similar.
10. There are now many good accounts of these years. See especially Moshe Lewin, *Russian Peasants and Soviet Power*; Stephen F. Cohen, *Bukharin and the Bolshevik Revolution*; Isaac Deutscher's three volume biography of Trotsky, especially volume 2, *The Prophet Armed*, and 3, *The Prophet Outcast*; E. H. Carr and R. W. Davies *Foundations of a Planned Economy* (six volumes) and, from a Left Maoist perspective Charles Bettleheim, *Class Struggles in the USSR* (two volumes).
11. For a good account of the complex relationship between democracy and socialism in the 19th century see Arthur Rosenberg, *Democracy and Socialism* (Boston: Beacon Press 1936), also Korpi, *op. cit.*
12. Stanley Aronowitz, *Crisis in Historical Materialism Class, Politics and Culture in Marxist Theory* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1990.)
13. James Connolly, *Selected Writings* (NY: International Publishers, nd).
14. Aronowitz, *op. cit.*
15. Louis Althusser, *For Marx* (New York: Vintage Books, 1971).

16. Bruno Latour, *Science in Action* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1986); Stanley Aronowitz, *Science as Power: Discourse and Ideology in Modern Society* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1988).
17. Sigmund Freud, *Civilization and its Discontents*; Herbert Marcuse, *Eros and Civilization* (New York: Vintage Books 1955).
18. Ernst Bloch, "Non-Synchrony and Dialectics," *New German Critique*, #11. This is an extract from Bloch's *Heritage of Our Times* (not translated into English).
19. Armand Mattelart and Ariel Dorfman *How to Read Donald Duck* (Paris: International General, 1977); Herbert Schiller *Mind Managers* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1974).

Ich bin ein MacDonaldsFranchize

LEONID BREZHNEV

Am I now history's
humpty-dumpty, falling
in fast-forward off that fat
wall of inconsequence?
And are my component parts,
once tight hints of a concrete totality,
always a breath away,
never unsung,
now. . .undone?

Caesar's body was thus.
Dust to fill a foreign hole
in a foreign wall.

But where are our Big Macs?
Who will pour the ketchup
to the thick pitch of its redness?
And what cheesy ghost slouches its way
towards the Alexanderplatz?

I am no cook,
nor did they want me to be
when service was all.

now the falling rate of my profit
congeals the juice of our beefy time.

channeled by andrew ross
november 1989

The Crisis And Upheaval In Eastern Europe

BOGDAN DENITCH

The dramatic upheavals in Eastern Europe, in the face of democratic pressures from below and long overdue reforms and liberalization from above, highlight the general crisis of the state "socialist" systems ruled by Communist parties. Political and economic reforms have pushed the prolonged low level systemic crisis of the East European state socialist systems into apparently terminal crisis.

The East European state systems, their differences notwithstanding, permit us to speculate about a general question: the limits and possibilities of change in the Communist regimes. A number of the proposed Soviet reforms have been experimented with for over two decades on the much smaller scale which individual East European countries afford. Comparisons have to made with caution since the East European Communist regimes have been imposed on these states from the outside and were in any case more recent than the Soviet one. The order of scale itself is also important. However there are sufficient similarities for Eastern Europe to be a cracked mirror of the Soviet Union's possible future, or at least the most probable future.

The fate of these societies and political systems has a direct bearing on any prospects of the socialist project since it was in good part the flawed and perverted experiences of the Soviet and East European communist politocrasies that put the very idea of socialism in question everywhere. Whatever democratic socialists and various native intellectual dissidents say about these societies not having been genuinely socialist — and therefore not a valid test of the possibility of socialism — for the vast majority of the world those experiences do bear on the validity of some major assumptions shared by socialists in general. At the very least, they cast a very negative light on the performance of highly centralized command economies at other than early industrialization stages of development.[1] There is also some distorted family resemblance and a partly similar vocabulary. The Prague Spring in 1968 had been greeted with joy and relief by activists in the mass Communist parties of the industrial capitalist democracies since it seemed to show that communism in power could regenerate itself. Two decades later the Gorbachev reforms raise hopes among a far wider political public, although (or perhaps because) they occur under conditions of a visible moral and ideological crisis of both Communist politocratic regimes and the general socialist project.

The hope for internal redemption and transformation remains a powerful one that all the sacrifices and brutalities under these regimes will not

have been in vain. More mundanely, major reforms make possible imagining an end of the cold war as we have known it. Substantial improvements in the lives of a large part of the world population are no small thing in themselves. Clearly, whatever the fate of the economic reforms, perestroika and glasnost have had an enormous and positive effect on the lives of people in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. Those societies are less oppressive and freer in ways unimaginable only a few years ago.

The term Eastern Europe used here is not a geographic concept. For my purposes, Greece is not in Eastern Europe while East Germany is. The concept refers to the state socialist politocratic systems developed since the Second World War in the part of Europe awarded to the Soviets by the Teheran and Yalta Agreements. Albania and Yugoslavia, have managed to leave the bloc, and therefore Eastern Europe consists of the Warsaw Pact countries: East Germany, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Rumania and Bulgaria. All are in trouble, none have lights at the end of any tunnels, if they have any tunnels in the sense of a generally agreed upon path of development, no matter how long-range or unpleasant, which would solve these societies' economic and social crises.

Recent experiments try in different ways to deal with the dilemma of political democratization against the historical background of exclusive communist control. In Hungary the party, split and the old reform wing is trying to re-emerge , new name and all, as a quasi-social democratic party. In Poland, the party has had to accept a rival trade union federation of Solidarity as a temporarily dominant political competitor. In both East Germany and Czechoslovakia the massive communist presence in the structures of the state and other bureaucracies is fighting a delaying battle to hold on to some power, whatever the formal fate of the party itself. However, those two states have the most favorable prognosis since one will not be allowed to collapse by West Germany and the other has a well established alternate leadership with wide legitimacy. The fate of post-communist Rumania on the other hand is very problematic indeed. Some kind of Mexicanization seems to be its fate, that is, a non-competitive limited pluralism. Reforms in Bulgaria will be modest and are already flawed by the popular chauvinism against equal rights for the million and a half Turkish and Moslem minorities.

In most cases the party or its majority current retain a massive presence in the military, police, civil service and managerial hierarchies. The non-communists are allowed a role within the system, even a formally leading role in some cases, on probation. That is, they are for the time being tolerated and it is a very open question what the fate of these experiments will ultimately be if their present grim economic picture does not improve. Even more uncertain is the fate of East Germany moving into reforms at a rapid pace forced by intolerable pressures from below and constant mass emigration of the young and talented. Unlike the other East

European politocracies, the GDR's existence as a separate polity is highly problematic; it would not survive the test of plebiscite which posed the option of German unification or its own continued existence. Whatever ultimate form it may take, the two Germanies will reunite, certainly by the end of the '90s.

Long-range crises of the East European communist systems.

Politically, Eastern Europe had stabilized with a series of unlovable and unloved, increasingly nationally specific regimes, which had proven capable of ruling but not of obtaining any popular legitimacy. Popular resentment varied from regime to regime but in none could the regime survive the withdrawal of Soviet support. Soviet support sharply affects the parameters of what is possible, and this fact should not be forgotten simply because Moscow presently favors reforms. The political crisis of Eastern Europe, however, is if anything more fundamental than the bankruptcy of its political institutions.

There are three separate loci of the crisis: (a) the complete collapse of official "Marxist" ideology as a mobilizing instrument useful to the ruling elites[2]; (b) the demoralization of the in-system reformers and the startling absence of any reform currents within a recognizably Marxist or socialist framework among the intelligentsia; and (c), the increasing and increasingly visible gap in technology, productivity, living standards and social standards between Eastern and Western Europe.[3] While it was possible to write learned books about the onset of a technocratic communism in East Germany and the convergence of US and USSR in the early sixties, it is clear today that the real issue is whether Eastern Europe will be doomed to be a backwater of Europe or slide into the third world.

I use the image of sliding into the third world because, even though there are fields of culture and science that are world class, the overall performance of the economy and society is dreary and discouraging. Thus the decade of relative normalization of personal existence in most of these states has been followed by more than a decade and a half of deterioration in living standards, very sharp in some cases, accompanied by a drop of productivity and technological innovation. These states have not even entered into the information revolution and remain smoke stack economies. One should add that smoke stack economies are, if anything, less sensitive to problems of environmental devastation. This evident backwardness was particularly painful for regimes which, being unloved, had based their claims to legitimacy on economic performance.

Their genuine achievements — the creation of crude welfare states which did raise the living standards of wide sectors of the population, particularly in the years of growth in the late fifties and through the sixties — no longer secure support. The second and third generation of industrial workers and urban dwellers do not find the welfare state a

novelty but on the contrary takes it for granted and therefore focus on its many inadequacies. These are all the more visible since the yardstick of comparison is not the U.S., but rather Western Europe, which combines aspects of the welfare state with much greater prosperity.

The economic, social and political problems are exacerbated by the increasing porousness of what used to be known as the Iron Curtain and the fact that at least the young are completely taken with western and more often American cultural forms. The young prefer punk and New Wave to anything that is written in their own countries unless perhaps it is the Polish and East German version of punk and New Wave. While the youth are attracted to the Western youth culture, the rest of the population is mostly mesmerized by western mass consumerism and a consequent exaggerated attraction to materialist, petty-capitalist values, in a word, possessive individualism. This is especially widespread among the educated middle classes, including parts of the political elite, and it can be seen in both the mythification of the market as the solution for all problems and the rising differences in lifestyles and access to goods between the more privileged strata and the working-class. Forty years of politocratic "socialism" has all but destroyed any fabric of social solidarity. That is not the least important criticism of communist parties in power.

In mass culture and mass media, the regimes have long since lost the battle: official ideology is quite simply seen as boring. The communist parties were perceived simply as channels for careerists and while they were channels for advancement, anybody who pretended to take the programs or ideology of those parties in the least bit seriously was held in utter contempt by the younger generation and even apparatchiks. The ruling elite itself became more and more cynical and instrumental about "Partinost" (Party loyalty).

It is grim to live in a society which seems to be walking backwards into its own future.[4] Marxism itself put enormous emphasis of the linkage between technology of production and political organization. Capitalism was progressive vis-á-vis feudalism because it released enormous creative energies, because it was evidently technologically superior, because capitalist domination was most congruent with breakthroughs in technology and the organization of production. Marx and certainly most of his mainline successors thought of socialism as having an analogous relationship to capitalism: capitalism would begin to act as a restraint on the creative productive forces, finally to be overthrown by a superior, more advanced form of society, not merely in moral and egalitarian values but also in terms of the ability to organize society more rationally and effectively. That is what presumably made Marxist socialism "scientific " as distinct from various, much scorned, "true or utopian socialism." Whatever one's views about the East European and Soviet states, it is clear that

these societies are not technologically more efficient than capitalism. Even past economic and industrial growth is not an argument for the East European regimes since a whole range of societies, many in their own ways as unlovely, have also dealt with industrialization and modernization. South Korea, Taiwan, Singapore and Hong Kong, while also authoritarian, are far more productive and efficient at introducing new technologies and scientific breakthroughs.

But official Marxism has always been scientistic and to give up the claim to scientific superiority is therefore to give up the very essence of the elite ideology. One can have other Marxisms; democratic and humanist Marxisms which stress non-productivist aspects of Marx and which rest on the theories of alienation and the need for empowerment of unempowered strata in society. Yet that Marxism was the Marxism of the opposition, the Marxism developed by the internal exiles, in the jails, among the ghettoized academic intellectuals and in the little samizdat publications. That humanist Marxism is also in a crisis today although for different reasons, more having to do with a relentless series of defeats. Nevertheless it is a fact that this Marxism exists primarily in Yugoslavia and East Germany where, almost alone in Eastern Europe, the language of much of the opposition as well as of the defenders of the regime is still mostly Marxist.

There has been an widespread depoliticization and massive demobilization of the population over the years. Much of the official mobilization of the young and of the urban workers in the Forties and Fifties had been fraudulent but it did have an effect on the ever-latent idealism of the young. By the sixties, this had been long spent through years of repressive manipulation of the liberating symbols of socialism in the interests of the new politocratic ruling class.

While younger workers have never experienced terror and take whatever social and economic gains that exist as their right, they are rightly cynical about any official work ethic since it is clear that work, official work which you are paid to perform, is not the way to advance. This is made evident by seeing who does well in these societies: political hacks and those who work the legal or not so legal boundaries of the gray or alternate economy. Thus neither the carrot nor its stick is particularly effective with younger workers. This makes the fate of reforms based on marketization more complicated than economists realize. Effective progressive change is generally treated with cynicism, a cynicism reinforced by the increasing possibility for tolerance of petty corruption and individual advancement. The grotesquely inefficient organization of services and repairs has given birth to an entire Black Economy which is no longer even underground and is hardly noticed by the regime, as it obviously is not threatening to it. It would be a mistake to assume that the informal economy is a feature of the marginal private sector alone: it permeates the

official institutions and economy as well.

Breakdown Of The Social Pact With The Working Class

This state of affairs — the standoff between inefficient regimes and a surly and indifferent working class — has rested on a tacit social pact which is now being challenged by forces beyond the control of the regimes. Those forces reflect the growing integration of Eastern Europe into the world market under circumstances where the technological and productivity gap becomes unbearable. Poland, Hungary, Rumania and Yugoslavia all owe money to the World Bank as well to private banks and all are under pressure to increase their exports to meet the payments. It does not help that all, except Rumania, have far more efficient and advanced economies and economic organization than the Soviet Union. That is after all no yardstick for comparison and in any case they do not have the Soviet Union's vast natural resources. To attempt to resolve the economic problems of these regimes, the Soviets have encouraged, even pushed, the Eastern European economies into the world market and there the rules of the game have an unfortunately Universalist character which measure the East European regimes by very different yardsticks. They would now be obliged to produce adequate goods of decent design and quality to have a chance to export.

This is taking place at a point when Western Europe is increasingly protectionist and the competition from the Pacific Rim nations and rising third-world economies like Brazil increasingly savage. The solution has been two-fold: to modernize the industrial plant (thereby increasing the indebtedness to the western banks for the purchase of the machinery) and to improve productivity, i.e., to speed up the workers. This speed-up, because of the external debt, had to be accompanied, not by pay increases, but if anything by pay decreases. Better living standards, to be sure, are promised in the future, once the economies have been reformed.

However, far too many promises have already been made over the years for much credibility and trust to remain. To make things even worse, reform will bring greater inequality and unemployment. In politocratic systems, that inequality would obviously benefit the political ruling stratum, not necessarily the more economically productive. In either case greater economic inequality will hardly encourage workers to accept unemployment and speed up which are necessary features of the proposed economic reforms. The brutal period of industrialization of the first decades of communist rule has created a large and increasingly homogeneous working class. The process which took place in Western Europe in generations was compressed into two short decades. The regimes favored the industrial working class and the cities against the rural sector and the peasantry. It was in the cities where the crude welfare state first developed, where education became accessible to the working class and where the rapid upward social mobility of workers and peasants into the new

layers of state, party, economic and mass organizational bureaucratic hierarchies took place.

Furthermore, the industrial workers who had belonged to the traditional proletariat were "compensated" for the destructions of their independent trade unions, parties and institutions by historically unprecedentedly high mobility into the new social and economic elites. Much of this mobility was the result of the structural changes in the economy and as a consequence the "rewards" were distributed as often as not as a result of mere chance and the good luck to have been in the right place when the party cadres desperately searched for promotable but loyal bodies. An entire political class of the old prewar bourgeoisie had been eliminated and now needed to be replaced. The new Stalinist regimes were heavy on administration and therefore needed many, many more persons to fill the new slots. After all, the hallmark of an administrative society is that it is top heavy with bureaucracy. Short of reliable party cadres, there were three sources of recruits. The new Party members, could at least be assumed to be faithful out of gratitude, if nothing else; a handful of older bourgeois experts and technicians willing to adapt to the new regime; and the workers. It goes without saying that all the Party cadres within the working class, few as they were, had meteoric careers and until the new universities began to produce politically correct experts and technicians, the most reliable managerial types were workers promoted through the Party. While not necessarily competent they were loyal (but then the prewar bourgeoisie had not necessarily been competent either). The unanticipated effect of this rapid social mobility was to remove the reliable party cadres from the working class and to increase the distance between the actual manual workers and the communist party, whose base became white collar employees, technicians and managers. To put the above proposition more succinctly, by the mid 1950s a worker could be reasonably sure that the person working next to him or her on the assembly line or in the mines was not a police or Party agent if they had been there for any length of time. Otherwise they would long ago have been promoted upwards. With a whole second generation of workers beginning to enter the work-place in the sixties the chasm between the Party and the working class increased and the informal lines of solidarity and mutual support against the bosses, the managers, the state and all things external to the working class began to develop.

But then East European blue collar workers had other characteristics which were bound to create trouble. Not only were the workers now increasingly abandoned by the Party in the work-place, but massive new quasi-slums ensured that you were unlikely to live next a party informer or bureaucrat as well. If Party membership was good for anything, it was good for obtaining better housing and other perks. Thus in many ways the blue collar workers of Eastern Europe resembled the industrial proletariat

in smokestack industries of an earlier period in Western Europe, a period of great industrial militancy and self assertion. Continued, labor turbulence is part of the future forecast for Eastern Europe, and it is affected by three factors: (a) The Soviet Union itself is going through a series of wide ranging technological and administrative reforms that are an implicit critique of the East European communists. (b) It is difficult to repress the bulk of the working class. Regimes, to be sure, have had difficulties repressing intellectuals as well. However it is an option not available for dealing with industrial workers or even the masses of new technicians and engineers which these societies need. A cynic could add that while the police take to cracking down on intellectuals and students with ill repressed class resentment and therefore move joyously to the task, it is an entirely different kettle of fish to beat up miners or steel workers. (c) Then there is the problem that regime legitimacy, defective as it was, still rested at least theoretically on the claim that these were some kind of workers' states.[5]

All this adds to a formula promising continued stagnation and a checkmate between the class forces. It also adds to a consolidation of class consciousness on the part of the workers on the one hand and self consciousness by the ruling strata of their separateness on the other. These are increasingly class societies.

If the explosive potential of industrial unrest represents the general crisis in the long run, the short run is not rosy either. The gap between promise and performance in the economy, the lag in technological innovation and progress and the growing cleavages between the top leadership and managers committed to marketization, and the bulk of the population, make these societies unstable and open to demagogic populist pressure.

The New Relationship With The Soviet Union

Eastern Europe is no longer an economic asset to the Soviet Union. If anything today it is a drag on Soviet resources. The potential political instability of the East European states is also a problem to the Soviets themselves. Today there is primarily an ideological rather than an instrumental reason for maintaining the bloc. A major part of the legitimacy of the Soviet elite, in its own eyes, is that it is the head of a world movement toward socialism, not merely the Soviet state. It is therefore important to them to maintain countries other than the Soviet Union as close allies, and to keep ties with as many communist parties as possible. It helps maintain their legitimacy in their view of themselves and within what remains of a world movement. Military advantages for maintaining the Warsaw pact are much more dubious than either the U.S. or Soviet analysts think. Given the real prospects for major cutbacks in armaments in Europe on the part of both military alliances that advantage becomes less relevant and, above all, is worth less.

In the longer run East European autonomy may evolve into a "Finlandization" of the area, where Soviet strategic and security interests remain protected as ever greater political and social differentiation of the East European states take place. An popular metaphor among analysts of the Soviet bloc is the rough historical image of the "Ottomanization" of the Empire; the parallel of the century long process of decay of the Ottoman empire where province after province on the periphery gained de facto independence while maintaining a purely pro forma acceptance of Ottoman overlordship.[6]

The Soviet model has in the past tended to emphasize heavy industry as critical for any developmental strategy. Most of the East European economies, having followed the Soviet model of development, have become heavily dependent upon the Soviet Union in two respects: cheap energy and, cheap raw materials. For almost three decades, the Soviets have been subsidizing their East European dependencies by selling them energy — oil and natural gas, as well as some raw materials — below the world market prices. By the mid 70s, they could no longer afford to continue these subsidies, and began to renegotiate the trade agreements, moving closer to the world market prices as calculated in hard currency. Now, those societies face economic disaster in good part since their economies are hooked on cheap energy and raw materials.

Even more harmful is the archaic, authoritarian top-down over centralized economic system itself. Reforms will be very difficult to achieve since of course the Soviet economy faces the same problems. That explains the urgency and seriousness with which Gorbachev is pursuing economic reforms as well as the detente with the US, in itself essential to provide the breathing space and economic resources for those reforms. Due to the bottlenecks in their own economy, the drop in the world price of oil and the need for large-scale imports of western technology (to be paid for in hard currencies), the Soviets are now less able to aid their allies.

The high cost of their commitments in Afghanistan and Cuba did not help. Hence the reluctance to continue aid to the Sandinistas in Nicaragua and the advice for moderation in that country. Hence also the willingness to liquidate the Afghanistan adventure on terms which are a disaster for their allies there.[7] The technological and economic burden of the arms race, launched in the last two years of the Carter administration and continued with such fanfare by the Reagan Administration, had exacerbated the already dismal economic scene.

The basic stereotype about Soviet-East European relations, reinforced in the west by generations of East European political exiles, is thus simply wrong today. The Soviet Union does not exploit the East European states economically which are all in miserable shape for a number of complicated reason. Moreover the Soviet supply of raw materials has allowed

them to maintain a relatively higher standard of living than that in the Soviet Union itself.

Democratic Opposition

The cost of the status quo for the East European regimes has been political, moral, social and economic. The most devastating cost is the moral and spiritual. One not so incidental cost has been that the term "socialism" has all but been destroyed in Eastern Europe. The ideological vacuum has resulted in widespread cynicism about politics and even about oppositional politics, mainly among the young. This has also spread across the class barriers to form a genuine youth sub-culture that is mostly apolitical, hedonistic and materialist. Certain "fashionable" topics, currently ecology and human rights, serve as a focus for single-issue activities, particularly if popular among western youth as well.

Rejection of the language of socialism however does not necessarily extend to the basic values of socialism; democracy, equality, community and participation. The major focus of the anti-regime opposition in Eastern Europe has been on democracy, free elections and the end of the communist monopoly on power. This is a very good thing despite the ambivalence of a generation of miseducated Marxists in both Western and Eastern Europe about so-called "bourgeois" democracy. I do not accept the notion that there is such a thing as "bourgeois" democracy or liberty. These are democratic rights and liberties which have been won in over a century and a half of bloody struggles from the bourgeoisie. In any case the struggle for democracy and liberty pre-dates the struggle for socialism. These are democratic rights and liberties which today happen to exist mostly in bourgeois societies. These liberties and democratic rights are however safest in those bourgeois societies with the most powerful workers' political parties and movements.[8]

These are not "bourgeois liberties" and one of the not so minor problems with the contemporary socialist project in much of the world is that some socialists still think of those liberties as time-bound and relevant only for bourgeois societies. Even worse is the prattle about democracy and individual rights as a culturally specific "western" preoccupation. The struggle for human rights is dismissed as form of western cultural imperialism. That is refuted by the immense size and importance of the repressive institutions in "non-western" states and in third-world "socialist" societies. It seems reasonable, on the part of the working-class movements and for any other popular-democratic movements in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union to say, "We want at least all of the liberties which workers have in the western world, and then we want more." What is certain is that they do not want fewer rights but more. That would seem a reasonable thing to demand from a government calling itself a democratic or socialist government.

The widespread criticism of Polish Solidarity in 1981 was that it overloaded the agenda of demands to a point where it was very difficult to win specific immediate demands which could be maintained before moving further ahead. It should be remembered, however,that the first round of regime Solidarity confrontations occurred in 1980-1981, before the advent of the reforming Gorbachev administration in the Soviet Union. It also occurred at the point of increasing US-Soviet confrontation. Clearly trade union gains, even the legalization of alternate unions, which did not include a relatively autonomous judiciary and some political freedoms, would not be worth the paper they were written on.

The legalization of Solidarity in the Spring of 1989 occurred against the background of Soviet reforms and in the context a successful foreign policy offensive by Gorbachev. The economic situation was also far worse than in 1981 and regime was desperate to get Solidarity to share power and responsibility for maintaining the economy. That is, it was in a framework where Soviet intervention against the first non-communist government in Eastern Europe was very unlikely indeed. Poland neatly illustrates the difference between "government," dominated by Solidarity and "regime" dominated, still, by the Communist Party.

In state "socialist" regimes the demand for democracy is the primary socialist demand. Everything begins there, with freeing the society from the total domination of the Party and the State. This creates the space for autonomous social, cultural and political and popular institutions and thus a civil society which is a pre-condition for democracy.

Prospects Of The East European Regimes

Good sense and politics would indicate that the first priority for the post-communist regimes is the establishment of stable democratic polities with widely accepted legitimacy. For that to work, democracy cannot come in the same package with sharp drops in living standards and a massive settling of past political accounts. However, what makes good sense in the long, or even the medium run, is all too rarely the same policy that makes sense in the short run. Tolerance of differences is essential in order to build stable democratic regimes. It is the precondition for a democratic civic culture.

That means no vengeance, no matter how justified, no witch hunts against former Communist hardliners and, above all, no searching for scapegoats for economic and social bad times to come. Those scapegoats will be, too often, those who are ethnically different, the minorities and the Jews. Or intellectuals, or liberals, or leftists. Eastern Europe is populated with ghosts of chauvinist, populist and rightwing and corporatist parties. It is important to try to keep these ghosts quiet. Nationalism is the red meat of the organic "genuine" national community which is use against "cool" legal and rational universalism. It is therefore a continual threat to those who would build a democratic parliamentary order. It does

not help the prospects for democracy or tolerance that so many of the reformist democratic intellectuals have passionately fallen in love with the abstract idea of the market. For the love of the idea of the market almost as much suffering may be visited on the population of Eastern Europe as had been for the equally abstract idea of centralized planning.

There seems to be no limit to how much suffering can be imposed on the living bodies of existing societies in the name of abstract ideas. That seems to be original sin of intellectuals. They have thus set themselves up to be blamed for the grim consequences of their present infatuation with yet one more abstraction. In Hungary national populists have already begun attacking "cosmopolitan," read Jewish, big-city liberals over that precise issue. Similar national populist attacks on economic reforms, and on pluralistic democracy, with or without anti-Semitic sub-texts, can be expected in Poland, Rumania and in the Republic of Serbia in Yugoslavia.

The road to democratization runs through perilous straits in Eastern Europe. It has many enemies, few open, many covert. They include what remains of the communist parties and the bureaucrats in the state and other institutions, populists and nationalists and technocrats. That is why it is essential to help build democratic institutions, trade unions and civic groups with moral and material aid. That must supplement generous economic and technological aid. Western European democracies are clearly going to be more generous and effective in this task of providing aid and moral support than the United States.

Temptation to use nationalist, ethnocentric and populist pseudo-egalitarian demagoguery will be very great and it will pay off in the short run. In some cases that demagoguery will be the instrument wielded by what remains of the communist nomenklaturas, institutions and cadres within the bureaucracies. This is particularly true when there has as yet not been enough time to develop broadly based political parties and movements to fill the void created by the collapse of the communist parties. It would have been madly utopian to expect that years of repression had left behind a mass political culture that was democratic and tolerant. The values of the democratic and human rights activists have been relatively limited to the better educated publics. It is important not to assume that the massive turning against the communist regimes was and is inspired by the politics and values of oppositional activists. That process was and is far broader and includes a visceral and massive anti-communism which has precious little in common with democratic values.

The post-Communist politics of Eastern Europe will in many ways resemble Mexico, with all the present features of corporatism, corruption, a dynamic private sector, a multitude of political parties, most of which have no effective access to power or broad support. One must not push the analogy too far but it is richly suggestive. These will also be societies where the role of international financial institutions and banks will be

very important as well as a source of great internal hostility and controversy. For there are historical penalties to be paid by these societies for the lost years under Communist regimes. It must be made clear by western socialists that the quantity and type of aid, not to speak of the relationship to the EC, will depend of the degree to which the East European states abide by democratic norms and respect human rights, including explicitly independent trade unions and social movements. For that pressure to have any real effect, the international financial institutions must not be permitted to continue to demand policies which will impose a brutal austerity, hard for any democratic or popular regime to survive. The trouble is that economists tend to ignore the social and political consequences of their proposals. Sensible people must insist that there is no such thing as a "purely" economic policy.

A brief prescriptive summary: (1) The Soviet and other state socialist politocracies are today in major economic, social and political crises. Some have passed the terminal stage. The presence of a large increasingly unsatisfied industrial working class will produce continual pressure from below, encouraging both liberalizing and technocratic reforms movements from above and the openings towards more democracy; (2) In part in response to this economic crisis, the Soviet leadership under Gorbachev is extraordinarily open to radical cut-backs in military expenditures and arsenals. Historically unprecedented opportunities are thereby opening for socialist and peace organizations. This strengthens the western advocates of disarmament and the tendency for Western Europe towards greater independence and assertiveness towards the United States. These factors lead to a possibility of an end of the cold war War as it has existed since the late forties and for democratic change in Eastern Europe; (3) The aim of radical democrats and democratic socialists should be to help both the chances of successful reforms in the Soviet bloc and the end of the confrontation which has been the linchpin of the postwar social and economic order. While supportive of the liberalization and economic reforms from above, socialists should be particularly active in contacting and encouraging the tender shoots of democracy from below and the possibility of developments towards genuine civil societies. To do this extensive contacts, official and unofficial, government and opposition, should be encouraged and expanded between the socialist, peace and labor movements in the west in general, and western Europe in particular, and those in the Soviet alliance. The Soviet leaders should be told amicably but firmly that the degree of contact and friendliness is linked to the continued opening up of these societies and expansion of democratic and individual human rights. Extensive long range credits on very favorable terms should be offered to help the process of modernization of their economy and society. This would of course also help the Western Euro-

pean economies much like the Marshal Plan in the forties helped the US economy.

Notes

Parts of this essay appear in *The End of the Cold War* (University of Minnesota Press: 1990).

This is a minimal bibliography on the crisis of the East European and Soviet systems and does not pretend to be a general description. The crises of the systems are the focus of this short list. A reasonable start, would be with Leon Trotsky, *The Revolution Betrayed* (New York, Pioneer Publishers 1945); Isaac Deutscher's biography of Trotsky, or at least its first two volumes, *The Prophet Armed* and *The Prophet Disarmed* (New York, Oxford University Press 1954.) This could be followed by *The Great Purge Trial*, edited by Robert C.Tucker and Stephen F. Cohen (New York, Grosset and Dunlap 1965.). I would also recommend Paul Sweezy, *Post Revolutionary Society* (New York, Monthly Review Press, 1976.)

A general coverage of the world Communist Movement is found in Fernando Claudin, *The Communist Movement: From the Comintern to the Cominform* (2 vols, New York, Monthly Review Press 1975); Max Schactman *The Bureaucratic Revolution: the Rise of the Stalinist State* (New York, Donald Press 1962) is an important, but hard to find work.

For international affairs two books are good starting points, George Kennan, *Russia and the West under Lenin and Stalin*, Boston, Little Brown and Co. 1960 and *The Domestic Context of Soviet Foreign Policy*, edited by Seweryn Bialer, Boulder, Westview Press 1981.

To this should be added: *Blue Collar Workers in Eastern Europe* edited by Charles Gati and Jan Triska (eds), (London, George Allen and Unwin 1981), and, *Socialism, Politics and Equality* by Walter D.Connor (New York, Columbia University Press, 1979) and *Social Structures of Eastern Europe*, edited by Bernard Lewis Faber (New York, Praeger Publishers 1976) and Mark Rakovski (pseudonym), *Towards and East European Marxism*, New York, (St. Martin's Press: 1978). Of Eastern Europe, there are of course a large number of other deserving books but to make a list is to chose.

1. This is not because I regard these regimes as any variant of socialism but because they have become for the vast majority of people the paradigm of what is wrong with socialism. All basic economic reforms of these systems must have as their essential precondition the destruction of the present stubbornly entrenched privilege which are primarily those of the politocracy and their families and allies.

Any discussion of the crisis of the East European, Soviet and other variants of state socialism must necessarily, begin with the question of the similarities of those political and economic to each other. In other words to their common character, if there is one. I believe that the best way to describe these systems is as *politocracies*, that is *systems in which the political elites, ruling through the single communist party, control the state and the economy and through those the society.*

This is not the place to develop an extensive rationale for my present preference for the term "politocracy" to describe societies diversely known as state socialist or currently existing socialisms or authoritarian socialism. I borrow the term with considerable gratitude from the well know Yugoslav political theorist Svetozar Stojanovic. I think it is superior in explanatory power to the other independent marxist (generally trotskyist influenced) attempts to describe the societies which emerged after the isolation of the Bolshevik revolution and the counter-revolution led by Stalin in 1929/30 created an unprecedented new social and political order.

The terms used among independent Marxists had ranged from degenerated workers' state (early Leon Trotsky) to state capitalism, bureaucratic collectivism etc. My own early preference was for that set of terms which indicate that these were new social formations, radically different from either the previous authoritarian capitalist states or from workers' states. To put as directly as possible, whoever ruled, whatever class was in power it seemed clear to me that it was not the working class. The new political elites having emerged out of the revolutionary socialist tradition continue to use and manipulate, albeit ever more routinely the language and symbols of a common socialist tradition.

Both the realities and phantasies about these systems, which defined themselves and were accepted widely, as some variants of socialism, were something for which some kind of intellectual and above all moral responsibility was laid at the door of socialism itself, as a project and a world view. This is in no small part because a number of Western Marxists or socialists do continue to refer, to this very day, to these societies as socialist, although usually with a modifier such as the euphemism "currently existing socialism" or simply as "state socialism". What I am implying is that these societies have similar class structures and an essentially similar class in power. However I now believe is that politocracies have a wide range of possible political forms with more or less autonomy for independent

organizations and trade unions and more or less political rights and individual liberty. Just like bourgeois societies

2.This is visible in the uncritical acceptance of the ideological defence of the market as the master instrument of economic reform. I am not questioning here the desirability of introducing market principles in the economy as one of the needed measures to leverage the nomenklatura out of economic control. What I am questioning the present love affair which many East European reformers like Kuron in Poland have with the "market" as a synonym for the economic dogmas of Milton Freedman and the social policies of Margaret Thatcher.

3. The gap even more depressing if comparisons are made with the Asian rim "tigers". Even if one argues that all things considered, including the state of the world economy, the economic performance of these regimes is not all that terrible, but merely humdrum, that will not do. The whole point of these regimes was that hey provided very high growth at a certain political price. The price has long been paid.

4. And of course the Communist parties are held responsible for the horrible economic and cultural mess of these societies. As Walesa said on February 6 1989, at the opening of the negotiations for the recognition of Solidarity by the Polish government. "..the country is ruined, but it was not some elves that ruined it, but a system of exercising authority, that detaches citizens from their eights and wastes the fruits of their labor".(quoted in *The New York Times*, Feb 7, 1989.

5. While I do not believe that this claim is taken seriously by either the workers or the elite, it may be taken seriously by younger officers and above all by the conscript soldiers who are themselves most likely blue collar workers. Therefore massive clashes between workers and the forces of order are devoutly to be avoided.

6. That was how Egypt, Serbia, Bulgaria and Romania gradually gained their independence from the Turkish Empire. The problem with this image is that those states gained their full independence gradually to be sure. However at key moments they *also fought* their Turkish masters, usually with foreign military and diplomatic support. That makes Ottomanization at best a very clumsy metaphor.

7. For that matter, the current Soviet advice to their friends throughout the Third World is to make whatever terms with the world market possible. That is, with the "currently existing" world market, controlled by capitalist powers and norms.

This is an obvious massive ideological retreat in the face of the stubborn reality of the failure of the Third World models which had adopted features of the Soviet economic or political model.

8. For that matter, non-working class autonomous social movements are most powerful and effective in those societies which have powerful working class socialist parties and movements and traditions.

Introduction to Altvater/Hoffman

ANDERS STEPHANSON

In the 60s and 70s, there emerged in West Germany (and later Denmark) an extraordinarily rich Marxist moment loosely referred to as the capital logic school. It has largely been ignored in the anglophone countries. *New left Review*, a journal with aspirations of internationalism read worldwide, passed it over in silence. Once, I think in 1977, I reproached them for this; but the response was merely a dismissal of the *Ableitung* tendency as "exceedingly doxological." In this country, it has received similarly scant attention. *New German Critique* could, one might have thought, have found some space among its massive (and often admirable) contributions to *Frankfurteriana* for an assessment: not so. An outside observer may in fact be forgiven these days for thinking (though here *NGC* should be absolved) that the theoretical landscape of the *Bundesrepublik* has been occupied almost entirely during the last decades by Habermas and his epigones. One pernicious result is a rather simplistic image of the French/German divide (an intolerably limited and wrongheaded polarity so far as I am concerned).

As an initial attempt at recuperation, *Social Text* is thus pleased to publish the ensuing retrospective of what became the most salient problematic within the capital logic tendency, namely state derivation. Written by Elmar Altvater and Jürgen Hoffmann, two prominent participants, it is a thematic overview of the state derivation debate against the unfolding background of Bundesrepublik history (in itself now of the utmost importance). It is also a critique, necessarily brief, of the some of the shortcomings and dead ends that inevitably marked this theoretical moment. As such the article needs no further introduction. However, because of its exclusive focus on the state derivation theme, one must mention some other aspects of this self-conscious "movement of Marxist reconstruction." (I steal shamelessly most of the following from my old friend Thomas Lindén).

Capital logic refers to capital as real social development as well as to the categories deployed by Marx in his *Darstellung*. Much of it starts indeed with an attempt to "recover" the latter from the sedimented reworkings ('abridgements') by the Second and Third International. Altvater/Hoffmann mention as immediate sources here (for in the background hovers Hegel as well as, more controversially, the legacy of the Frankfurt School) Roman Rosdolsky, Jindrich Szeleny and Karol Kosik; add to the list Alfred Sohn-Rethel and (interestingly) Paul Mattick. The main centers of the movement, Frankfurt and Berlin, evinced certain differences of emphasis: crudely put, the former was philosophically oriented, the latter

economically so. Among the Frankfurt circle one might single out mention Alfred Schmidt, Oskar Negt (whose seminal work with Alexander Kluge, *The Public Sphere and Experience*, is now about to appear in English), the tragically deceased Hans-Jurgen Krahl, and above all Helmut Reichelt. Reichelt's *Zur Logische Struktur des Kapitalbegriffs bei Karl Marx* (1970), shortly to be explored, I gather, by Fredric Jameson, was of inestimable importance. The Berlin group, among whom figured most outstandingly Altvater and Christel Neüsuss, did more concrete work on problems of the actual accumulation and movement of capital, as well as on state interventionism. For me, the most useful aspect here was undoubtedly the critique of the concepts of monopoly and the putative "stage" of monopoly capitalism; for the result of this critique was to render Lenin's theory of imperialism and much of the orthodox party baggage wholly untenable *from the standpoint of a more pristine Marxism.*

All the the talk of logic might indeed give the impression of excessive doxology; but the beauty of the whole thing, as Linden has argued, is precisely the *combination* of iron logic and revolt/emancipation that we also find in Capital itself. In this day and age of universalizing markets, it is actually more than a little suggestive.

The West German State Derivation Debate: The Relation Betweeen Economy And Politics As A Problem Of Marxist State Theory

ELMAR ALTVATER AND JÜRGEN HOFFMANN

In order to understand the peculiarities of the West German state discussion since the late 1960s, especially the state derivation debate (*Staatsableitungdebatte*), it is necessary to review the historical preconditions of that country's social trajectory.

First, the critical and thereby also marxist tradition, which had been blossoming in the Weimar period, was interrupted by the Nazi terrors and then to boot by the postwar Stalinist vulgarization, so that the more recent marxist discussion found little to connect up with. For decades the Frankfurt School offered the most important theoretical reference point for the maturing critical left — aside from a few isolated scholars who considered themselves to be working within the marxist tradition (Wolfgang Abendroth, Leo Kofler, and Ernest Mandel, the lastnamed having done much for the preservation of marxism in the Federal Republic).

Second, West Germany did not live up to the many leftist predictions of economic collapse and progressive impoverishment. In particular, it did not live up to the prognoses of the Communist Party circles, which adhered closely to the line of the official socialist camp. Instead, West German society experienced an "economic miracle" in the 1950s and 60s. The political development of the Federal Republik into an anticommunist, *authoritarian* democracy under Chancellor Adenauer in the 1950s was thus sustained by a broad consensus. This consensus made possible the marginalization, indeed criminalization, of the left (best expressed in the outlawing of the Communist Party in 1956).

Third, in the course of these events the Social Democrats [SPD] adjusted to the demands of restoration, an adjustment consummated in the famous "Bad Godesberg Turn" of 1959. Yet this adjustment was a thoroughly active one in the sense that they developed a distinctive political project of "domestic reform" coupled with detente in foreign affairs (Brandt's *Ostpolitik*). After a long period of neoliberal economic policy, they put forth what might be called an enlightened Keynesianism, geared towards full employment and redistribution of income for the benefit of the broad masses.

Fourth: These three factors not only had decisive influence on West German social theory (from left to right), but, starting in 1965/1966, also served as the socio-political point of departure and frame of reference for

the *student movement*. The latter, in turn, was to become the nucleus for the renewal of marxist theory. Its experience with a praxis of social change had a decisive effect on the state discussion and, not less importantly, served to focus the general theoretical debate of the left specifically on the *state* itself.

1 The Historical Context of the State Discussion

Fascism ended critical discussion in Germany. From then on, the dialogue among German exiles about the marxist legacy was shaped strongly by the theoretical and political ambience of the countries to which these scholars and politicians were forced to emigrate. This was as much true for the development of "critical theory" by the members of the Frankfurt Institute for Social Research who largely fled to the US after 1933, as it was for the consolidation of so-called revisionist currents within social democracy in exile (heavily influenced by the Swedish and English experiences), as indeed it also was for the elaboration of the theory of state monopoly capitalism (Stamokap) by the Communist Party in exile. In the early years after the founding of the Federal Republic, none of these three theoretical groups was able to achieve significant political power. Furthermore, as the Federal Republic developed and the apolitical euphoria of the economic miracle increased, the social importance of all varieties of marxist theory decreased; irrespective of quality, they could thus be characterized as unscientific, ideological, even "inimical to the constitution."

This process, which theoretical "loners" like Abendroth, Mandel and the returning members of the Frankfurt Institute were unable to prevent, can be traced in part to the political eradication of the workers' movement under fascism. Equally important, however, was the "success" of rejuvenated West German capitalism and the formation of a new "basic consensus" in the population (and, correspondingly, in science [*Wissenschaft*]), due essentially to the stability of capitalism (the "economic miracle") and the anticommunism of the cold war. A discussion of marxist theory had no place in this social context: its diagnosis and prognosis seemed to be refuted as much by the actual success of capitalism as by the unconvincing example of communism in the GDR. And unless such a development accorded with the premises of the position at the time — as in the case of the Frankfurt School, whose socio-political pessimism was confirmed rather by the actual "Americanization" of West German society — there remained only a defense along theoretical lines. This took the form of an insistence on democratic principle, as constitutionally sanctioned, and it sought by means of resistance against authoritarianism to preserve at least the option of social emancipation. (This is particularly clear in Abendroth's work in the 1950s and 60s; cf. Abendroth 1968.)

The development of West German democracy into an authoritarian state and social system under Adenauer and his Christian Democratic successor was impossible to overlook. This proccess was sustained by the de facto survival, even restoration, of pre-1945 authoritarian structures (including continuities in personnel from Nazism). It was this authoritarian state — which had lost or integrated its opposition through the Great Coalition between the SPD and the Christian Democrats in 1966 — rather than social and economic conditions that became the impetus for critical currents in science, and, above all, for the revolt of intellectuals in the latter half of the 1960s. The revolt was aimed against the "restructuring" (*"Formierung"*) of society through the Great Coalition, against the emergency laws instituted with the its help, and against the corporatist integration of the unions in the triangular "Concerted Action" between capital, labor and state. Theoretically, this "new critique" was based on the Frankfurt School's analyses of the "authoritarian state of late capitalism" (Adorno, Horkheimer, Marcuse) and on concrete analyses of the "transformation of democracy" (Agnoli 1967). (It was no accident that the theoretical journal of the Socialist Students' Association [SDS] was named "The New Critique").

With the forming of a new government of social democrats and liberals in 1969, the state necessarily became a more central topic of leftist discussion. The regime euphorically proclaimed a program of regulation of economic and sociopolitical development, with the aim of full employment and fairer distribution of wealth. Furthermore, under the slogan, "Dare for more democracy," (*Mehr Demokratie wagen*, Brandt 1969), it took seriously the student movement's basic socio-political demands, and promised to implement them (for example, in education, health and criminal law, as well as with regard to the protection of minorities). Suddenly, the possibility of the state reforming society in the sense of social emancipation seemed very great, a perspective which gripped many parts of the student movement. In the years immediately after 1969, social-democratic reform policy was able to produce a broad consensus which extended from the progressive middle class through the workers to the previously oppositional critical intelligentsia. The political system seemed to enjoy a relatively autonomous capacity to regulate the capitalist economy in order to produce a more just social order. Economic crises seemed finally relegated to the past; anticyclical management of effective demand was to transform "growth cycles" into balanced growth with full employment and price stability. These ideas were not only present in mass consciousness, in the rhetoric of the social democrats and the unions, and in the self-conception of the political class; they were also *theoretically* formulated within political crisis theory (cf. the reader by Jänicke, [1973]), most importantly by Jürgen Habermas [1973] and Claus Offe [1972], who thus served as a challenge to marxian and marxist theory.

This whole framework must be taken into account when one assesses the significance of the state derivation debate.

2 Approaches to the Reconstruction of the Critique of Political Economy

Beginning in the late 1960s, theoretical circles coalesced around the program of the "Reconstruction of the Critique of Political Economy." Through systematic readings of Marx's *Capital*, they attempted to create a theoretical basis for a critique of both the capitalist mode of production and the (democratic) capitalist state. Such theories had, of course, been formulated before. As a rule, however, they remained theoretical reconstructions, and could not claim any new conceptual foundations. Just as the student movement self-consciously, indeed arrogantly, invented new forms of political practice and contemptuously rejected "traditional politics," it also sought a new, original, and provocative theoretical approach to contemporary political questions. In this project, the theory of the state was, so to speak, the first locus for of the resumption and application of Marx's method of conceptual reconstruction of a social totality. The methodological blueprint for the realization of this was now also developed: in Rosdolsky's opus magnum on the genesis of Marx's *Capital*, in Szeleny's delineation of the scientific logic of *Capital*, in Karel Kosik's *Dialectic of the Concrete*, and so on.

After 1970, along with the project of conceptually reconstructing the reality of bourgeois society, the marxist state debate set itself a dual task: to formulate theoretically grounded and politically meaningful alternatives to the extreme left's concept of the state ("The [fascistic] state leaves no room for social progress!"), as well as to the social-democratic illusions about the welfare state ("The state under SPD tames the monster of the capitalist economy!"). Ultimately, the determining factor in both positions was an incorrect understanding of the relation between economy and politics in bourgeois society — an understanding based on the long tradition of the "revisionist separation" of these two areas in the Second and Third International.

The contribution by Wolfgang Müller and Christel Neusüss* which in 1970 opened up the state debate bore the programmatic title, "The Welfare State Illusion (*Sozialstaatsillusion*) and the Contradiction between Wage Labor and Capital." The essay attempted to formulate a theoretically stringent critique of what was called revisionist understandings of the state. The two authors evaluated diverse, indeed contrary positions such as the social-democratic theory of state and capitalism in the Weimar Republic; the theory of state monopoly capitalism; and the political crisis theory of Habermas and Offe. They found all these theories trapped in welfare state illusions and thus revisionist. The state in bourgeois society, they argued, does not have the ability (*Handlungskompetenz*) to avoid crisis tendencies, or even to channel these into systemically safe areas by the use of successful intervention in the social process. The state, on the

contrary, is doubly limited: as an *interventionist state*, it is forced to respect the conditions of capital accumulation; as a *welfare state* (*Sozialstaat*), it will implement measures to redistribute income and wealth in the interests of the working class, even against the resistance of individual capital (measures "forced upon it" through class confrontations), but that will only create new general conditions for the production of surplus value, along with new accumulation possibilities. Thus, if the state attempts to limit the conditions of surplus value production (for instance through social policy), it immiedately creates new ones. The state's latitude to act is therefore substantially less than the "revisionists" assume. Given this insight, conspiracy theories or investigations of the personal influence of capital and capitalists on politics (*Politik*), as exemplified by propagandistic versions of the state monopoly capitalism literature in the GDR, or by Miliband's (1969) *The State in Capitalist Society*, are theoretically untenable and politically problematic.

Müller and Neusüss refer to Marx's discussion of the process of capitalist reproduction in part three of *Capital* II for evidence of the limits to redistribution and to his account of the introduction of the ten-hour day in the eighth chapter of *Capital* I for proof of what Bernhard Blanke would later (1978) describe as the "functional ambivalence of reformism." The shorter workday merely limits the production of absolute surplus value by limiting extensive prolongation of labor time. Simultaneously, however, political and economic pressure to produce the technological and labor-organizational foundations for production of relative surplus value increases. The welfare state remains subject, therefore, to the conditions of surplus value production even when it attempts to bring about its modification. The result, then, is only a thrust toward modernization, which ultimately benefits capital in the competition between nation states, and which guarantees by means of institutional mechanisms the "passive integration" of the working class. "Transformism," as Gramsci called it, would be impossible without the institutional system of the welfare state.

In this approach, as in other contributions to the derivation debate, the crux remains the structural limits of state activity (beyond the level of personal influence). These are determined by the laws of capital reproduction. Each of the different approaches within the debate examines Marx's depiction of the form and content of capitalist reproduction in order theoretically to reconstruct the *form* of the bourgeois state in precisely specifiable derivational steps. The form and function of the state is hence drawn from the "development of the general concept of capital." With explicit reference to the "system of the critique of political economy," the state derivation debate accorded a central role to the question of the form of the state. This approach was in no way new, but it had been buried by state theorizations within legal theory (*Staatsrechtslehre*), within the

critical theory of the Frankfurt School and within the marxist state definitions coming out of Lenin's *State and Revolution*.

Legal scholars essentially understand the state in terms of its boundaries (*Abgrenzung*), that is, its "sovereignty" from or with respect to society. In the configuration of the bourgeois constitutional state, which Althusser called a "legal illusion," the state limits itself and thus opens up to the private sector a space free of the state in which it is possible contractually to pursue economic affairs. However, friction arises when the "modern,","socio-industrial" state (Forsthoff, 1971) develops into a social constitutional state, which no longer merely defines the rules of the game with general laws and assumes the role of arbiter in disputes, but also intervenes purposively in society. The *welfare state* and the *constitutional state* were stylized into antitheses which, in the 1950s, formed the dividing line between progressive, socially oriented (Abendroth) and conservative positions (e.g. Forsthoff and Werner Weber). Entirely new foundations arose for the legitimation of the state. The "state in modern industrial society," wrote Forsthoff (1971, p. 56) does not require "spiritual self-representation" (*geistigen Selbstdarstellung*) and "consequently, obedience to it cannot be understood as an act of ethical fulfillment of duty,", as would follow from Hegel's idea of the ethical state.

In this view, a rational orientation towards industrial society's mode of functioning defines the "mentality in state and society" (Forsthoff, 1971, p. 57). This again is based on the stability of industrial society. "But all risks of industrial society are immediate and at the same time state risks. Thus, the state's susceptibility to crisis has taken on new dimensions" (ibid.). Moreover, the state's strategy of averting crises, along with the development of a related capacity to intervene, is in the state's *self-interest* as an institution. Here, Forsthoff uses an argument which is also found — in a different context, of course — in the work of Marcuse and other representatives of the Frankfurt School, as well as in Habermas's essay "Technology and Science as Ideology" (1968).

Followers of the Frankfurt School now reformulate this way of thinking. In "late capitalism," the state is itself immersed in the relations of production and dissolves extensively with its political steering mechanisms (*Medien der politischen Steuerung*) the exchange system of the market. Thus, new problems arise for the legitimation of bourgeois rule, especially in the exercise of state power, as well as in the relationship between the public and private.

This line of thought led Horkheimer to postulate the inevitability of the authoritarian state, thus articulating fears of the 1930s which had already been theoretically founded during the Weimar Republic by Hermann Heller and Otto Kirchheimer, among others. For Offe and Habermas, however, the late capitalist politicization of all spheres of life shifts the problem of legitimation onto the political-administrative system, which

must use its management resources to stabilize the economy by avoiding crises, guarantee military security, implement foreign policy and organize mass loyalty. Forsthoff speaks in this context of the "performance state" (*Leistungsstaat*) in the certainty that all state duties will be executed. For Offe and Habermas, on the other hand, systemic contradictions can only precipitate crises in the form *political crises*. Proceeding from the thesis that the modern interventionist state can fundamentally regulate economic crises, and that, given the "imperative to avert crises" (Offe), the state actually is able to do this, they conclude that the suppressed possibility of economic crisis would translate into a political crisis — essentially a legitimation crisis. However, the "self-interest of the state" (Offe, 1975) leads the political system to bring about social reforms precisely to the extent that these strengthen the conditions upon which its existence is based. According to Habermas, the decisive task is to deal with "minor" crises in the economic system through the mobilization of "self-adaptive mechanisms," in order to prevent "major" crises which would threaten the existence of society.

As Esser (1975) remarks, the theory of the state thus becomes a theory of political crisis. The presupposition is always that capitalist society has undergone a transformation process — projected in stage-theory manner (and not sufficiently grounded by Offe or Habermas): from *competitive capitalism*, in which legitimacy can be generated through the market's exchange network, to "late capitalism" or the *monopoly stage of capitalism*, which entails extreme politicization of all areas of the system- and lifeworld as a result of the "state-permeated" (*durchstaatlichten*, Karl Renner, 1917) dissolution of the conduits of exchange. Legitimacy is no longer a source of stability generated as a quasi by-product of market processes. Increasingly, it must be produced and reproduced politically by state action.

In the German discussion, these theses were addressed on two levels: *First*, what has been called the "new quality" of monopolies was criticized as theoretically insufficient, since Marx did not clearly distinguish the concept of monopoly from the concept of "capital in general." (The state derivation debate in Germany opened up problems similar to those dealt with by the Japanese Uno school, although neither side was aware of the work of the other [c.f. Sekine, 1978; *actuel Marx* no. 2, 1987]). The changes in social form which have doubtless occurred were mostly phenotypically related to changes in attributes, but there was no theoretically satisfying analysis of their immanent dialectic.

Second, because of this, the need for a different concept of the state could no more be explained by the transition to late, or monopoly capitalism than could the politicization of the legitimation problem. This politicization undeniably exists; however, it must be grounded in something other than that proposed by critical theory and political crisis theory.

Participants in the state derivation debate therefore tried to connect the politicization to the *general* structural principles of capitalist reproduction. Essentially, it was a matter of defining the relation between the *form* of the state in bourgeois society and the *content*, which expresses itself in the specific form of state.

However, a discussion of social development is now in order. Only a dogmatic few would go to the extreme of reducing the theory of the state to its formal aspect. The monopoly concept does not adequately characterize phases of social development. Social development can produce changes in form, in other words *transformations*. However, these affect the total system of social regulation and not only the external relation of economy and state; social development affects the labor and valorization processes as well as the total market. It would therefore be just as unaccceptable to ignore social structures and development as it would be to assume that the form taken by the state is historically invariant.

3 Approaches to the Theory of the State in the "Derivation Debate."

Rather than giving a chronological account of the contributions to the debate, it seems preferable to break them down systematically. The question of the general form of the bourgeois state refers to the material-value contradiction in the *societalization* process, or the form-content mediation, the dynamic of which produces the specific separation of an instance which must constitute itself beyond the exchange network (Sauer, 1978). This raises Pashukanis's "classical question" of 1929 (reprinted 1966, p. 119f.): "Why does class domination not remain that which it is, i.e. the effective subjugation of one part of the population by the other? Why does it assume the form of official state domination, or — in other words — why is the apparatus of state force not created as the private apparatus of the ruling class, why does it split off from the latter, and assume the form of an impersonal apparatus of public power, detached from society?" This question concerns what Marx in *The German Ideology* called the doubling of society into society and state, the reasons for that *double structure* (the double character of the commodity, and labor) which marks bourgeois society and renders economy and politics autonomous from one another, but autonomous as moments of a *contradictory unity*, not as subsystems of a total social system with external relations.

The Form of Exchange and Legal Form

In the second chapter of *Capital* I, Marx asked: How can it be ensured that the commodities to be exchanged can be brought to the market at all, and how can the "owner of the commodity," make the greatest possible profit, thus taking advantage of the other, while at the same time the principle of *equivalent exchange is formally guaranteed* (*das Prinzip des Äquivalententausches*)? The answer: There is a *legal relation*, formed between the subjects of exchange, which corresponds to the economic principle

of equivalence. It can be nothing but a legal relation, since the only thing that brings together the subjects of exchange is the *interest* in exchanging their own commodities for other commodities which have use value for them. *Relations of exchange* duplicate themselves in *contractual relations*; legal relations arise from economic relations, and the former must be "set" and above all, monitored. There must be sanctions against violating legal relations. This authority (*Gewalt*), again, cannot lie with those who carry out the exchange, since their interest is *onesided*. It must be delegated, so to speak, to a *neutral* authority, or usurped by authority, insofar as one already exists

The assumption that the sanctioning authority can be delegated is fundamental to the early bourgeois contract theorists, and is most clearly discussed by Jean-Jacques Rousseau. The thesis of usurpation is explicit or implicit in those approaches which understand the emergence of the bourgeois political system as a result of the transformation of the feudal state in Europe. (Gerstenberger, 1973, stresses this point, but see also Perry Anderson, 1975.) In this interpretation, therefore, the state to be "derived" has already long existed. However, its form changes with the process of social transformation. Is the state then to be regarded merely as an institution which sets the rules of the game and monitors adherence to them, as in current neoliberal theories?

Property and Appropriation:

Blanke, Jürgens and Kastendiek (1975), in perhaps their most systematic contribution to the derivation debate, make clear that among all the laws the state makes and guarantees one is most prominent: that of *property rights*. As MacPherson (1973) has shown, the early bourgeois theorists, Hobbes and above all Locke, understood this law in essentially formal terms. Marx was the first to clarify the connection between property and *appropriation* (cf. as early evidence, the letter to Annenkow of 12/28/1846 in MEGA II/2, p. 74). In doing so, he made an extraordinarily important suggestion for the analysis of the state: the institution which provides legal guarantees ensures property. But what follows for this institution, when on the basis of the capitalist law of appropriation, classes of property owners arise, namely those who have at their disposal property as means of production and those who can call nothing their property but their own labor power? And, secondly, what follows when appropriation cannot be politically guaranteed from property, since the process of appropriation is economically and therefore cyclically mediated and subject to structural long-term changes — according to what Marx called the "fundamental law of the capitalist mode of production," "the law of the falling rate of profit?"

Crucial to answering this is the fact that property rights are always rights of exclusion; that is, property rights require the power to exclude all those who are not entitled to particular private property. Thus, by necessity, not only do classes of property owners and nonowners arise

from property, but so do *power structures* and *power relations* (*Gewaltverhältnisse*), and these become *political* power relations when they are neutralised or separated from specific property. Here again Pashukanis's "classical" question is relevant: why, instead of remaining simple, brutal and open class power, do these power relations become — to use Weber's terms — legitimate relations, building on the consensus of all, property owner and nonowner alike?

Surface and "Revenue Sources:"

Without going into more detail about the complicated problem of legitimation, Sybille von Flatow and Freerk Huisken (1973) attempted to answer this question in the context of the derivation debate. Their argument was entirely based on the *mystification complex* described by Marx in *Capital*: On the "surface" of the capital-relation, the class structures which result from property and appropriation, from the opposition of wage labor and capital, are blurred, mystified by the forms of socialization (exchange of commodities, monetary mediation, wage form, etc.), reified as fetishes, so that now all unequals *appear* as equals. Moreover, as citizens of the state, they are even deemed materially equal. Up to this point, Flatow and Huisken merely paraphrase Marx's reflections on the relation between circulation and production (e.g. in *Capital* I, chapter 4) or on the relation between "bourgeois" and "citoyen" (e.g. in the "The Jewish Question" from 1844).

However, Flatow and Huisken go further in that they account for the equality of social individuals as citizens through their qualitative equality as owners of revenue sources (referring here to Marx's statements about the "trinitarian formula" in *Capital*, III, part 6). The interest of all "owners of revenue sources" is that their source is as productive as possible, and that it continues to be so. This unity of interests crosses class boundaries and is independent of the *quantitative* extent of the revenue source (wealth) and of the revenue (income), as well as its function in the capitalist reproduction process (in the functional distribution of wage, profit, interest). It is this unity which makes it possible to constitute members of opposed classes as *citizens*, and as nations (*Volk*).

In contrast to discursive or populist theories of the state, to be addressed below, this approach presupposes a systematic connection between the *mode of production* (structured by the class oppositions of capital and labor) and *social formations* (as the terrain for civic action). This connection between "deep structure" and "surface" is made through Marx's category of *mystification*, by which is grasped the specific inversion, fetishes. These constitute not only "false consciousness" in Lukács's sense, but also preshape everyday experience and circumscribe the frame of action in which individuals can operate in bourgeois society. They are "false reality," i.e. the context of alienation. Thus, the qualitative equality of citizens as owners of revenue sources is not merely a "false represen-

tation" that could perhaps be corrected by enlightenment, but a reality and experience of the life process which is primarily responsible for the stability of bourgeois society. Consequently, the existence of capitalists and proletarians as citizens with equal rights is no mere illusion. It is materially grounded.

Hence, the *possibility* of the bourgeois state (and not just its necessity) is a product of this surface equality of interests. The state cannot, accordingly, be "derived" from the contradictions of interests of the core or "essence" of society. This Flatow/Huisken position, however logical, has been criticized in many respects. Gerstenberger (1973) and Reichelt (1974) have rightly pointed out that historical developments have no place in the scheme. "Surface and state" (Arbeitskonferenze 1974) become the vertices of a marxist theory of state; the structuration of both by the fundamental relations of production and their contradictory development is explicitly excluded from the analysis. Furthermore, the revenues of revenue source owners are unequally affected by the movement of capital, and this in turn generates social conflicts which are necessarily omitted from Flatow's and Huisken's insulated consideration of "surface and state." Finally, as other critics have pointed out, they their approach is based on a theory of social harmony and so could also provide the foundation for a theory of pluralism.

Class Relations and Capital Reproduction:

Yet we come back to the question posed above: what are the consequences of the capitalist form of appropriation (emanating from property rights) for political relations and their institutionalized forms? A first important point is that appropriation by the owner of the means of production determines the *exploitation* of those who do not own the means of production (who, however, own the commodity of labor power). The form of exploitation as surplus value production gives rise to opposing interests, for instance with regard to the length of the work day, an example taken up by Müller and Neusüss in the aforementioned article and thus already discussed. Here it is enough to note that in this approach, the state is not considered the agent of collective interests, as in Flatow and Huisken's work, but rather as an institution which regulates conflicts. Bernhard Blanke (1978) extends this idea — without explicit reference to Müller and Neusüss — to argue that the state is no longer to be seen as a black box functioning according to social requirements of regulation. With, rather, the experience of social democracy and welfare state in mind, the "entry of the masses into the state" is considered.

Here, there is a link to the French discussion: the state with its multiplicity of institutions is understood as "a field of class conflicts," (Poulantzas 1978). For if "the" state, forced by social struggles, intervenes on behalf of those who depend on wages (for example, by limiting

the work day or, as the welfare state does, by compensating for the negative consequences of the population's subjugation under the factory system), then it is only logical for working-class organizations to "supervise" how the adopted reforms are complied with. Since the welfare state, as it develops, assumes institutional forms (parastate institutions such as social insurance, labor exchange, public infrastructure arrangements, etc.), it is obvious that working-class organizations "enter into" these arrangements and themselves undertake the implementation of reforms within the systemic possibilities. In this way, class conflict is "institutionalized," by, among other things, the accomplishments of the welfare state and the corresponding rights of participation of class and mass organizations. The *form* of the state is transformed through the *contents* of social conflicts and their dynamic. Moreover, on the very basis of these processes, the social conditions which frame appropriation, and hence exploitation, change. Marx analyzed the shortening of the work day as the historical occasion for the general transition from absolute to relative surplus value production; that is, the political reaction to the economic mechanism of appropriation provokes a restructuring of economy and politics and their relation to each other. The result is the "functional ambivalence of reformism" emphasized by Blanke (1978). This view (by contrast to Flatow's and Huisken's) takes into account the social structure of conflict and is open to analysis of historical tendencies.

The State and "General Conditions of Production"

Given the general functional requirement of capital valorization, the formation of the state as a separate agency may also be explained by the "general conditions of production," which cannot be generated by individual capital but necessitates an "ideal collective capitalist" (*ideellen Gesamtkapitalisten*")," to use Engels's phrase from *Anti-Dühring*. Projekt Klassenanalyse (1973) advocated this approach in the typically polemic style of the time. The result was not particularly exciting: because the conditions of production (e.g. in the infrastructure or the overall legal framework) are general, they cannot be perceived by individuals, by individual capital, but only by an institution "separated" for general tasks, namely, the state. Here, the state is no longer *derived* by formal analysis, but tautologically *defined* in a kind of quid pro quo manner.

More ambitious, however, was Dieter Läpple's version, (1973), which likewise used the "general conditions of production" to account for the necessity of the state as a separate institution alongside and outside of society. Referring to the few remarks on these conditions in *Grundrisse* (1953, p. 430, and also in Capital II), he manages to develop categorically the specific "general conditions of production in capitalism" as distinct from the "asiatic mode of production" and simultaneously, if sketchily, to relate historical-empirical investigations to the derivation. While Flatow

and Huisken tried to account for the *possibility* of the state, here the central issue is the *necessity* of the state, which is due to deficiencies in the societalization capacities of the capitalist mode of production. The state is functionally necessary in order to maintain the capitalist process of reproduction, that is, the system of capital valorization. The system becomes differentiated in response to functional gaps which arise during the development process. Here, however, formal analysis must leave off in favor of functional analysis.

Accumulation and the Falling Rate of Profit:

At this point in the derivation debate, the next step is to deal explicitly with the historical tendency of capital valorization, as it is expressed in what Marx called the "most important law of the capitalist mode of production," that is, *the fall of the average rate of profit*. This law is extraordinarily important for the relation between economy and politics, since the rights to property and appropriation can be *politically* guaranteed and still lose *economic* meaning, if capital valorization no longer succeeds as a result of the fall of the rate of profit. Politics no longer primarily circumscribes the foundations of the economic order, but rather intervenes in economic processes. The transition from "the politics of order" to "the politics of process" — the liberal Fall of Man — is inscribed in the contradictoriness of the accumulation mechanism. Here is manifested the contradiction inherent in private property as *capital* between the state's formal guarantee of its existence and the economic tendencies of profit to erode during the accumulation process. Two things follow: *on the one hand*, in the course of accumulation, limits are set on state guarantees and political efforts at regulation; and *on the other hand*, the political system must develop adaptive mechanisms so that it is capable of intervening politically on a repeated basis to help capital valorization along. For reasons embedded in the dynamic of capital accumulation, the state becomes the *active economic factor* in the process of reproduction.

Altvater (1972) proposed a state derivation based on "accumulation theory." He accounted for the necessity of the state in terms of the deficiencies of the structure of capital reproduction, as expressed in the tendency of the profit rate to fall: the state must take over or organize all those processes of production (in the form of state enterprise or public services) which are indispensible because of the material context of reproduction (in other words, the use-value aspect of the process of production), but which cannot be produced under conditions of individual calculation of capital valorization , since they either are unprofitable or would become unprofitable with the falling rate of profit.

Here, in contrast to the tautological argument of Projekt Klassenanalyse, the concept of "general conditions of production" acquires historical substance: it concerns aspects of the social process of reproduction which are materially necessary but unprofitable to produce

privately. Insofar as the state now manages the unprofitable sectors of the social reproduction process itself, it contributes to retarding the fall of the rate of profit of private capital or even to compensating for it in crises by a policy of "socialization of losses."

The "accumulation theory approach" was further developed by Altvater, Hoffmann, Schöller and Semmler (1974, 1979) in the context of a historical analysis of the tendencies of capital accumulation in West Germany. The basic assumption was most clearly expressed in Blanke's (1977) and Hoffmann's (1977) concept of the "adjustment of politics to the economy." Politics may be relatively autonomous with regard to the economy and its contradictory tendencies of development. However, ultimately the contradictions and crises of the economic system are transposed into the political sphere and provoke adaptive processes, "adjustments" (*Anpassungsbewegungen*), that is, institutional transformations.

In political crisis theory, it is assumed that the shifting of economic crisis tendencies into the political system indicates that the state's interventionist strategy for avoiding crises has *succeeded*, and that in any case, with the "end" of economic crisis in the Keynesian state, the crisis would occur as a potentially overwhelming crisis of legitimation. In the "accumulation theory approach," however, the Keynesian way of avoiding crises is viewed much more skeptically (for evidence from prosperous times, see Altvater [1970], Hoffmann and Semmler [1972]). As Blanke, Jürgens and Kastendiek (1974) explain, the state's potential to act does not only seem restricted by the *systemic limit* (the guarantee of property and capitalist appropriation); they are determined beforehand by the "*activity limit*" of the state in any given society, which is marked by class and power structures historically specific to it. These cannot be defined independently of the development of the economy.

Naturally, it must be taken into account that a "merely economic" crisis, in Habermas's sense, is a "minor" crisis, which does not raise any insoluble problems for the hegemonic system. Only as a political crisis (Berger [1981] talks here about "interferences" between economy and politics) does it endanger the existence of the system, because the foundations of the consensus, and thereby the loyalty of citizens can be destroyed. But this self-evident statement reveals nothing about the economic contradictions that can crystalize into structural crises with the falling rate of profit. Therefore, authors oriented towards "accumulation theory" put forth analyses of the development of the profit rate, which they interpreted as a "synthetic indicator" of economic and social contradictions. These investigations were to provide greater historical precision in evaluating the structure and dynamic of social crises and their consequences for the necessary adjustments of the political system.

Form and Functions of the State:

In this approach, certain tasks or functions are assigned to the state (or more generally, the political system) within the social valorization context (*Verwertungszusammenhangs*). Thus, a step — possibly premature — towards *functional* analysis is taken before the analysis of form is entirely completed. A series of authors have criticised Altvater's work for this (Flatow and Huisken; Gerstenberger; Holloway and Picciotto; Blanke, Jürgens and Kastendiek).

Four basic functions of the state are distinguished: *first*, foundation of general conditions of production (i.e infrastructure); *second*, establishment of general legal norms both for members of society and for the interventions of the state itself; *third* , regulation of the conflict between wage labor and capital not only by law but also through the institution of the "repressive state apparatus;" *fourth*, finally, guarantee of the movement of the total national capital outwards into world market competition, including foreign and military policy (Altvater, 1972, p. 9ff).

Against the critics of functional analysis, it may be observed from the present perspective that form and function naturally have an inner connection: if, with Wolfgang Müller (1977, p. 27), the *form* can be understood as the "result and disguise of a previous process generated by an initial contradiction," then the *functions* are more precise determinations of the form. This can be argued in analogy with Marx's analysis of money, where the derivation of the form of money from the commodity (*Capital* I, ch 1) leads to the more precise determination of this form through its acquired functions (ch 3). State functions can be distinguished through specific *institutions* which form historically as *the state apparatus*. They intervene in ways which correspond to their functions in the system of reproduction (*Reproduktionszusammenhang*) with specific interventional media (*Eingriffsmedien*), especially the media of law and money (see Blanke, Jürgens, Kastendiek 1974). The form is defined only when the functions, institutions and media of the state specific to society are clearly established. Only then is it clear why a specific *content* takes on the given *form*, and why, conversely, the bourgeois form of the state — structure and movement of bourgeois society — is adequate to the content. This is the only way to account for the "structure of doubling" of bourgeois society into society and state which has been addressed so many times, and which is implicitly or explicitly at the root of all state derivation approaches.

The State as Field of Class Relations

Joachim Hirsch raised, in several contributions (1973, 1976, 1977), initially within the standard derivation framework (economy and exchange, law and politics, the state as guarantor [*Garantieeinsatz*]), the issues of the historical tendency of the falling rate of profit and capitalism's consequent susceptibil-

ity to crisis. In contrast to Altvater, Hirsch (and a research group from Frankfurt [von Auw, von Braunmühl, von Cappelleveen, Engelhardt, Füchtner, Gloede, Hirsch, Köhler, Küchler, Mayer, Wilker, Wolf, 1976]) interpreted the falling rate of profit as the result of *class struggles*. With this assessment, he distanced himself from the economistic interpretations often found in the marxist tradition.

What consequences does the falling rate of profit have for the relation between economy and politics and specifically for the state? Through the capital-relation (*Kapitalverhältnis*), Hirsch assigns three basic functions to the state, namely: *first*, guaranteeing the capital-relation and the general conditions of production; *second*, the administrative redistribution of revenue and the control of circulation; and *third*, the development of the forces of production (Hirsch, 1973, p. 235), a topic he had considered previously (1970). The historical tendency for state functions to increase results from disturbances in the execution of political-administrative functions, disturbances inevitably linked to crises around the falling rate of profit. Thus, the political-administrative system differentiates according to the requirements of economic functions.

Up to this point, aside from his argument about the tendency for the rate of profit to fall, both systems theorists and proponents of state monopoly capitalism theory could agree with Hirsch. However, he enriches his approach in a way which will become significant for his later analyses: since the falling rate of profit is a result of class struggles, the state can only counteract this tendency by reorganizing the social conditions of reproduction, and by doing so on a particularly fundamental level during structural crises of society (Hirsch, 1973, p. 224ff.). Initially, Hirsch only defines the reorganization process in general terms, referring to tendencies for monopolization, capital's expansion of the world market and the acceleration of scientific-technical progress. Later, this point is discussed in more detail with the formulation that the theory of the state can only be developed as a theory of the "shifting of class struggles" (von Auw *et al.*, 1976, p. 128). Referring explicitly to Gramsci, Althusser and, above all, Poulantzas, Hirsch also defines the state as the "field of class relations" (Hirsch, 1976, p. 107). Given the "special nature of class relations," (Hirsch, 1976, p. 115) Hirsch, with Althusser, distinguishes repressive and ideological state apparatuses, but then adds the category of "mass-integrational" apparatuses (*massenintegrativen" Apparate*). Whereas in Gramsci," the *societá politica* — parallelling the repressive apparatus of state — and the *societá civile* — corresponding to the ideological apparatuses — are understood as relations which are irreducible to "apparatuses" since they also include immaterial institutions, in Althusser and then in Hirsch, the concept of "apparatuses" designates the "institutional structure of the apparatus of bourgeois domination" (Hirsch, 1976, p. 115).

Summary

In spite of isolated references, the "derivation approach" is linked neither to the Gramscian tradition which has become important in Italy (and in the Romance countries generally), nor — aside from a few exceptions — are there references to the works of Althusser and Poulantzas, who are widely read in Anglo-Saxon circles. Paradoxically — while the work never became more than nominally known in other countries and theoretical traditions — the very narrowness of the West German state derivation debate has been viewed as productive. Holloway and Picciotto (1978) refer to this in their introduction to the English version of the seminal text (Müller and Neusüss) of the debate (an article frequently abbreviated to the point of distortion). Given certain "inadequacies" in the theory of the state in Great Britain, they wish to "underline the advances which [they] feel the German discussion has made in the analysis of the state" (p. 14). For them, the essential contribution of the derivation debate was to thematize the problem of the form of the state, before either empirically investigating power structures (Miliband) or engaging in ultimately fruitless debates about the primacy of economics or politics. For "the distinction between the two tendencies (politicism versus economism [E.A./J.H.])... depends not on the starting point of the analysis but on the conception of the social totality which underlies the analysis." (Holloway and Picciotto, 1978, p. 10).

Beyond all the divergences and polemics, there was never any disagreement in the derivation debate that the issue was not the primacy of politics or economy, or of state or society, but rather how to grasp their *separation* in bourgeois society in terms of Marx's idea of capital. To this extent, Laclau's (1981, p. 37) statement that the problem of the state in the "capital logic school" is located within an "economic frame of reference" which takes "capital" as the starting point of the derivation, would only be correct if it could be shown that capital is understood in an *economistically abridged* way. This, naturally, would be hard to do. Within the derivation debate, there was certainly a consensus that *capital* was understood as a *social relation* and not as an "*automatic economic subject*." But the specifics of this theoretical construct were a sensitive point, a subject for different approaches and strident controversies.

Beyond the State Derivation Debate

Hirsch has consistently pursued the problems he formulated in his approach but many other participants in the discussion distanced themselves from it long ago and do not wish to be reminded of past contributions. Comments about the reorganizing or restructuring of the relation between economy and politics in crises, as a result of the falling rate of profit, struck the opening notes for later investigations of the system of capitalist regulation from the perspective of the theory of stages. The "*Modell Deutschland*" analyses (cf. Hirsch and Roth, 1980) have taken up the concept of "*Fordism*," used by

Aglietta (1979) in connection with Gramsci, to understand the West German state's capacity to reorganize. Hirsch could build on his approach in another respect as well: in describing unions, associations and parties as "mass-integrational apparatuses," as components of the system for securing bourgeois hegemony ("security state," Hirsch 1981), he articulated a social process which was to become widely known as "corporatism" in critical social science towards end of the 1970s, though without explicit reference to the rest of his conceptual system. This is not surprising, since the concept of corporatism is *descriptive* and cannot be used analytically, even in refined approaches, while Hirsch's conceptual system, though only capable of describing social power structures systematically, remains entirely within the tradition of the state derivation debate which sought to move beyond historical-empirical investigation to a categorical definition of *form*. As Heide Gerstenberger comments, summarizing the state derivation debate: "It will not be possible to progress from historical description to historical analysis without fundamentally reflecting on the theoretical categories to be applied" (Gerstenberger, 1977, p. 21).

However, Hirsch's transition from the conceptual reconstruction of the state in bourgeois society to the analysis of tendencies of social and political structures which determine the profit rate could be the *bridge* that connects conceptual analysis and historical investigation. It remains to be seen whether this bridge does not lead back to the point where the discussion of the state had begun, namely to an analysis which conceives of an authoritarian state along the lines of a theory of apparatuses or elites, without any of the complexity and contradiction so painstakingly outlined (cf. Hirsch, 1983).

Blanke, Jürgens and Kastendiek (1975) and Hoffmann (1977) indicate another possibility. They attempt to concretize categories in order to analyse the structure and functions of the political system in developed capitalism. *Without* having to fall back on the theory of the apparatus, they see the conflicts and contradictions in the process of accumulation in developed capitalism as mediated by the political system.

In retrospect, the West German discussion of the form and function of the state, of the relation between politics and economy in bourgeois society — the state derivation discussion — has not only been circumscribed, but rejected. Critics have interpreted the concept of "derivation" as though the participants in this discussion were only concerned with deriving the complex reality of modern bourgeois society from the concept of capital. Many contributions to the derivation debate do support this implicit accusation of idealism, of seeking to reconstruct the material world from the concept. However, this criticism misses the purpose of the analysis of the form and function of the bourgeois state. The debate was an attempt to reconstruct conceptually the chaotic ensemble of social relations, including the complex connections between politics and econ-

omy that surface in bourgeois society as an organic, systematic social structure. This would be achieved by tracing these relations back to the simplest form of socialization and by "rising from the abstract to the concrete" — as Marx programatically formulated it in the "Grundrisse" (1857). To this extent, the debate is also empirical.

There is still, of course, no *theory of action*. The limits of social-democratic reform policy set forth in the discussion of the state became historical reality during the crisis-ridden developments after 1973 (stagflation). Reform politics thus faced increasingly stark alternatives: either to push back politically the system-limit of politics (private property) or to "adjust" to ever greater limits (cf. Hoffmann, 1977). With the failure of reform, the state discussion lost its privileged political "object" and came to a dead end. Concepts meant to overcome the limits of the system had no chance of political realization when advocated by a minority opposition. And the political failure for which they were destined was all the more painful, because it was not merely theoretical. When the economic boom ended in the crisis of the early 1970s, the air also went out of reform politics, and the social-democratic plans remained largely empty, economically and politically unrealizable programs. Instead, there began a period of political repression (prohibition against practicing one's profession [*Berufsverbote*], the "West German Autumn") and limitations on economic and welfare state policies (the politics of austerity). In the 1970s, the Federal Republic was identified as an "authoritarian democracy" (cf. Altvater, Hoffmann, Semmler, 1978), as a "security state" (Hirsch, 1981) in two senses: it granted a considerable degree of social security and at the same time, extended police security. In the 1980s, the Federal Republic took a political "turn" from a social-liberal coalition to conservative-liberal hegemony, a turn in many respects anticipated in the social-democratic 1970s. But this development was also the beginning of the formation of new social movements. With the growing economic and political division in society and the worsening ecological crisis, they emerged as an alternative to traditional political forms.

Here, not only a political, but also a theoretical deficit in the derivation debate became apparent. Given the debate's level of abstraction, conceiving a politics capable of overcoming the system would have required an analysis of the social movements. However, references to this were very abstract. Furthermore, it was precisely these "new social movements" (e.g. the peace, ecology and women's movements) which radically placed in question the dominant social forms. Working-class organizations could not formulate this critique because, having been coopted (*eingebannt*) and remaining within the capitalist model of accumulation, they were compelled to observe the existing lines of compromise. The recognition of this was an essential result of the state derivation debate. However, the paradigm of "capital logic" did not allow for the fact that beyond class lines,

new radical movements would arise, nor that these would in part be radically critical of society and pose new questions for the discussion of the state (for example, the problem of majority decisions about the uses of life-threatening technologies and the right to resist).

The questions raised by this alternative movement frequently have a great affinity with the "old" problematics of the state discussion. The newly posed question of the role of the welfare state (cf. Neusüss, 1981), the discussions of an alternative economic policy beyond social-democratic statism, the question of the chances of restructuring production to democratize the economy and achieve a system which meets needs, and the resistance to the potentially total control of citizenry by the state with the help of new communications and information technologies etc. — all these questions asked by the rapidly developing alternative movements return to old problems. At the same time, however, new answers have been formulated, answers clearly different from the classical slogans of the "left," which have often turned into empty formulas (for instance, the demand for nationalization).

For marxist theory, the existence of the alternative movement is an unmistakable *practical critique of the strategic shortcomings of the marxist discussion*: the lack of a conception of social change beyond the "classical" (statist and class-reductionist) answers. These shortcomings became manifest at the end of the 1970s as the "crisis of marxism" which was hardly restricted to the Federal Republic. (Althusser's "proclamation" of it in Venice, 1976, comes to mind.) In any case, it is clear that formal determination is not enough for strategic planning.

It was not simply the boredom induced by verbose polemics that ended the state derivation debate sometime in the mid-1970s. The real reason concerned the unambiguous limits of the analysis of the form of the bourgeois state. But was it therefore wrong to venture into formal analysis, to seek a map of its coordinates? The answer is clear: certainly not, for even if many aspects of the relation of state and society are obscured by the analysis of form, recourse to it is necessary in order to answer a question which is always contemporary: what are the systemic limits of state intervention in society? Answers to this will have to be formulated in the future, and in that process, many of the reflections from the state derivation debate may still be useful.

— Translation by Capers Rubin and Eileen Schreiber, modified by Anders Stephanson.

* As we worked on this essay, Christel Neusüss died after a long illness on April 2, 1988. With her, the West German left has lost one of its most distinguished and original theorists. In recent years, she concentrated on feminist theory and through that she formulated in particular a critique of technological understanding.

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Nightmare in the Mirror: Adolescence and the Death of Difference

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The teenager is an orphan among cultural representations. Nobody wants him. For decades now, of course, he has caused a nervous culture one embarrassment after another. Youths wild in the streets, werewolves, long-hairs, lunatic bikers, slavering idiots unable to do arithmetic or find Mississippi on a map. . .thirty years of such images have spewed from the culture industry's maw. Now, however, a new twist has appeared. Instead of the adolescent rampaging against adult society, we have the adolescent as dull neurotic introvert, a gnawing problem even to himself. Angst and bouts of suicidal despair distinguish this gloomy figure; terror, taunts, and insecurities are the seasoning on modern salad days. Adolescence has become unbearable. Who needs this horrible interim of self-doubt? And how did it get to be so bad?

One expects a certain clarity to come from admitting that the teenager *is* a representation: adolescence is a fake. The rhetoric of its sublime liminality merely drowns out the clatter of its making. A marginal moment when the subject stands between two worlds, poised with innocence on the one hand and experience on the other — none of this has the universal validity it claims. The teen years are an invented transition between two carefully constructed norms, childhood and adulthood: adolescence as we know it is not ontological and invariable, a permanent feature of the human animal, but a relative category created to organize an otherwise inchoate experience. It is a construct generated largely during the last two centuries, defined and regularized by cultural needs and discursive operations. The social requirements behind its construction, the reasons beneath its contradictions, should ideally become clearer in the course of recognizing it as such.

What happens, though, is the opposite: new questions arise, about why the image of the teenager is still promulgated, still driven home. That image seems to have no purpose. The artificiality of isolating a four-to six-year period as "adolescence," quarantining a quadrennium under a category, imposing on it an identity and a prescribed range of behaviors: there is no clear reason why all this continues. Exactly what function does the teenager still serve? Suicidal kids in movies or on TV all wonder what it means to be a teen; through their ventriloquial voices, one may speculate, culture as a whole is pondering the same thing.

Once upon a time the answer was clear. It seems likely that the category of adolescence was originally constituted in response to an emerging discourse of sexual liberation, toward the end of the nineteenth century. It developed by extrapolation from the physical fact of puberty, but it had a specifically social function. The adolescent took part in a larger discourse on sexuality, appeared amid a general tendency toward generating and taxonomizing sexual subjects. Adolescence offered a testing-ground for the formation of these new selves, a laboratory governed by elaborate rules. With normative sexual enlightenment confined within the bounds of a periodized and categorized age group, its processes could be organized, controlled. In the figure of the teenager, sexuality was made manageable, delimited by names and norms.

In time, another social function came to amplify and in part replace this sexual use. *The teenage years became a training-ground for consumption, as one set of desires muscled in on the province of another.* In the arena of adolescence, people learned to need and to sate their needs with objects; they were taught the flat obligation and the intricate techniques of consumption. Teenagers turned into a market; they went to the mall.

In both constructions adolescence was a contradictory zone: it was different from adulthood, yet its difference was perpetually being expropriated, put to use. Its utility was also its annihilation: the underlying command enforced during adolescence was always *to grow up*, to turn the habits (sexual or economic behaviors) learned in its arena of flux and putative freedom into mature practices, fixed domestic routines. Yet adolescence also lent the teenager a temporarily independent identity, a sense of separateness from adult norms. And this estrangement was empowering. At its height the teenager could see in himself a walking denial of the grown-up world. Difference demanded its right to live: it rebelled.

The larger culture was quite aware of this subversive side to its own creation. By the Fifties, visions of the teenager as a Frankenstein's monster dominated the culture industry's production. Alienated adolescents came to represent an absolute, aporetic deviation from adult life: the Otherness of their invented self, the negativity of their constitution as false difference, emerged in a represented ecstasy of rebellion. The utilitarian function of adolescence generated its own negation, a defiant rejection of practical rationality which was often shown in explicitly supernatural terms. Spanning the decades, such films as *I Was a Teenage Werewolf* and *Carrie* depict teenagers mobilizing magic against the oppressive realities of adulthood. In the former, sexual desire escapes the boundaries in which adults try to confine it; hormones lend obscene fecundity to hair and claws. In *Carrie*, *things* themselves, passive consumer objects, take on a life of their own through Carrie's telekinetic powers, wreaking revenge on the whole panorama of mindless purchasers-in-training.

The teenager was gaining an autonomy, a control over his destiny — which consisted in denying that it was destined: in his brief zone of qualified apartness, he fought the life-narratives prefabricated for him. Exploiting his constructed Otherness, he negated the monolithic and the ready-made. Difference is the hallucination and destroyer of our world: the teenager made the most of it. And of course this process extended far beyond films. In the dream-world of modernity, mass nightmares come true. The teenager's sense of his own estrangement and the culture industry's fear of it cooperated in a complex interaction. Elvis Presley's pelvic thrusts became a gyrating one-man *Totentanz* in which the rebellion against mass-production, and the mass-production of rebellion, moved in uneasy step. Eventually the two erupted as one. Those were the days: the Sixties.

Now we can witness the withering of this allotted difference. The teenager is no longer necessary: he has outlived his uses. There are better means, one might say, for instilling cultural norms. It could almost be argued that television is killing the teenager: its insidious intrusions made it possible to reach, and reform, children practically from the cradle onward. Its unprecedented power as a regularizing force rendered superfluous the special period set aside for self-formation. Sex has lost its liminal aura for most children long before puberty: they are incessantly exposed to it — and to systems for practicing it — from the earliest age. And the same is even more true of consumer norms. Patterns for desiring and buying batter the child from the moment she sees her first Saturday-morning cartoon. Caress here; shop there. Screw this, pay for that. As mass culture becomes more and more pervasive, instruments for channeling and controlling desire invade every crevice of life.

The rationale for a space of difference disappears. Entering adolescence, the teenager is already quite familiar with the things he is supposed to learn. Yet the separate periodization of the teen years still survives. Their demarcation now gives rise to a nagging question, for it is a difference without content, arbitrary and unexplained. Neither sex nor salesmanship any longer stake a special claim on teenagers – where does their separateness come from?

This is the real topic beneath the images of troubled teenagers in the Eighties. The troubles have nothing to do with old rebellions against adult norms. Rather, they involve a supplanting sense that adolescence is an empty identity. They revolve around self-definition: the crisis is not one of difference, but of suspected sameness. To be sure, these depictions manufacture reasons for adolescents to be depressed — uncaring parents, meaningless responsibilities, a hostile world. These disasters, though, don't rouse the kids to resistance: rather, the teenagers confront them *as adult problems*: through them, they realize their lives are really adult lives. In psychologists' offices and on TV, in magazines articles and

movies, these representations all problematize the teenager, showing him not as a threat but as a question. They interrogate his separateness, and mostly deny its meaning. Invading and colonizing the zone of onetime difference, they silence its negations: they reassert the doxological integrity of adult law.

The teen film of the Eighties has, of course, been pitched and marketed with great success to teenagers themselves. It reflects an uncertainty about selfhood which the adolescent undeniably feels. But it also reifies and reinforces that doubt. And it makes the teenager into a figure — a new kind of figure — in adult discourse. The teen film talks to the teenager, often hectors him, about who he is; but through its medium grownups also talk to themselves about their problematic children. Adults redefine the difference they themselves created.

John Hughes' movies have to some degree set the standard. In *The Breakfast Club*, five teenagers in detention hall prate about the meaning of being a teenager. Their talk is articulate, mournful, unstoppable, veering between psychobabble and *Lord of the Flies*: it's like watching island innocents reinvent group therapy. But their conversations ultimately trace a self-reflexive circle. They locate teenage identity in a tautology: adults don't understand us because we're adolescents; but we're *adolescents*, we're different, only because adults don't understand us. The awkward age is merely a misunderstanding. The vulnerability of this existence — the tenuousness of a separate self sustained by simple error — seems far more ominous than the fact of the mistake itself. One leaves the film haunted not so much by the failed communication between adults and kids as by the apparently inevitable prospect that communication will finally work, that the kids will lose their last claim to difference, that they will understand and be understood, and in the process become adults themselves. The kids' own talk, their sensitively shared feelings and slobbery growth-through-caring, is a model of the kind of "understanding" Hughes sees as breaking down barriers between adults and adolescents; their inarticulate rebellions, though, seemed more authentic and more fun. The unintended irony, of course, is that one adult does understand: John Hughes. Teenagers have no secrets from *him*. Hughes constructs his teenagers according to an adult's solipsistic image of them: he shows them worried about not being the adults which he alone, by the rules of the game, knows they truly are. In his work, the call for comprehension emerges as an ominous imperialism of the adult world over the kids', erasing the boundaries between the two. The teenager, becoming "known," loses mystery and alterity. Adolescence is being abolished.

Or rather, is being re-absorbed. The historical function of the teenager's factitious "difference" is suddenly supererogatory; the teen is drawn back helplessly into the adult matrix. The flip side of the emptiness of adolescent identity portrayed in *The Breakfast Club* lies in another

Hughes film, *Ferris Bueller's Day Off*. Here the teenager's difference seemingly reasserts itself: the ostensible role of teenagers is to have fun, something adults just can't understand. The only fun in the movie, though, is had by the insufferable Ferris himself, and most of it is at the expense of his fellow kids. It's all justified in the movie's terms; Ferris is teaching them to live. But here the movie pulls a dirty little trick. For all that he plays hooky, Ferris is really the pedagogue at heart. The supposed ideal teenager is really impersonating an adult himself, enjoying adult freedoms, playing quintessentially adult roles — as con man, but even more as self-appointed professor. The picture's closing moments gratuitously stress his investiture with authority: Ferris reappears on screen after the credits to berate the idiots in the theater — his fellow teens? — for not having the sense to leave. Class is over: go home. No hanging around after school. Ferris has beaten the truant officer, but has taken his badge and job. The only difference is that he has a sense of humor: small improvement. Everyone knows there is nothing worse than the wisecracking adult who sneers, *I told you so*.

The real falseness of Hughes' films can be grasped if one just imagines a few gays or blacks or Hispanics in them. The films could never take it. The characters are *oppressively* lightweight, white and middle-class; the delicately calibrated structures of false difference, the fake oppositions between teens and adults, would collapse with the appearance of a genuine Other or two. These movies are nightmarish; the claustrophobia of *Breakfast Club* and the manic expansiveness of *Ferris Bueller* are equally confining and surreal. It is a particular kind of nightmare, though: the bad dream of difference unravelled, of a false distinction exploited, then slyly exposed as untrue. Behind the conceit of the teen's separation lies Hughes' consciousness of uniformity. Hughes confirms the dark suspicion that there is no social reason behind teenage selfhood any more. But since, despite its absence of content, its shell is still around, adolescence unwittingly turns into a demonic parody of the grown-up world, which is the only game in town. Hughes has discovered adolescence as the nightmare side of adulthood.

In this, the old image of the teenager as horror returns. But this is not James Deanery or the fanged angst of werewolves. The terms have turned around. The contemporary teen appears as a threat in that he is *just like us*. He exists only as a shrunken double, a midget Other showing up contradictions in the self: a monster in the mirror.

This sameness is apparent even in a film like *River's Edge* (directed by Tim Hunter, written by Neal Jiminez), which tries to fit into a tradition of horrifying treatises on Today's Youth. This movie has all the makings of a shocking expose, save shock. Its tone is that of a supermarket tabloid turned blase. The film is based on a real incident: a big bull of a high school student kills a girl during a night's rough sex in the woods. His

friends, rather than turning him in, attempt ineptly to cover up the crime. The film focuses on their drugged indifference to the fact of murder, their inability to articulate any feelings at all about the fact that a girl — also their friend — is dead. Here the old trope of adolescents as wild shows its new, improved guise — they are wild, *and boring*. Insanely though they may behave, their lunacy is lifeless. Their threat, their "rebellion," consists simply in their collective nullity.

The movie tries vainly to come up with reasons for the kids' supposed indifference, their "difference" from "us." In one of the first shots, a boy drops his sister's doll from a bridge. Here we have one heavy-handed explanation, a shrieking symbol: these youths have lost their childhood innocence. Later in the film, though — after the killer has been found — one of the killer's teachers lectures his class about the Sixties. We *cared* about something then, he rants; we had a cause; and you people don't have any direction, any practical sense at all. He is, of course, speaking over their heads to the audience; and what he is yelling is that these kids are immature and locked in fantasy, that they need to be brought down to earth — that they need, in short, a little experience. Which is it? Is experience the villain, or the remedy?

The film doesn't know because the opposition it tries to build is itself a hollow one. The film asks us to be horrified by people who are incapable of horror; it works up a savage sweat about their mindless savagery. A *pro forma* indignation over drugs informs the movie: we are meant, for instance, to shake our heads in righteous fury as a little boy becomes a pothead. But one suspects that drugs are not so much condemned as exploited here, used for their ready associations of decadence and death: the film employs the shock value they still carry, in hopes that some of it will rub off. For at heart the movie itself is profoundly jaded. Just like the kids, it can't feel much horror either. The camera's loving, null, banal fascination with the girl's nude corpse, stretched like a blue-tinged mannequin by the river's edge, is the giveaway. The shots of her decomposition aren't even numbing; they are already numb. The film makes the body almost beautiful in its casual decay. She can't have been so harmless, so placidly desirable, when alive. A transcendent indifference hangs over her like a cloud of flies.

Everyone in this demonic doll's house of a movie has a toy. The little kids play with dolls; the aging pothead — perhaps the movie's archetypal grownup — has an inflatable woman on hand; and the teenage killer (and the film itself) play with the inanimate body of the murdered girl. But these three are really the same: the objects of a universal manipulativeness and unconcern which are the final note of the film. The teenagers share their emotional emptiness with the movie itself, which is supposedly condemnatory but secretly complacent, and complicit. Far from being their distinctive mark of Cain, the kids' inability to care is

their real common ground with the adult world. There is no more difference to deal with; no wonder everyone is indifferent. Otherness is levelled. The movie would like to reassert it, longs to see the kids as separate, strange; but the more anxious it is to prove this point, the more it undoes itself. The parents toke and have trivial, whiny arguments that are worse than their children's spats. Meanwhile, the teenagers worry and suffer through their parents' problems: stripped of a coherent identity, they are left with the scraps of the adult world.

The dirty secret of *River's Edge* is that its ostensible subject, adolescence, is really irrelevant. The indifference the teenagers display is merely the mark of a larger, literal *in-difference*, an inability to imagine difference, which pervades the movie and the world it shows. Adolescence is no longer useful; its separateness vanishes in vapid, imitative violence. The Otherness the adolescents are supposed to embody is shunted to the margin, replaced by a monotonous uniformity. The pervasive emptiness of the movie is merely the "sensitivity" and "understanding" of Hughes' films pushed to the limit. *River's Edge* shows a world made repressively understandable, hence flat, unvaried, void. It is a world where all boundaries are broken down.

The emblem of encroaching sameness in *River's Edge* is the obsessiveness with which everyone cares only about their objects, their toys. This tendency reaches its logical conclusion in another recent film: in Michael Lehmann's *Heathers*, everyone *becomes* an object. The death of the teenager culminates here: the adolescent is, like the corpse in the woods, merely a vaguely mordant, uneasily seductive image. In this savage satire, both the grown-ups and their victims finally realize that adolescence is being done in. *Heathers* is uneven: its knowing allusions (to *Archie* comics and *Adam-12*) often have the silliness of the in-jokes it professes to despise; and, scared of themselves, its satiric energies take five from time to time to allow a few fabricated tears. Yet at its best it unveils modern adolescence as a premature senescence, a combination museum and mausoleum. The film offers a death's-mask portrait of the expropriated teen.

Here, once again, the teenager's existence appears as an intensification of adult ways. The kids' shared discontent comes from the realization that this is life: their petty power plays and rivalries are local versions of grown-up's games; by their society's standards, things don't get any more real than this. "How do you think adults treat each other?" Veronica's mother demands as her daughter bemoans her stunted life. "When teenagers complain that they want to be treated like human beings, it's usually because they *are* being treated like human beings."

In this nullification of separate identity, however, a paradoxical independent content briefly reasserts itself; and, like a corpse-light, a function reappears with it. For the high school — a miniature society in itself, a

terrifying Tinytown — hypostasizes one aspect of the adult world with a particular vengeance. Its governing process is one of categorization. Everyone ossifies into a type. Geeks, jocks, dweebs and dweebettes, preppies — there is a pigeonhole for everybody, and the group boundaries are relentlessly enforced. High school appears here as a model of a semiotic society: what it really teaches students is to infer identities from codes, to read selfhood into the discrete details of daily existence. Even mineral water has a meaning in its demimonde of teeming significances; the hapless drinker of Perrier is, of course, a fag.

Presiding over the rank-and-file are three pretty and appalling girls named Heather, who form a sort of identity patrol, ensuring that no one breaks their assigned rank. Budding Joan Crawfords, they reveal the hackneyed power of the bitch — that cultural icon — as simply the incarnate right of judgment, the authority to evaluate and decide the identities of others. And they wield this power because they inhabit their own identities completely, without a shred of self-doubt. "Why are you such a megabitch?" Veronica asks one of them, and Heather replies: "Because I *can* be." The tautology — I am what I am — shades into an assertion of infinite potential. Complete surrender to the arbitrary system of selfhood lends the self an irrational strength.

More than any other contemporary film, *Heathers* shows adolescent life as centered around identity. Yet underlying the embrace of roles is the extermination of the teenager as a self. There is no basis for an identity *as a teenager*. The illusory discovery of independence only offers a smorgasbord of grown-up roles and categories to choose from. The film begins with the strains of *Que Sera, Sera* — When I was just a little girl, I asked my mother, what will I be?

During the teenage years, the film suggests, this query will be answered. Adolescence recovers a social task: to train youths in the whole process of accepting and inhabiting identity. It is a laboratory for the production of social roles, the seed ground of system.

Adult processes rob the adolescent of a private sphere, but move in with their own array of selves to force on her. The kids' anxieties in the film stem from adulthood's imperialism against any last, specifically youthful concerns. Deprived of the safety-net of adolescence to fall back on, they are forced to decide *who they will be* — making a grown-up choice and donning grown-up clothing. The independent identity of the adolescent dissolves into a myriad minor identities, in which an ultimate sameness — the murder of difference, its integration into the larger world it once resisted — can be seen.

Heathers shows the only rationale remaining for the separateness of adolescence: the category clings to shards of validity as a narcissistic glimmer in adult minds. Grown-ups sustain it as a dark glass of themselves; in it, they can see the identities that govern their own lives

microscopically mirrored. In the agonies of teenagers struggling with adult roles, they enjoy a distanced version of their own uncertainties and angst. Everywhere in *Heathers*, grownups sit back and watch the kids, projecting their terrors onto the safe, small screen that alienated youth provides. The teenager as habitable self gives way to the teenager as spectacle. Identity extinguishes subjectivity. The nightmare adumbrated in *The Breakfast Club* — that understanding itself is a tool for suppressing difference — comes true, and becomes crucial. The teenager no longer has a voice of her own: mute and helpless, she can only be observed. Her actions take their meaning from a vast, involuntary mimicry of adulthood, which she cannot alter or defy.

There is a rebellion in *Heathers*, to be sure. The movie gestures back toward the old image of teenager as incarnate denial; that image flickers weakly here, at the end of the teenager's history. Veronica's boyfriend J. D. wages war against the system of identities. His name suggests James Dean, his grimace Jack Nicholson — both superannuated emblems of adolescent alienation; but his hunched and awkward amble, coattails flapping behind, implies an older model still: Groucho, a truly Marxian anarchic spirit. J. D. rebels in the name of a comic nihilism. "Chaos is great," he insists; anything that subverts system is his weapon. Destruction gives him energy: and this means murder. He and Veronica start killing people, disguising the deaths as suicides. First the head Heather, the bitch supreme, goes; then a couple of jocks follow. For Veronica the deaths make up a sort of reform movement: "I just want my high school to be a nice place," she pleads. For J. D., though, the murders are their own justification. Death is the last available subversion.

But *Heathers* only invokes this figure of archaic rebellion to show his impotence. Even anarchy can be co-opted, controlled. The authority of the adult world lies in its ability to expropriate difference; it categorizes chaos. The engines of identity-construction can turn even J. D.'s rebellion against adult selfhood into a reified self. He has, after all, learned his destructiveness from his father, a mad bomber who has harnessed his explosive skills as a destroyer (and developer) of buildings. Dad is a successful businessman. Destruction pays. And J. D. too finds that his putative differences, his anarchy and madness, only make him "cool" in others' eyes. "The extreme always makes an impression," he says, but that is all it does — it becomes part of an economy of impressions. "You're not a rebel," Veronica shrieks at him, more truly than she knows. For all that she calls him immature, he is really a grown-up too, inhabiting another category, playing another role. The search for a liberating corner of strangeness in adolescence is doomed to fail, even when it turns to death as its refuge and strength. There is no safety there: death is, it turns out, just more of the same.

Death only plays into the hands of system. And this is not just because (as Veronica thinks) to kill one Heather only means that another will take her place. True, the social roles and powers survive those who play and wield them. But a darker secret underlies this. For system *is* death: identity *is* destruction. Death only finishes and affirms the imposed, fixed self. Once dead, the head Heather is more popular that ever: her beauty and bitchery, everything that made her *her*, are reified forever. The jocks, meanwhile, are resignified in dying: Veronica and J. D. disguise their killing as a gay suicide-tryst. "Beer-guzzling, sexist assholes" become sensitive in retrospect; death gives depth. Murder offers a new, improved meaning for the self, only affirming, however, the enormous empire of signs. Death is refiguration.

There is more here than a nasty joke. The film is onto something. It senses that under adult identity and the fixity of social roles lurks a sacrifice: the loss of freedom inherent in social limitation both contains and prefigures death. Destruction is inherent in modern selfhood, as its hidden motive force. Imitating their elders, the kids are playing a deadly game.

The infatuation with death which *River's Edge* displayed is both mocked and extended here. Death is the secret grown-ups carry: unable to see it in themselves, they project it onto their progeny. In *Heathers*, parents have an enormous hunger for youthful slaughter. The movie dares to make fun of suicidal adolescents; but this is because it grasps that teenagers who kill themselves have nothing to do with *teen suicide*, the phenomenon adults represent to themselves with lurid glee. The whole thing, as J. D. points out, is simply a big show for older eyes. There are even songs about it (a cheery rock sets the background beat: "Teenage suicide, don't do it!/ Teenage suicide, she blew it!"). The grown-ups eat it up. Suicide becomes simply an excuse for talk, for more repressive "understanding" of teenagers on the part of adults; Miss Fleming, the touchy-feely teacher who goads her colleagues to "revel in this revealing tragedy!" and stages Nurembergian love-ins with TV cameras in the wings, is paradigmatic. On the one hand, extinction is emblematic of the teenager's reduction to perfect comprehensibility. The teen is talked to death; as she becomes understandable, an object of knowledge, her residual difference is exterminated. But death is also precisely the thing that adults understand best in the teenager as they recreate her. The embrace of adult identity is a voluntary destruction. Slaughter is the concealed model of selfhood. There is nothing to do, as Veronica realizes, but to "grow up, become adults, and die" — indistinguishable processes all. Teen suicide is an image of the dark death hidden in the manufacture of identities.

J.D. decides, in the end, to blow up the school, faking a mass suicide pact signed by all the students: the apocalypse of adolescence, the unveil-

ing of its essence, is mass murder. In planning this ersatz *Gotterdammerung*, though, he realizes the real truth: this is not rebellion but simply an admission that the teenager is an adult, no different from the grown-ups. The collective slaughter he envisions is a seal of participation in the death which is the adult world. "People are gonna look at the ashes of Westerburg High," he tells Veronica, "and say: There is a school that self-destructed not because society didn't care but because the school *was* society."

Veronica defuses the killer bomb at the last minute — but in doing so she affirms her social loyalty, loyalty to a social identity, which is equally a form of self-murder. J. D.'s last words to Veronica sum up the film: "Now that you're dead, what are you going to do with your life?" Not to be or not to be: That is the question. What can be done with a life that is death itself?

The nightmare of the adolescent as destructive force comes full circle here. Instead of a destructive difference turned against the adult world, teenagers embody a destructive sameness turned upon themselves. They enact a drama of emptiness, abolishing their own independence in mad identification with adulthood, which is death incarnate. The teenager at last emerges as the image of extinction. In dying, she grows up — and vice-versa. Death is the victory of maturity, regularity, boredom, over the last traces of difference.

The end of the adolescent is the triumph of modern life, a life which appears in *Heathers* dripping with blood. The peculiar genius of the film is to recognize this process. Here lies the last function of the teenager, that now-faded image: to the adolescent falls the task of affirming death, by accomplishing self-destruction. The codes and roles the teenager assimilates finally assume their true character, as killings. Adults, looking at this nightmare underworld, watch their own secret treaty with death exposed; it is both brought to the light of day and tamed, projected onto an Other which is merely their own selves made young. In the teenager, the adult sees himself demonized. He enjoys the horror: death is entertainment. Extinction, a pure flame within, glows beneath life and confirms its emptiness. The adolescent, meaningless and morbid, ephemeral and banal, survives — only briefly — to light the adult world by an infernal fire.

Fragments on *Wings of Desire* (or, fragmentary representation as historical necessity)*

CESARE CASARINO

I

This film has a circus, at its center. It is unannounced. We first catch sight of it from a distance, through one of those tunnels which often in cities run across and under elevated roads or highways. We approach the circus, slowly, lured by its melancholy music, and when we emerge from the tunnel we are already inside the tent, where Marion is swinging high on the trapeze, wearing wide angel wings. When Karl Rossman, in Kafka's *Amerika*, emerges from the underground station at Clayton, in search of the Nature Theater of Oklahoma, what he finds is an itinerant caravan of racetracks, platforms and employment bureaus, which closely resembles a circus. He is lured into this travelling show by "the noise of many trumpets," which are being blared by women on high pedestals, "dressed as angels in white robes with great wings on their shoulders."[1] These two very different circuses constitute the foci of an elliptical narrative of the ever-present European concern with America. In the film a reversal is enacted, and a return. After a series of itinerant films engaging with America, its roads, and spatial movement, in *Wings of Desire* Wenders returns to the European stage by dealing with a single location and with temporal movement (Berlin and its history). Within this return, the circus in *Wings of Desire* becomes a reversal of the Nature Theater of Oklahoma. Max Brod writes that "Kafka used to hint smilingly, that within this 'almost limitless' theater his young hero was going to find again a profession, a stand-by, his freedom, even his old home and his parents.[2]" If Kafka has a utopian moment with the Nature Theater of Oklahoma, where we see Karl Rossman re-enacting and fulfilling, on the new American continent, his past and his childhood, Wenders, on the other hand, takes this theater back to the most devastated of post-war European scenarios, and makes it into a circus which shuts down as soon as we enter it, thereby putting an end to Marion's childhood dream of becoming a trapeze artist. Wenders' return to Europe does not complete or fulfill Kafka's project, which needs to remain unfulfilled if it is to retain "its peculiar beauty," since, as Walter Benjamin reminds us, this is "the beauty of a failure.[3]" The

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* These fragments on *Wings of Desire* were inspired, separately and differently, by Bhaskar Sarkar and Dan Sherer. They owe a great deal of their present form to Fredric Jameson, Saree Makdisi, Maria Bezaitis and Richard Dienst.

intervention of history has changed the necessities. After having re-enacted, in his earlier "American" films, a trajectory similar to Kafka's most peculiarly European gesture in *Amerika*, Wenders' return transforms both projects, and marks Berlin as the inescapable necessity of searching among the rubble of the old.

II

A

The circus in the film shuts down for lack of funds. On the other hand, Karl Rossman, who is throughout very concerned about his poor finances, gladly discovers how, in "the land of plenty," the Nature Theater of Oklahoma can afford to engage and feed everyone. In Kafka's times it was evidently still possible to inhabit a circus with the American allegory of an ("almost") unlimited space of equal opportunity for all (a utopian space which here, with all its angels, blaring of trumpets, surprise and yet somehow expected encounters with long lost friends and acquaintances, reminds one (un)cannily of heaven). In Wenders' world the circus is being supplanted by other newer forms of entertainment ("television and movies," as he points out)[4], and in this changed historical situation the circus becomes suitable for very different kinds of allegorical significations. Here, however, it needs to be stressed that in *Wings of Desire* the fascination with the circus is rooted primarily in its being a dying art, and not just in its being an itinerant and performing one. Although such a fascination might betray an eagerness to rescue the circus, as an art form, from its irrevocable death, this film at the same time cannot but be complicitous with the disappearance of the circus, not only due precisely to its being a film, but also due to the larger implications, in the film, suggesting the impossibility of representing the disappearance of something (however) cherished without participating in it. One can also sense, in *Wings of Desire*, the necessity for such a participation or complicity, as it lends to the film part of its nostalgic mode.

B

In *The State of Things* we learn how "the land of plenty" does have its limits, as we are told of a (science-fiction) film which is being shot in Europe and which cannot be completed because the Los Angeles producer suspends the flow of funds. In *Kings of the Road* we follow the protagonist(s), in Germany, from cinema hall to cinema hall, and we realize how most of them are about to shut down or have had to resort exclusively to porno films to remain in business. Much like the circus in *Wings of Desire*, whenever cinema is represented in Wenders, this too is portrayed as an endangered art form, threatened by economic collapse. The specters of television and of 'commercialization' loom high upon such a collapse. *The State of Things* and *Kings of the Road* engage with the threats of the latter; but it is television which *Wings of Desire* attempts to exorcise.

C

The recurrent economic concern in Wenders is often associated with problems of film production and with cinema as an art form in general. Given how in many films Wenders emphasizes the itinerant and performing qualities of this art form, it seems that the circus in *Wings of Desire* is perceived as some kind of ancestor of cinema, so that its financial impasse acquires the resonance of a warning. Furthermore, the circus in the film is named: "Alekan," seemingly in tribute to the very old Henri Alekan, cinematographer in Jean Cocteau's *The Beauty and The Beast*, who is also responsible for the cinematography in *Wings of Desire*. To point out that Wenders' films are self-reflexive, as they are concerned with cinema and its fate, is to state the obvious. For Wenders the circus is already "something of the past," cinema is in danger, and television, besides competing commercially with cinema, is also that new medium which has "eaten up film language from inside" like a "cancer.[5]" It is the concern with the vicissitudes, mutual influences and exclusiveness, life and afterlife of cultural forms which constitutes a central theme in Wenders' work. Concealed under many (horizontal, linear) narrative layers, one can often sense history as the major propelling force of such a concern. *Wings of Desire* breaks open these layers and exhumes history, in all of its destructive force, as a necessity for a fragmented cinematic narrative.

III

Wenders explains how "In Berlin there's always a circus because there are all these empty spaces. At any given time you can be sure there will be a travelling circus"[6]. These empty spaces mark the places where houses, buildings and railway stations used to stand before the last war; they are gaps which have been imposed (literally) from above onto the physiognomy of the city. The continuous presence of circuses in Berlin is due to this violently transfigured physiognomy; they inhabit spaces which have been opened up by history. The wanderings of the circuses in and out of and within Berlin, from "empty" space to "empty" space, trace the paths of the last war's destructions and superimpose onto the old map of the city a new one made of absences, carved out of the old urban material. These wanderings and tracings through such a scarred landscape are the writing of history.

IV

When we first encounter the angel Damiel, he is looking downward onto the crowd moving in the streets, as he stands high above on the ruins of the Kaiser Wilhelm Gedächtnis Kirche. Since the very beginning of the film an association is drawn between angels and ruins. Later we watch footage of the bombardments of Berlin: we see the city in ruins, we see corpses, and survivors wandering through the ruins, we see planes dropping bombs into the night, and superimposed onto these latter nocturnal images we see the repeated flapping of an angel's wings as if turning the pages of this most

terrible chapter in the city's history. This association between angels, ruins and the destructive forces of history has a precursor in Walter Benjamin's ninth thesis on the philosophy of history[7]:

> A Klee painting named "Angelus Novus" shows an angel looking as though he is about to move away from something he is fixedly contemplating. His eyes are staring, his mouth is open, his wings are spread. This is how one pictures the angel of history. His face is turned toward the past. Where we perceive a chain of events, he sees one single catastrophe which keeps piling wreckage upon wreckage and hurls it in front of his feet. The angel would like to stay, awaken the dead, and make whole what has been smashed. But a storm is blowing from Paradise; it has got caught in his wings with such violence that the angel can no longer close them. This storm irresistibly propels him into the future to which his back is turned, while the pile of debris before him grows skyward. This storm is what we call progress.

Certainly, the wings we see caught in the storm of the bombardments belong to the *Angelus Novus*. Certainly, the angels in this film are "angel[s] of history." But there are many questions which in Benjamin remain unasked: Who is "the angel of history?" Can he still be a messenger, a mediator? Was he ever one? What is his task? "His eyes are staring, his mouth is open, his wings are spread:" Benjamin's angel is paralyzed, as he "fixedly" stares at the Medusa of history. If he had ever had an identity or a task, in 1940, on of the darkest hours of the war, he had surely lost both. In the film, on the other hand, the angel Cassiel reminds Damiel that it is their duty "to observe, collect, testify, preserve." Wenders restores in his angels a sense of historical task.

V

A

What one sees on the head of Klee's *Angelus Novus* is not hair but the scrolls of the Torah. In the face of historical destruction he preserves writing by carrying it away with himself, as an outgrowth of his self. Wenders' angels, ever attentive as they are to even the more remote and secret sounds of history, just as the *Angelus Novus* must also be if one is to judge from his ears, hear everything, select and then transcribe into small diary-like books from which they are inseparable. A profound commitment to, a reverent intimacy with writing: that is what Wenders' angels and the *Angelus Novus* above all share.

B

"In 1921 Walter Benjamin bought Paul Klee's aquarelle *Angelus Novus*: " this is the first clear utterance emerging from the undecipherable mist of readers' murmurs in the library as soon as the angels enter it.[8] But as soon as the angels enter it this is no longer a library: the interior undergoes a profound metamorphosis, so profound that in fact nothing changes. From the

high cornices of the nave angels hang like sacred icons, people pray in the side chapels or hidden away in obscure niches, the murmurs rising from the aisles are prayers and litanies: under the angels' omniscient and transcendental gaze the library is revealed to be a cathedral from which the divinity has fled long ago leaving behind its *verbum* on the altar. The written word is what the angels worship. Writing is their religion.

VI

A

"To observe, collect, testify, preserve:" to record history is the angels' task in *Wings of Desire*. They roam around the city daily in search of events to write down in their books. The first time we see Damiel and Cassiel together, they are taking a pause from this search: they are sitting in a car, parked in a show room, and they exchange the stories of the day's labor, while watching through the windows the people outside walking in the streets. They first situate the day in history, by recalling the significant events which had occurred on that very same day, at other times, in the life of the city. Then they go on to the here and now. The stories they have collected belong to the realm of those (minor yet pivotal) epiphanies which are usually washed away unnoticed in the daily flow of urban simultaneous multiplicities: a woman who stops walking in the pouring rain, closes her umbrella, and lets herself get drenched; a man pasting his rare stamps on letters to be sent away; an old blind woman groping for her watch, and suddenly feeling the angel's presence; a prisoner banging his head into the wall of the cell and shouting: "Now!" All these events share in the time of the Now. They witness and fulfill (even though in the image of a fleeting moment) a desire to break away, a will to resist. These acts of resistance are the punctuations and caesurae of the (otherwise undifferentiated) monotonies of the city's everyday life. They are daily occurrences only in the life of the city, while in the lives of the individual subjects who perform them, they constitute what the material object, trigger of the *mémoire involontaire*, constitutes for Proust's subjects, as "for that object, it depends entirely on chance whether we come upon it before we die or whether we never encounter it.[9]" In this sense, the epiphanies which the angels record are diametrically opposed to de Certeau's "oppositional practices of everyday life"[10]: they both rest upon a desire to resist, but the former are isolated revelatory moments, which lack either strategies or tactics, and which cannot be translated into a practice.

B

Although the angels in *Wings of Desire* witness and remember the "great" events of history, it is not this history of "great" events which they record. It is the minor epiphanies of everyday life which they transcribe, from the transient language of momentary experience, into the enduring language of (scriptural) writing. But what is the nature of this latter historical task? For

whom do these angels write? Walter Benjamin's third thesis on the philosophy of history reads[11]:

> A chronicler who recites events without distinguishing between major and minor ones acts in accordance with the following truth: nothing that has ever happened should be regarded as lost for history. To be sure, only a redeemed mankind receives the fullness of its past- which is to say, only for a redeemed mankind has its past become citable in all its moments. Each moment it has lived becomes a *citation à l'ordre du jour* - and that day is Judgement Day.

The angels in the film, who collect and preserve minor events, may well be considered such chroniclers for whom "nothing that ever happened should be regarded as lost for history." Benjamin's chronicler, though, recites for a future (redeemed) audience; his task shall be fulfilled only in the eventuality of the last event of history. History will become "citable in all its [major and minor] moments," that is to say, the writing of (all) history will become possible, only in the future of final redemption. Until that time the chronicler's task remains an unfulfilled *recit* of unrelatable events. These events can exist, that is, they can be recorded and charged with significance, only in relation to a hypothetical future of revelation, and hence they are stripped of much power and meaning in and for the present. At this point the Benjaminian logic of (the writing of) history might start to resonate with the conservative undertones of the religious seduction of promising just fulfillment and retribution in the afterlife. Benjamin's summoning of the Messiah, in the "Theses on the Philosophy of History," however, mostly resolves itself as a nostalgia for future redemption: within this mode of nostalgia the redemptive telos of history is, at once, posited and lamented as unreachable. Such a telos in Benjamin, far from belonging to the realm of possibilities, becomes instead the indispensable rhetorical (and ideological) device which allows historical writing and thinking.

C

Jacques Derrida, in his discussion of John's Apocalypse, writes[12]:

> No longer is one very sure who loans his voice and his tone to the other in the Apocalypse; no longer is one very sure who addresses what to whom. But by a catastrophic overturning here more necessary than ever, one can just as well think this: as soon as one no longer knows who speaks or who writes, the text becomes apocalyptic. And if the dispatches [envois] always refer to other dispatches without decidable destination, the destination remaining to come, then isn't this completely angelic structure, that of the Johannine apocalypse, isn't it also the structure of every scene of writing in general? This is one of the suggestions I wanted to submit for your discussion: wouldn't the apocalyptic be a transcendental condition of all discourse, of all experience even, of every mark or every trace? And the genre of writings called "apocalyptic" in the strict sense, then would be only an example, an *exemplary* revelation of this transcendental structure.

Benjamin's insight consists in having uncovered how his own text becomes such "an *exemplary* revelation," by making explicit its indispensable recourse to the end of history, and its impossibility, as the origin of the writing of history. This leads us back into the still un-addressed issue of the possible destinations and receivers of the fragmentary dispatches which are written down by Wenders' angelic chroniclers. "No longer is one very sure who loans his voice and his tone to the other in the Apocalypse; no longer is one very sure who addresses what to whom," and "as soon as one no longer knows who speaks or who writes, the text becomes apocalyptic." Ultimately, their familiarity and kindness notwithstanding, one does not know Wenders' angels. One would have to say that their fragmentary texts, much like Benjamin's chronicler's and Benjamin's own texts, are impelled by and directed towards the (prime origin of) the final end of history. But if one lets oneself be seduced, even if for just a moment, by the all-encompassing desire of Derrida's further (apocalyptic) suggestion that the apocalyptic might be a transcendental (ideological?) "condition of all discourse," then, the next moment, one would also have to step forward into the difference between Benjamin's "*exemplary* revelation" of the apocalyptic tone and the texts of the angelic chroniclers in the film. Here, I want history to claim the scene of difference. If in Benjamin's historical situation it was still possible, indispensable and unavoidable to posit a future redemption of history (no matter how unrealizable and irrecoverable) as the enabling condition of the thinking of history, in Wenders' situation, on the other hand, there is a sense in which the vision of a future and final epiphany is not any longer present as the transcendental enabling condition of historical discourse, even though it might still inhabit the present in some other form. One never gets the feeling that Wenders' angels are writing for the future, that what they are writing are fragments towards a redeemed history of everyday life. The angels do not write even for themselves, in the sense that it is not their history which they record. The pleasure they realize in reading and narrating to each other the fragments they have collected is infused with and derived from a nostalgia for precisely this fragmentary present, which exists outside their realm of experience. This fragmentary discourse has its immanent enabling condition in a nostalgia for the present, in a longing for the realization of the present in the present.

D

These angels write for no one. The fragments remain fragments. Each one of them can be textualized, in beautiful and painful isolation, but no meta-narrative can be constituted out of these separate textualizations. *Wings of Desire* represents the impossibility of representing a history of contemporary metropolitan experience. Clearly, the fact that this experience has generally undergone, since Benjamin's time, an ever-increasing process of fragmentation and splintering, due preeminently to the increasing mechanization of everyday life, is the changed socio-historical condition which gives rise to

the impossibility textualized in the film. Also, in the Berlin of *Wings of Desire* (a Berlin prior to the opening of the Wall, a city (re)constructed around physical/historical gaps, a boundary-ridden city) the fragmentation of everyday experience had reached newer and further intensities and pervasion. Indeed, in the film fragmentation is represented as the enabling condition of metropolitan experience. No transcendental, meta-historical telos can reconstruct and reorganize such a fragmentary experience into the image of a single, redeemed historical narrative, not even as a future impossibility. The time in which these fragments live is not the Benjaminian *Jetztzeit*, in that it is not a time which awaits. On the other hand, this time is also Benjamin's *Jetztzeit*, but without the awaiting[13].

VII

Of Proust's sadness Benjamin says: "what he once called '*l'imperfection incurable dans l'essence même du présent*' '."[14] This imperfection is the present moment lived as our unbridgeable distance from it. The angels in *Wings of Desire* record the rare fleeting moments which cure this imperfection, which redeem our alienation from the present.

VIII

Michel de Certeau writes that "The desire to see the city preceded the means of satisfying it."[15] This is the desire which impels and guides Wenders' camera over Berlin through the several aerial sequences in *Wings of Desire*. In these sequences Wenders harks back to those "Medieval or Renaissance painters [who] represented the city as seen in a perspective that no eye had yet enjoyed."[16] One thinks here of Ambrogio Lorenzetti's fresco "Good Government in the City," in Siena: this celebratory representation of the new urban experience of 14th century Italy offers an aerial perspective of the city and its bustling streets. This new aerial perspective is linked, in this fresco, to the flourishing of a new socio-political formation: the free-city intended as a walled-in, autonomous and autarchic political unit. But had really "no eye" "yet enjoyed" such a perspective? Within the artistic, religious and folk lores in which Lorenzetti operated, angels certainly constituted a precedent for such an aerial point of view. Lorenzetti reminds us of this perspective precedent as he paints an angel (the allegory of *Securitas*) hovering over the city, while holding a scroll with verses of praise for this new socio-political space. Wenders' aerial sequences, whose perspective is made possible by artistic/technological developments, are inseparable from the figures of the angels hovering over Berlin and writing what they see and hear; in this sense the film too offers a perspective which has its own historical and traditional precedents inscribed onto itself. This perspective is also linked to a specific historical situation, which brought about a new way of experiencing urban space. World War II is the historical event whose uncanny echo comes back to haunt the film in each and every of its flights over Berlin: while watching the city from above, through the angels' perspective, one cannot help but

being reminded that their aerial perspective is the same of the bombers which destroyed the city during the war. Furthermore, the aerial perspective in *Wings of Desire*, much like the one in Lorenzetti's fresco, is bound to the rise and establishment of a new socio-political formation, directly produced, in this case, by the events of World War II. The rebirth of Berlin after the war as a divided city, the establishment of West Berlin as a semi-autonomous political unit, its final inception as a physically separate space with the Berlin Air-lift of 1948, when for about a year the city was accessible only by air: the aerial views of the city in *Wings of Desire* resonate also with these events in the making of post-war Berlin into a new socio-political space.

IX

The aerial perspective in *Wings of Desire* is not celebratory. Or, more precisely, the aerial sequences celebrate the city in lamenting it. This is Rilke's *Klage*. "We comprehend flowering and fading simultaneously," he writes in the fourth of his *Duino Elegies*. More than once in the course of these recurring sequences we glide from the heights of the angels' totalizing vision down towards Berlin's blue-gray tenement-buildings and we lose ourselves into the minute labyrinths of streets and people's thoughts. There is a profound sadness in the beauty of this hovering and gliding above the city and plunging into its midst, as if they were attempts to commemorate something about to disappear, to capture something in its last instant, as if every moment were the last moment. Rilke in his tenth elegy narrates "*die weite Landschaft der Klagen*." This "spacious landscape of Lamentation" is the city Wenders creates from above. The camera which leads from the heights of this creation into the city and through the images of its daily experience and its history is Rilke's *Klage* who leads the dead youth and the reader into this landscape and through its temples, columns, towers, and ruins.[17]

X

A

"Jeder Engel ist schrecklich."[18] Rilke's angels are always "terrible." Wenders acknowledges the angels of the *Duino Elegies* as the prime source of inspiration for his angels in *Wings of Desire*.[19] Wenders' kind, benevolent and always so human angels, however, are far from Rilke's "terrible" angelic visions. In his letters Rilke writes[20]:

> The Angel of the Elegies is the creature in whom that transformation of the visible into the invisible we are performing already appears complete... The Angel of the Elegies is the being who vouches for the recognition of a higher degree of reality in the invisible. — Therefore "terrible" to us, because we, its lovers and transformers, still depend on the visible.

As Cassiel reminds Damiel and ourselves, the angels in *Wings of Desire* testify to (what he names) the spiritual existence of individuals, they preserve the *Geist*. They do so by transforming the invisible into the visible, by capturing in writing the fleeting thoughts, preoccupations, anxieties and revelations of daily existence. Even Cassiel, who repeatedly stresses the "higher degree of reality in the invisible," and who responds to Damiel's enthusiastic description of what his first day as a human will be by saying that, whatever it will be, it will not be "true," even this Cassiel and his conception of the invisible are fundamentally dependent on the visible and on representation, such as the act of writing. Furthermore, while Rilke's humans are attracted to the invisible and the angels, in Wenders this relationship is reversed when Damiel is seduced by a human, by the visible, and by the sensory and physical at large, into entering the flow of human history.

B

Rilke conceived the project of the *Duino Elegies*, and wrote most of them, in the years just preceding World War I. Here, rather than asking whether Rilke's angels were heralds of what was to come, I reflect on what it could have meant for Rilke, in those years of impending doom, to create angels which would complete "the transformation of the visible into the invisible." Rilke's is a flight from representation. If the problem of representation is always an historical problem, in the sense that representations of whatever kind and purpose become inevitably and primarily representations of the history of which they partake as forms, then at times of historical upheaval the overwhelming urgency of historical events will flood more surely and more quickly the representational field of culture and will drain all of its representational energies. In the face of an historical disaster, and in the midst of a vast crisis of cultural values and of socio-political formations (preeminently, for Rilke, the impending disintegration of the Austro-Hungarian Empire), to represent, however critically and oppositionally, would have inevitably meant to represent and reiterate and reinforce in its inevitability that crisis and that disaster. Rilke's angels are dictated by an historical necessity to search for a non-representational space in which to enact a utopian gesture (the ever-present *Klage* of the elegies, utopian in its nostalgia) in defiance of historical catastrophe. These angels belong to the realm of an invisible, meta-historical *Geist*. The angels in *Wings of Desire* also belong in a non-visible realm; on the other hand, they are also completely immersed in acts of representation: it is their task to transform the invisible into the visible. These immemorial angels, who remember World War I and World War II, are the indispensable connection to the most uncomfortable and unexplored of German pasts for Wenders, who grew up and operates within the historical oblivion of post-war Germany. In a contemporary German situation which is still characterized by what Wenders anxiously denominates as an "inability to name"[21] history, and which is presently experiencing a resurgence of xenophobic discourses and of neo-fascist polit-

ical parties, historical urgency demands that the absence (repressed presence) from collective memory of Germany's only too recent past be named, remembered, represented. If in Rilke's historical situation there was a necessity to yearn for the paradox and impossibility of a non-representational, "terrible" space, with Wenders we experience a necessity for the construction of new (fragmentary) forms of representation. If the invisible of Rilke's angels was the realm of a meta-historical *Geist*, for Wenders' angels history is that invisible, "absent cause," which needs representing.

XI

A

The angels' presence in *Wings of Desire* has not yet been questioned. Wenders repeatedly writes that the angels were only an artifice to enable him to represent and narrate the everyday.[22] This assertion shrouds a paradox: Wenders enters the most material world of common preoccupations and daily minutiae through the most transcendental of traditional and mystical ingresses. This paradox raises as many intricate interrogatives as it tries to dispel. Why does the contemporary metropolitan experience of the everyday need such an artifice to be narrated? What peculiar sensory and epistemological apparatus construct such an experience, if the latter becomes representable only through angels? What kind of subject-position, if any, does the film's angelic vision imply? In a 1938 letter to Gershom Scholem, Benjamin writes[23]:

> Kafka's work is an ellipse with foci that are far apart and are determined, on the one hand, by mystical experience (in particular, the experience of tradition) and, on the other, by the experience of the modern big-city dweller.... What is actually and in a very literal sense wildly incredible in Kafka is that this most recent world of experience was conveyed to him precisely by this mystical tradition. This, of course, could not have happened without devastating processes... within this tradition. The long and the short of it is that apparently an appeal had to be made to the forces of this tradition if an individual (by the name of Franz Kafka) was to be confronted with that reality of ours which realizes itself theoretically, for example, in modern physics, and practically in the technology of modern warfare. What I mean to say is that this reality can virtually no longer be experienced by an *individual*, and that Kafka's world, frequently of such playfulness and interlaced with angels, is the exact complement of his era which is preparing to do away with the inhabitants of this planet on a considerable scale.

Both Kafka and Wenders are confronted by the problem of gaining access to the increasingly elusive "experience of the modern big-city dweller," (and this epistemological problem is already at the same time a problem of representation). In the attempt to inquire into what in effect is the crux of modernity, they both resort to the circuitous routes of tradition. Once in-

voked in the face of contemporary metropolitan experience, tradition appears to Kafka and Wenders in the guise of angels.

B

Kafka's and Wenders' necessities (and results) in appealing to the forces of tradition do not completely coincide. That is so largely because the traditions they are drawing from are not the same. Kafka constructs his experience of the present from the standpoint of the mystical world of Judaic and German folk traditions.[24] It is precisely Kafka's encounter of modernity, with its resulting monstrous metamorphoses of tradition, which, taken as an extreme and hence paradigmatic product of a certain *mitteleuropäischer Modernismus*, constitutes the tradition Wenders invokes in *Wings of Desire*. This tradition of modernism is the structure of mediation in Wenders' project of contemporary metropolitan representation. Kafka's, but also Benjamin's, Rilke's and Klee's, angels become the emblems of that modernist tradition which alone can convey to Wenders the present. The angels which mediate the fragmentary images of present day Berlin are the echoes this tradition sends through the film.

C

Angels: these indefatigable messengers, envoys, couriers, emissaries, always traversing the heavens and the ages, always trespassing boundaries, demarcations, thresholds, always carrying messages, missives, dispatches. Wenders could have chosen no better agents to perform so acrobatically what in effect is a double process of mediation. The angels of *Wings of Desire* mediate, on the one hand, between the fragmentary of contemporary metropolitan experience and the spectator, and, on the other, between the past of modernist tradition and the present of the film.

D

Tradition does not become so up until the instant in which it is invoked as tradition. This does not only mean that there is no tradition prior to its naming. There is no tradition even after its naming. To invoke is already to name, to create, to bring into existence. To invoke is also already to quote, to fragment, to tear out of context, to destroy the context. The *fiat* always operates by destruction. It is only by revealing these "devastating processes" of tradition that one avoids reactionary nostalgia.

E

According to Benjamin, Kafka needed to appeal to the forces of tradition if he were to experience contemporary reality as an *individual*. Kafka's necessity of tradition stems from a perceived loss of individual subjectivity intended as a unity of experience. In Wenders' historical situation it has become clear that subjectivity is to undergo profound re-definitions if it is to form a mental image out of the present fragmentary paroxysm. Wenders'

appeal to tradition is not meant to recuperate a lost unity of individual experience. I have already pointed out how in *Wings of Desire* fragmentation itself is the enabling condition of representation and how the film represents an impossibility of representation.[25] It is such a paradox of representation what the angels of tradition enable. In *Wings of Desire* the camera-eye coincides with the angelic vision: the spectator sees what no human can see, hears what no human can hear.[26] From apartment to apartment through walls, shut windows, closed doors; from car to car in the traffic of the *Autobahn*; from commuter to commuter in the *U-Bahn*; from one fragmented thought to another: the angels move across all these innumerable discrete moments thus linking them by their invisible peregrinations through the city's fabric even while representing them in their fragmentation. Through the angels' gnostic somersaults one apprehends the impossibility of representing a unified meta-narrative at the same time that one comes closest to such a unified representation. *Wings of Desire* raises the spectator to the transcendental and omniscient vision of the angels. In this ascent the film represents the deep-seated longing for a gnostic position from which to articulate the fragments of the everyday in a way which would reveal them, their unnegotiable fragmentation notwithstanding, as being structured by and within the same socio-historical situation. The angels' wanderings and investigations textualize the otherwise radically invisible structure of a history in which all the fragments share. Between a longing for representation and the representation of this longing *Wings of Desire* unfolds as a utopian gesture.

XII

A

The youth who climbs over a guard-rail and then jumps off the roof of a building into the void; Damiel who enters human history because he is tired of the limits of his spiritual, angelic existence; Damiel who, once a human, learns the limits of physical existence: his head bleeds if hit, a "lousy cop" forbids his entrance through a gate; the woman on a bicycle who would want to go over the edge, to become mad, and be "redeemed at last"; the prisoner who bangs his head into the wall of his cell; the man who drives the car out of the garage and into the traffic, who complains of the multiplication of borders and boundaries, who laments that Germany has crumbled into as many states as there are individuals, who concludes that no one can any longer govern Germany: the fragments of everyday life represented in *Wings of Desire* share in an acute preoccupation with the trespassing and overcoming of boundaries, barriers, demarcations of all sorts. It is through this overriding preoccupation that the fragments, thus brought into relation, articulate the socio-historical situation which is post-war Berlin. These particular, specific boundaries are all metonymies of the Berlin Wall. The angels, who freely cross any physical and political barrier, prefigure a Berlin without the Wall. The film unveils the desire for the opening of the Wall as

the organizing principle and driving force of Berlin's collective unconscious. It is in the representation of such a desire that the film is at its most utopian.

B

Wings of Desire is at its least utopian precisely when it most tries to be so. The resolution achieved at the end is a mystifying one, as it retroactively forces the previous parts of the film into the fetters of a teleological narrative, while it was precisely such a narrative that most of the film had successfully avoided and discredited as obsolete. The sense of closure and fulfillment realized in the union of Marion and Damiel comes at the end of a film which up to that point had built its strength and originality on representing the uncompromising fragmentation of contemporary metropolitan experience as being no longer available for any conventional, unified representation. Furthermore, there is a cost for Marion's and Damiel's idyll which the film pays too readily and too lightly: the relationship between Damiel and Cassiel needs to be severed, sacrificed for Damiel to step into the world of human experience and reach Marion. Although there are few occasions when Cassiel's pain at the friend's betrayal is represented (most notably and beautifully in the homoerotic sacramentality of the Pietà enacted within the liminal enclave of the Wall), these representations are pervaded by a sense of inevitability and resignation which seems to reiterate a logic of "end justify the means" in the economy of the narrative. In the end the film uncritically reiterates all the conventions which prescribe a same-sex relationship to be eventually finalized to an opposite-sex one.[27] In the attempt to restore a conventional closure, and to reconstruct thus a wholeness of experience out of a world which has been represented throughout the film as no longer having the indispensable premises for such a wholeness or closure, *Wings of Desire* fails. "The whole is the false:" Adorno's capsizing of Hegel is valid now more than ever.[28]

C

When the Circus Alekan shuts down, its caravan leaves behind Marion in the middle of the large and now empty space which had been occupied by the tents and trailers. Marion is alone and without plans for the future. She stands there, staring into the distance, inebriated by the openness and possibilities of this newly-freed space. "I am here, I am free." "I can imagine anything." "Everything is possible." "Now... in this place... a feeling of happiness that I could have forever." These moments after the departure of the circus are already a vision of Berlin after the Wall. The circus, whose closing down opens up new and uncharted spaces, is itself a circular metonymy of the larger enclosing circle which is the Wall. Marion's exhilaration in the face of a sudden opening into unpredictable possibilities is the exhilaration which a few months ago seized the Berliners who were jumping and dancing on the Wall. In *Wings of Desire* post-war Berlin is a caesura of history. At the same time there is in this film an upsurge of prophetic exhilaration, a sweeping

gesture of closing and opening at one stroke, which envisions that after the Wall history can at last begin again.

Notes

1. Kafka, Franz, *Amerika*, translated by Edwin Muir, (New York: New Directions, 1962), pp. 273-274.
2. Brod, Max, "Afterword," *Ibid.*, p.298, my emphasis.
3. Benjamin, Walter, "Some Reflections on Kafka," in *Illuminations*, translated by Harry Zohn, (New York: Schocken Books, 1985), pp.144-145.
4. Wenders, Wim, "*Wings of Desire*. An Interview with Wim Wenders," by Bethany Eden Jacobson, *Impulse*, Winter 1989, Toronto, p.71.
5. *Ibid.*, p.67.
6. *Ibid.*, p.71.
7. Benjamin, Walter, "Theses on the Philosophy of History," in *Illuminations*, pp. 257-8.
8. This remark is not subtitled in the English language version of the film.
9. Proust, Marcel, quoted in Walter Benjamin's "On Some Motifs in Baudelaire," in *Illuminations*, p.158.
10. de Certeau, Michel, "On the Oppositional Practices of Everyday Life," translated by Fredric Jameson and Carl Lovitt, *Social Text*, Fall 1980, p. 5.
11. See note 7, p.254.
12. Derrida, Jacques, "Of an Apocalyptic Tone Recently Adopted in Philosophy," translated by John P. Leavey Jr., *Oxford Literary Review*, vol. VI, 1984, p.27.
13. In Benjamin's fourteenth thesis on the philosophy of history we read:

> "History is the subject of a structure whose site is not homogeneous, empty time, but time filled by the presence of the now [Jetztzeit]. Thus, to Robespierre ancient Rome was a past charged with the time of the now which he blasted out of the continuum of history. The French Revolution viewed itself as Rome reincarnate." The time of Wenders' angelic fragments is this Jetztzeit, but as experienced in the present moment, and not in a past of which the present would then become the sole justification, legitimization and redemption. (See note 7, p.261.)

14. "the incurable imperfection in the very essence of the present moment," in Benjamin's "The Image of Proust," *Illuminations*, p.203.
15. de Certeau, Michel, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, translated by Steven Rendall (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), p. 92.
16. Ibid.
17. Rilke, Rainer Maria, *Duino Elegies*, translated by J. B. Leishman and Stephen Spender (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1967), pp. 82-3.
18. *Ibid.*, p. 28. "Every angel is terrible." This is the opening sentence of Rilke's second elegy. See also, in the first elegy, "Each single angel is terrible" and the whole of the first stanza, pp.20-23.
19. He does so in several interviews. See "*Wings of Desire*. An interview with Wim Wenders," *Impulse*, Toronto, Winter 1989, p. 66, and also "Looking Homeward. A conversation with Wim Wenders," *Spectator*, Sept. 29 1988, Raleigh NC, p. 8.
20. Rilke, Rainer Maria, *Duino Elegies*, "Commentary," by J. B. Leishman and Stephen Spender, p. 87.
21. See the previously footnoted interview in *Impulse*; p. 69.
22. Wenders, Wim, "Il quotidiano della storia nella metafora degli angeli," translated from German into Italian by Luca Antoccia, *Cinema Nuovo*, January-February 1988, Bari, Italy, p. 5.
23. See note 3, pp. 141-143.
24. It is important to emphasize, like Benjamin does, that it is both the Jewish and the German folk traditions through which Kafka perceives the present. See Benjamin's "Franz Kafka. On the Tenth Anniversary of His Death," in *Illuminations*, p.134.
25. See VI, D, above.
26. Indeed, if it would make any sense, for this film one should also speak of a 'camera-ear' and of an 'aural vision'.
27. To this reiteration contributes to no negligible measure Peter Handke's heavy-handed writing in Marion's last monologue at the night-club, in which she declares to Damiel that there is "no greater story than ours, that of man and woman." For more information on the exact contributions of Peter Handke to the film's screenplay see "*Wings of Desire*. An interview with Wim Wenders," by Bethany Eden Jacobson, in *Impulse*, Toronto, Winter 1989, p. 68.
28. Adorno, Theodor, *Minima Moralia*, translated by E. F. N. Jephcott (London: Verso, 1987), p. 50.

A Day Without Art

MICHAEL HUNT STOLBACH

The event was long overdue! "A Day Without Art: A National Day of Action and Mourning in Response to the AIDS Crisis." A New York AIDS activist group — VISUAL AIDS — shaped it, and over 400 arts institutions participated, by taking down their art. Gallery spaces abstract in their emptiness became shrines for the dead. This is how they evoked December 1, 1989, the World Health Organization's second annual "AIDS Awareness Day." It was a somber, solemn day; it was also a day embroiled in the conflicts that mean AIDS. At the Metropolitan Museum, Picasso's Portrait of Gertrude Stein was the only piece removed. *Why Picasso? Why Gertrude Stein?*

Other galleries and museums rather than removing art, chose to sponsor exhibitions dealing with the devastating effects of AIDS. Illness, death and mourning are not the stuff that add up to pleasing definitions of art, and it is therefore not surprising that most of this kind of work had previously remained unshown. Two of these exhibitions gave a very good idea of the kind of art that does not play on 57th Street. As exhibition sponsors in New York discovered, one way to make a big noise is to show work about AIDS.

Many are the complex social and political issues that interface with the history of this epidemic in this country: discrimination against gay men — the group first affected by AIDS — and all persons with AIDS, FDA policies protracting the testing of experimental drugs, mandatory testing for HIV infection, contact tracing, quarantining and the distribution of clean needles to IV drug users. These issues have never made an impression on an art scene that glorifies art as object made in America and sold in Japan. Like an excluded work force, artists engaged in relevant social discourse are told "need not apply."

As one of these artists myself, I know the difficulties encountered. My need, first to record gay identity, and later to respond to AIDS, has drastically altered my painting in the last decade. The art scene which perpetuates century-old dictums of "modernism" — post, or otherwise — and the myths of "avant garde-ism" is no longer accessible or desirable.

As long as the museums and commercial galleries define "culture," what gets shown and how it gets talked about is a tightly controlled process. As the recent Warhol retrospect at the Museum of Modern Art demonstrated, Warhol's rise from virtual 60's "sexual outlaw" to 80's museum star, is deliberately re-choreographed to suppress his gay sexuality and the enormous influence of 50's and 60's gay sub-culture in the

formation of pop-art. If you think that Jesse Helms or Congress — the recent trouble makers over gay homoerotic art — have a monopoly on censorship, then you haven't been paying attention to how institutions like MOMA are run.

Nan Hunter, curator of the AIDS show "Witnesses: Against our Vanishing", at lower Manhattan's Artists Space, found out that even "alternative" arts organizations are expected to play by the rules in this era of public funding for the arts. Hunter's show sought to record "the personal response to AIDS" of photographer and artist friends from New York's East Village. Some of these — the late Mark Morrisoe, Peter Hujar and Vittorio Scarpiti — were persons with AIDS (PWA's) now dead. Their self-portraits are a startling account of image making as a death rite. Another artist and PWA, David Wojnarowicz, contributed an essay for Hunter's show catalogue that also vehemently attacked Senator Helms, Congressman Dannemeyer, and New York's Cardinal O'Connor for their positions on AIDS.

Unfortunately — as it turned out — this catalogue received funding in the spring on 1989 from the National Endowment for the ARTS (NEA). Since then, Senator Jesse Helms — never one to miss an opportunity to vent his hate against gay men and lesbians — seized upon NEA's funding of late gay photographer Robert Mapplethorpe's retrospect, to induce Congress to impose restrictions on NEA's funding policies. For reasons still not clear, Artists Space Director Susan Wyatt reacted to all of this by submitting Hunter's catalogue text for re-review.

A storm erupted when John Frohnmeyer — the newly installed chair of NEA — notified Wyatt that due to the "political" and "homoerotic" content of Wojnarowicz's essay "the endowment's funds may not be used to exhibit or publish this material." Although Frohnmeyer capitulated after being barraged by protests from the arts community, the anger boiled over into the streets at this show's opening with a block long demonstration organized by ACT-UP (the AIDS COALITION TO UNLEASH POWER).

What Congress has stated is that NEA funds may not be used "to promote, disseminate, or reproduce materials considered obscene, including sadomasochism, homoeroticism, the sexual exploitation of children or individuals engaged in sex acts ... and which when taken as a whole, do not have serious, literary, artistic, political or scientific value." With requisite disclaimers, Congress has laid its heavy hand on NEA's mandate, perniciously equating "homoeroticism" with "abusive" sex, to pave the road to censorship in the public funding of the arts. For now, not one museum or gallery — including Artists Space — has acted to separate itself from this corrupted funding process.

Just as the furor was calming down, another was brewing at the Henry Street Settlement House (on New York's lower east side) between its chief

administrator Barbara Tate and its AIDS show curator Humberto Chavez. "Images and Words: Artists Respond to AIDS" struck a sexually tensed political edge that seemed to take Henry Street by surprise.

The trouble began when Tate prevented Gran Fury — an AIDS activist group — from hanging its "banner" proclaiming "ALL PEOPLE WITH AIDS ARE INNOCENT" on the front of her building. Played up by the press amidst Chavez's charges of censorship, it threatened the show's opening and turned what should have been a model partnership between artists and a community center into another battle ground.

Although compromise allowed the hanging of this "banner" over the street, this show opened with Chavez leafleting his sponsors. In the end this whole affair seems to have reflected Henry Street's own discomfort with displaying Gran Fury's message to its neighborhood. However, it should not be allowed to obscure the fact that Henry Street afforded Chavez the opportunity to show work that is generally relegated to the art scene "closet" in a year when the Whitney Biennial failed to include a single work dealing with AIDS.

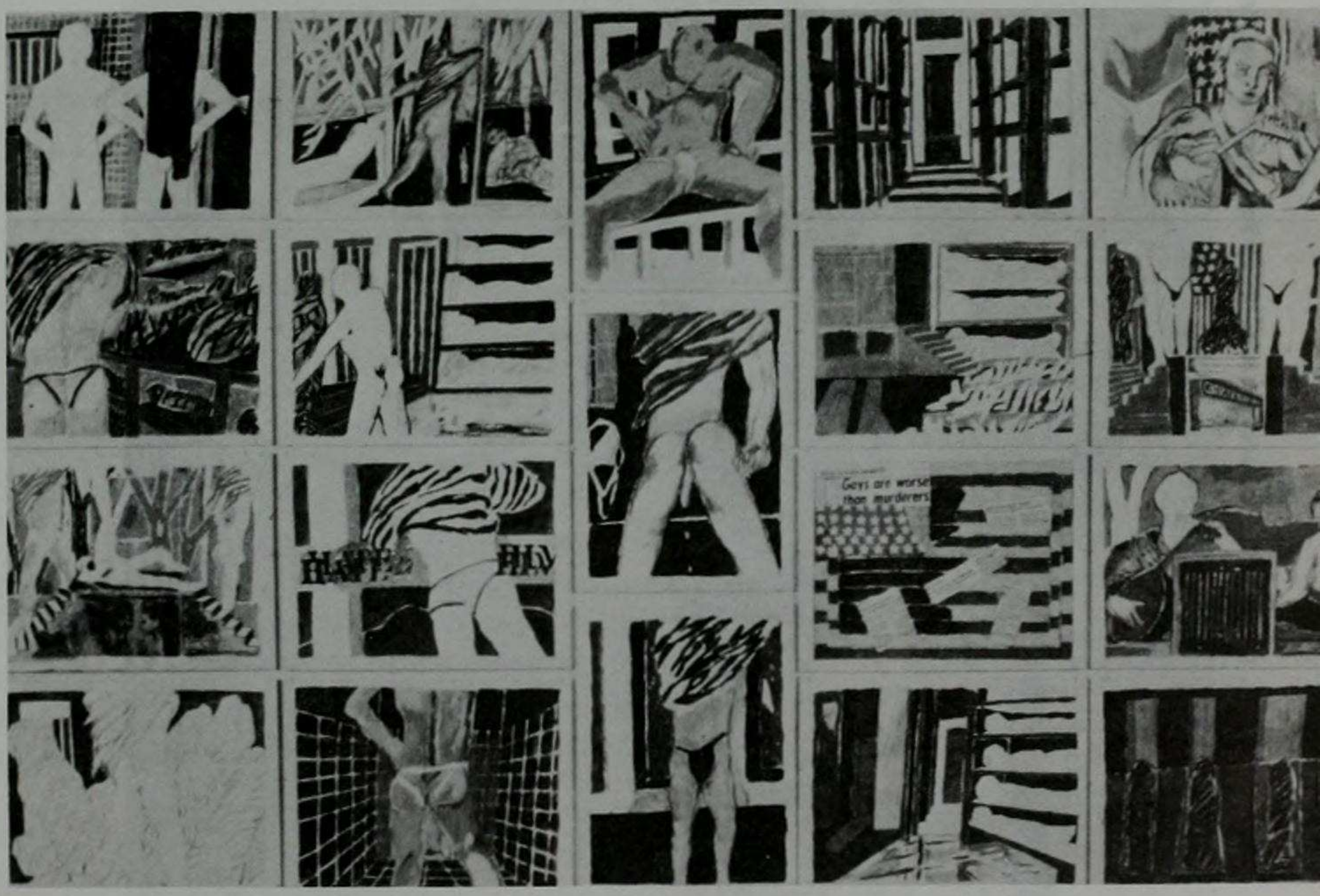
From this show, Robert Repinski's "The Burroughs-Wellcome Mat", (1989), delivers a stinging attack on Burroughs Wellcome for its "profiteering" on AZT, the only FDA approved drug to treat AIDS. Kingsley Parker's "Reflections of a Kinder, Gentler Nation" (1989), shows an archetypical government facade, wrapped in obituaries and stock quotations, tilting on coffins to mock the Reagan/Bush response to AIDS. Ellen Neipris's "ACT-UP DIE IN" (1989), transforms photo-journalist style to both document and restate protest. My own work in this show, "Random Access" (1989), combines serial homoerotic and death images with newspaper headlines to amass a record of gay identity, hate, and prejudice in response to AIDS.

With New York curators fending off censorship and funding cuts, what could happen to the opening of an AIDS show on a small college campus in rural Pennsylvania. Here, where affluent urban weekenders mix talk of gardening, antiques, and deer hunting, AIDS is something they would like to leave behind. But even Reading now has AIDS.

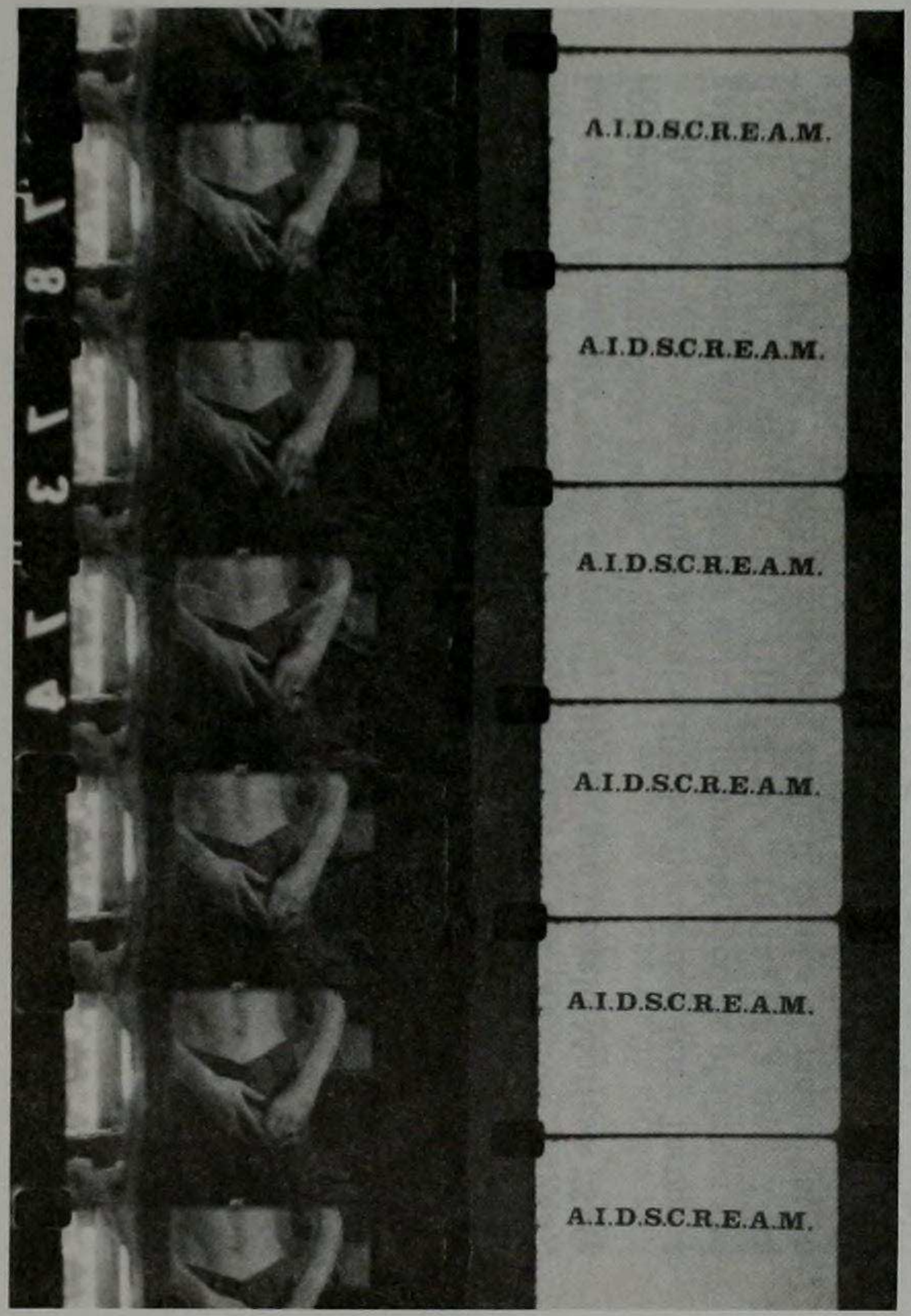
In organizing "All About AIDS" for the Albright College's Freedman Gallery in Reading, gallery directory David S. Ruben seems to have taken these and other considerations into account. Ruben also needed to interest students who in general have no direct experience of AIDS and for whom the sexual issue it raises — homosexuality and safe sex education — are inherently threatening and difficult to address within the college environment. Perhaps in attempting to sail these troubled waters smoothly — which he did — Ruben excluded the more provocative kinds of art shown in New York. If he succeeded in offending no one, he necessarily told less about the AIDS epidemic.

If the show's subject kept his audience focused on AIDS, much of its abstract work allowed for a very traditional viewing experience. Many of these artists are represented by major galleries and reflect a disturbing tendency to commercialize work about AIDS that softens the dialogue, adheres to constraints on subject, and shares a willingness to "please". If work of this kind is more accessible to its audience, it nevertheless invites other criticism. Was Ruben justified in picking images that portrayed the suffering of a mother with AIDS, while shifting the focus from gay men or IV drug users? A counterpart of more gripping figurative imagery was included with the dying Robert Mapplethorpe's "Self Portrait" (1988), Luis Cruz Azaceta's "AIDS Count II" (1988), and Donald Moffet's "Safe Journey to Some Safe Place" (1988).

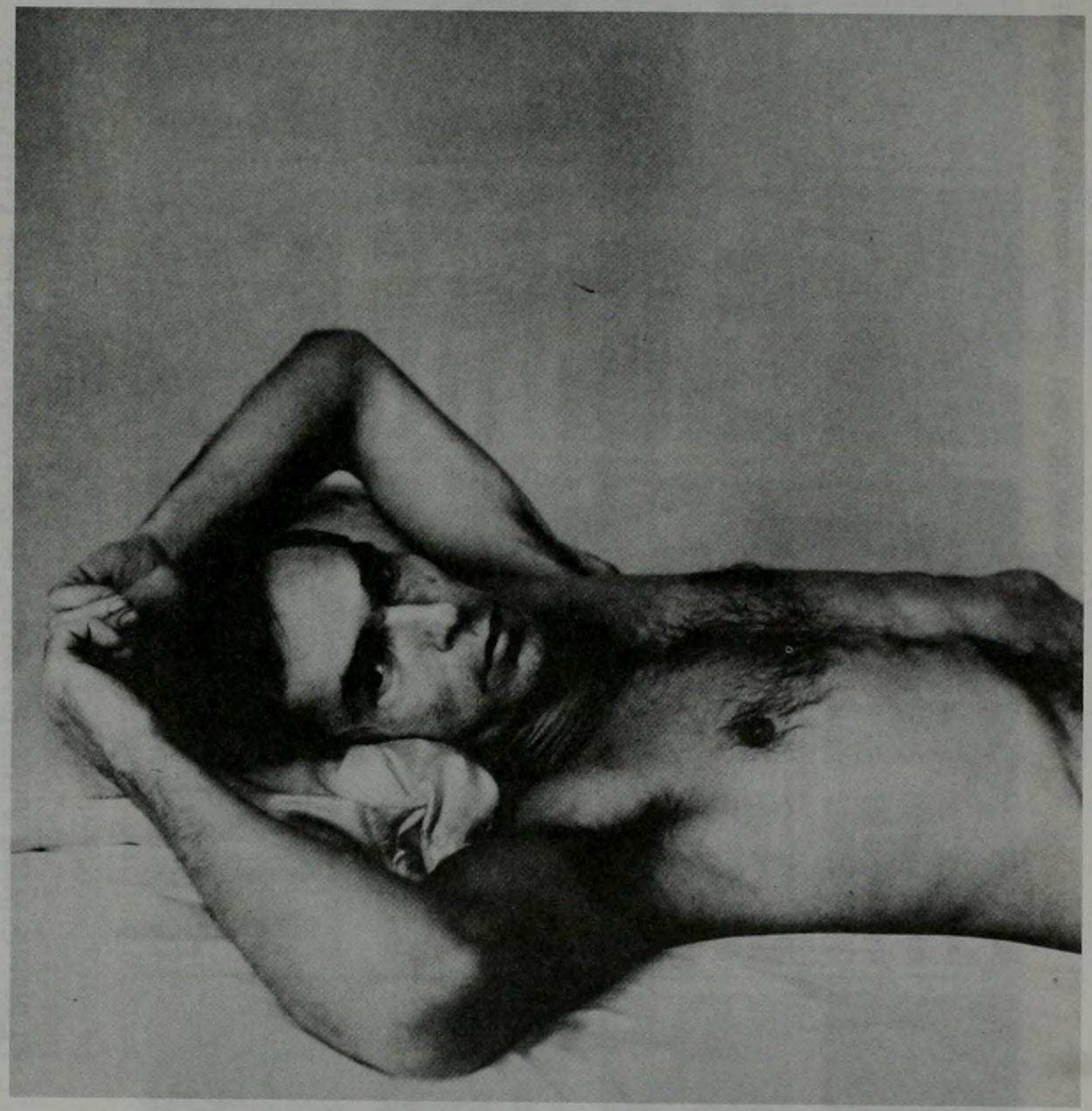
An adjunct showing of films about AIDS by filmmaker Jerry Tartaglia gave his audience an opportunity to react to harsher records of illness and death as well as graphically filmed sex. Tartaglia's own film "A.I.D.S.C.R.E.A.M." (1988), intercuts explicit scenes of masturbation and oral sex in arguing that AIDS is being used to annihilate gay identity and sexuality. It provoked a heated exchange between Tartaglia and his largely student audience, which clearly raised some of the more difficult issues about AIDS. It brings us back to what art about AIDS should be about: telling the truth about AIDS.



Michael Hunt Stolbach, "Random Access" 1989. Oil crayon, gouache, pencil on paper, 72 x 114 inches



Jerry Tartaglia, "A.I.D.S.C.R.E.A.M.,"
1988. Self-processed 16mm film



Peter Hujar, "Self portrait lying down," b/w photograph, 11x17 inches

The Simulation Syndrome: From War Games to Game Wars

JAMES DER DERIAN

After the informational euphoria of 1989, the first week of February had the feel of a morning after. Media dealerships handed out bromides when President Mikhail Gorbachev yet again did the unthinkable, proposing an end to the Soviet Communist Party's monopoly on power. News junkies hardly twitched when President George Bush once more responded with the predictable, calling a five minute time-out during a war game at Fort Irwin's National Training Center to let the soldiers know the good news. Kitted out in a photo-opportunistic ensemble of camouflage jacket, pin-stripe trousers, and wing-tip shoes, Bush used a radio link to tell the 2,689 players spread-out over the Mojave Desert that "we are pleased to see Chairman Gorbachev's proposal to expand steps toward pluralism in the Soviet Union." Inspired, the "Soviet" 197th Krasnovian Motorized Rifle Regiment made *borscht* out of the U.S. Third Brigade of the Ninth Infantry Division, and then headed for the ridge from which Bush had pledged not "to let down our guard against a worldwide threat." But Bush — clearly impressed by the power of fictitious forces over real ones — had already left for a briefing tour of the Livermore Labs, birthplace and incubator of Star Wars.

Of course, making the unthinkable predictable is Bush's number one job. But is it an historical irony or just the dumbness of imperial decline that should suddenly make war games such an attractive diplomatico-strategic tool for the job?

Perhaps it is simply a matter of centennial coincidence. In 1889 Major William Livermore of the Army Corp of Engineers joined William McCarty Little and Rear Admiral Alfred Thayer Mahan at the Naval War College to set up our nation's first modern system of war gaming. Spurred by the success of the expansionist Prussians who had used *Kriegsspiel* ('war play') before their victories over the Austrians at Sadowa in 1866 and the French in 1870, these early advocates of American war gaming found their positions strengthened when Japan achieved a stunning victory over the Russians in 1904 — a victory plotted out beforehand with newly created war games.

Long before Bush made his trip to the Mojave, war gaming had sallied from the battlefield, emerged from the basements of the War Colleges, leaked out of the high security rooms of research centers like RAND and BDM International, and entered if not seized the public imagination. One reason for the shift is the computerization of war gaming. Just as the art of warfare has undergone radical changes, so too has the art of gaming.

At the micro-level, the slow, spatial movement of toy soldiers and cardboard ships, the contoured sand tables, and expansive game rooms have largely been replaced by the high-speed electronic calculations and high-resolution screens of computer simulations. And from their inception thirty years ago, computer war games have undergone radical changes. When the Naval War college finally closed down its old tiled war gaming room in 1958, it was replaced with the Navy Electronic Warfare System (NEWS) which cost more than $10 million dollars and filled a three-story building. Today those very NEWS games could be played on the home computer.

And *they are* being played at home, as well as at the movies and in the classrooms. One of the most popular games, *Balance of Power*, requires only 256K memory, two disk drives, and the introduction of Syria into any scenario to trigger World War III (personal best: two minutes to reach Armageddon). Almost every mall now has a video arcade full of remarkably sophisticated war games: one can fly as *Top Gun*, rescue hostages *successfully*, or win historical (and some not so historical) military conflicts. Many of the wildly popular *Nintendo* games are based on military simulations. There is thefilm *WarGames*, about a young hacker who taps into an Air Force computer and nearly triggers a nuclear war between the superpowers, which is currently enjoying high-volume sales and rentals as a video. And more recently Ted Koeppel assembled — "for the first time ever" — a group of high-ranking military and government officials from the Soviet Union and the U.S. to play out a war game for an ABC prime-time audience.

Moreover, the war at home is increasingly being gamed. Before the 1984 Los Angeles Olympics, the various law enforcement agencies responsible for security got together to train for possible terrorist attacks. They took advantage of a new "Tactical Mapping System' created by the United States Agency for Advanced Research Projects that had put over 54,000 moving images of Aspen, Colorado on instantly accessible videodiscs (a veritable mink farm for animal rights counter-terrorists?). In Los Angeles, likely building targets were similarly video-taped, down to the detail of doorlocks and ventilation systems. Anti-terrorist specialists then trained by "walking through' computer simulations, their eyes becoming the camera's eye.

My purpose, however, is not simply to give notice of the computer diffusion of war games. Nor is it to claim that a pervasive militarization of society is likely to result. That might be a possibility, but there is a more complex if less obvious danger that deserves our attention. The proliferation of simulations into all walks of life — as news (re)creations, video games, flight simulators, police interrogations, and war plans — has weakened and in some cases displaced the representational boundary between the simulation and the "real thing'.

We all have some notion of the reality of war, but just what is its simulation? It could be broadly defined as the *continuation of war by means of verisimilitude*.Conventionally, a "war game' uses broad descriptive strokes and a minimum of mathematical abstraction to make generalizations about the behavior of actors, while the "simulation' uses algorithms and computer power to analyze the amount of technical detail considered necessary to predict events and the behavior of actors. Judging by the gradual shift by the military and think-tanks from games to mainly computerized simulations — reflected in the shift of the Joint Chiefs of Staff gaming organization from SAGA (Studies, Analysis, and Gaming Agency) to JAD (Joint Analysis Directorate) — it would seem that simulation is becoming the preferred, "sponge' term. "Simulation' also has the obvious advantage of sounding more serious than "gaming, and of carrying more of a high-tech, scientific connotation than modeling.

Driven by the goal of total authenticity and rendered by new scientific methods of reproduction, the war simulation is leading us into a brave new world. The writer J.L. Borges anticipated this realm in his fable about the cartographers who when ordered by the emperor to draw the perfect map of the empire created one that exactly and entirely covered the territory. The social critic Jean Baudrillard recounts this story to make a telling point: we now have the technical means to make maps and models that seem as real as the reality that they simulate. "Virtual' or "artificial' reality is what the computer scientists are calling it. Baudrillard refers to it as the realm of hyperreality, where origins are forgotten, referents lost, and simulations begin to precede and engender reality. This is the world of Mutual Assured Destruction, Star Wars, and Stealth Technology, all of them deterrence machines that most persuasively "work' in the hyperreal world of strategic simulation (a point brought home by the botched bombing of the Panamanian military barracks by a stealth FB-117).

A hyperreal simulation can take on many forms. For the radar operator and the tactical information coordinator of the *U.S.S. Vincennes* on July 3, 1988 it looked like an attacking Iranian F-14, even though their highly sophisticated Aegis radar system registered an unidentified airplane flying level at 12,000 feet. Is it possible that the nine months of simulation training with computer tapes that preceded the encounter engendered a hyperreality which absorbed the reality of the moment? Did the Iranian Airbus, in effect, disappear before the surface to air missile struck, fading from an plane with 290 civilians to an electronic representationona radar screen to a simulated target? Can a simulation overpower a reality which does not conform to it?

A later military investigation laid the blame on stress: the *Vincennes* and its crew had never been in combat, they were engaged with Iranian speedboats at the time, and surely the memory of the *U.S.S Stark* — which did not fire at an Iraqi warplane andwas nearly sunk by an Exocet

missile — was on everyone's mind. Yet stress has many origins, and the military shows signs of ignoring the mostserious one: the tension that can develop when the simulation becomes too real.

Symptoms have appeared elsewhere in the armed services. Although the Air Force has thrown a veil of secrecy over it, the Army, Navy, and Marine Corps have become alarmed by the sharp increase in cases of "simulator sickness'. This is a condition in which users of flight simulators — especially those that make use of powerful computers to create the most "realistic' motions and graphic representations of flight — experience flashbacks, visual distortions, and physical disorientation. Experts are unsure of the cause, but many of them attribute the disorder to "cue conflict,' which happens when one's expectations based on experience run up against contrary sensory information.

Should we be on the alert against a similar effect taking hold in the ranks of military and diplomatic officials, as well with the international relations specialists, who create, play, and promote war games? Is there sufficient evidence of a *simulation syndrome* creeping into our infinite preparations for war as well as war-fighting itself?

Probably not. Certainly there is not sufficient proof to wean the Navy from its "Global Game' or the Army from its "Janus' game as their preferred training method. Or to deter the Foreign Service Institute from using simulations like the "Crisis in Al Jazira' to educate junior-level diplomats in the art of crisis management and counterterrorism. Or to prevent the ubiquitous think-tanks from modeling everything from domestic crime to nuclear war, and selling them to the highest bidder. In turn, we — the inhabitants of advanced mediacracies — have become seduced by the technical reproduction of reality, especially its highest stage of development, the computer simulation. What will happen when the computer representation of reality moves into even more spectacular realms, where with the aid of holograms, interactive media, sensor helmets, data gloves, and other technologies of virtual reality we can fully inhabit the cyberspace of a three-dimensional, computer-generated hyperreality?

We should probably turn to science fiction rather than social science — to *Bladerunner* and *Robocop*, William Gibson and other cyberpunk writers, or perhaps M.I.T.'s MediaLab — to find answers to such speculative questions. Indeed, the movie *Aliens* provides an eerie foreshadowing to the *Vincennes'* incident. When the Colonial Marines are being buffeted as they enter the atmosphere of the planet where the Alien awaits them, Ripley (Sigourney Weaver) asks the obviously anxious Lieutenant how many combat drops this is for him. He replies "Thirty-eight', pauses, and then adds — "Simulated.' He quickly proves incapable of responding to situations that do not follow his simulation training.

But in the slightly less scientized and fictionalized present the proliferation of war simulations has engendered some immediate policy concerns. Simulations have given rise to important intertexts of strategic power and popular culture. Take Tom Clancy and his intertextual relationship to war games. The best non-fictional book on the subject, *War Games: the Secret World of the Creators, Players, and Policy Makers Rehearsing World War III Today* written by Thomas Allen (McGraw-Hill, 1987), sports a cover blurb by Tom Clancy who writes that it "will be the standard work on the subject for the next ten years'. Clancy's first bestseller, the *Red October* has a hyperbolic blurb from former President Reagan. His secondnovel, *Red Storm Rising*,a thinly fictionalized mosaic of NATO war games, was authoritatively cited by Vice President Quayle in a foreign policy speech to prove that the U.S needs an anti-satellite capability. His third novel, *The Cardinal of the Kremlin*, in which Clancy plots the plight of a mole in the Kremlin, affirms the need to reconstruct the impermeable borders of the sovereign state with Star Wars. And in his fourth, *Patriot Games*, Clancy magnifies the threat of terrorism to the prove that state counter-terrorism works; a view endorsed by Secretary of Defense Weinberger in a laudatory review of the book for the *Wall Street Journal* — which was then reprinted in the Pentagon's *Current News* for the edification of the 7,000-odd Defense and State Department officials who make up its readership. Taken together, Clancy's novels stand out as strategic siulations. Jammed with technical detail and seductive ordnance, devoid of recognizably human characters, and obliquely linked to historical events, they have become the perfect free-floating intertext for saving the reality principle of the national security state: namely, that the sovereign state's boundaries, like those between fiction and fact, simulation and reality, can once again be made impermeable to the Soviet threat, the terrorist attack, and even the launch of ICBMs.

At a more mundane level, simulations have acquired a very important budgetary function. After interviews with fast-track colonels from the various war colleges and with modelers from the RAND Corporation, I discovered that there is a very high demand for the best modelers, not just, as one would expect, to provide the best possible preparation for battle, but to convince the essential sub-committees of the Congress where funds should best be allocated. The different services compete to present the most detailed and technically ornate simulation — down to the number of roles of AP paper needed in the unlikely event of a Soviet invasion of Europe — to get a heftier chunk of the budgetary pie. As the arms race shows signs of winding down, the simulation race is speeding up. It would seem that war gaming has been joined if not supplanted by gaming wars.

There is of course a fundamental and ultimate difference between warring and gaming: people die in wars. This fact must temper any neo-Luddite rant against the computer simulation of war. Surely a prop-

erly executed simulation can play an important edifying role in alerting us to the horrors of war. It has been said that Ronald Reagan's participation in a DEFCON alert simulation, which included an evacuation from Washington, D.C., noticeably altered his attitude toward strategic issues and arms control. And as many players of war games would be quick to claim, by preparing nation-states for future wars, they might help to keep the peace: *qui desiderat pacem, praeparet bellum*

Perhaps the best hope to be derived from the pervasive simulation of war is that we might prolong the preparation and postpone the execution of warindefinitely. Perhaps NATO and Warsaw Pact talks on "open battlefields' will soon follow the current ones on "open skies', resulting in not only permission to watch but to participate in each other's war games. Perhaps Fort Irwin's fictitious 197th Krasnovian Motorized Rifle Regiment will finally meet its fictitious match, the Soviet brigade pretending to be American at their own National Training Center in the Carpathian Mountains.

Of course, this is to grossly minimize the possibility of nuclear and conventional accidents, nationalist conflicts, and proxy wars. But can we imagine a hundred years from now, when the time for a bicentenary celebration approaches, that strategists will be so far *inside* the simulation of war that they will neither feel a nostalgia for "real' war nor be able to distinguish it from some "original" model? Should we be horrified by the thought? Or just game on?

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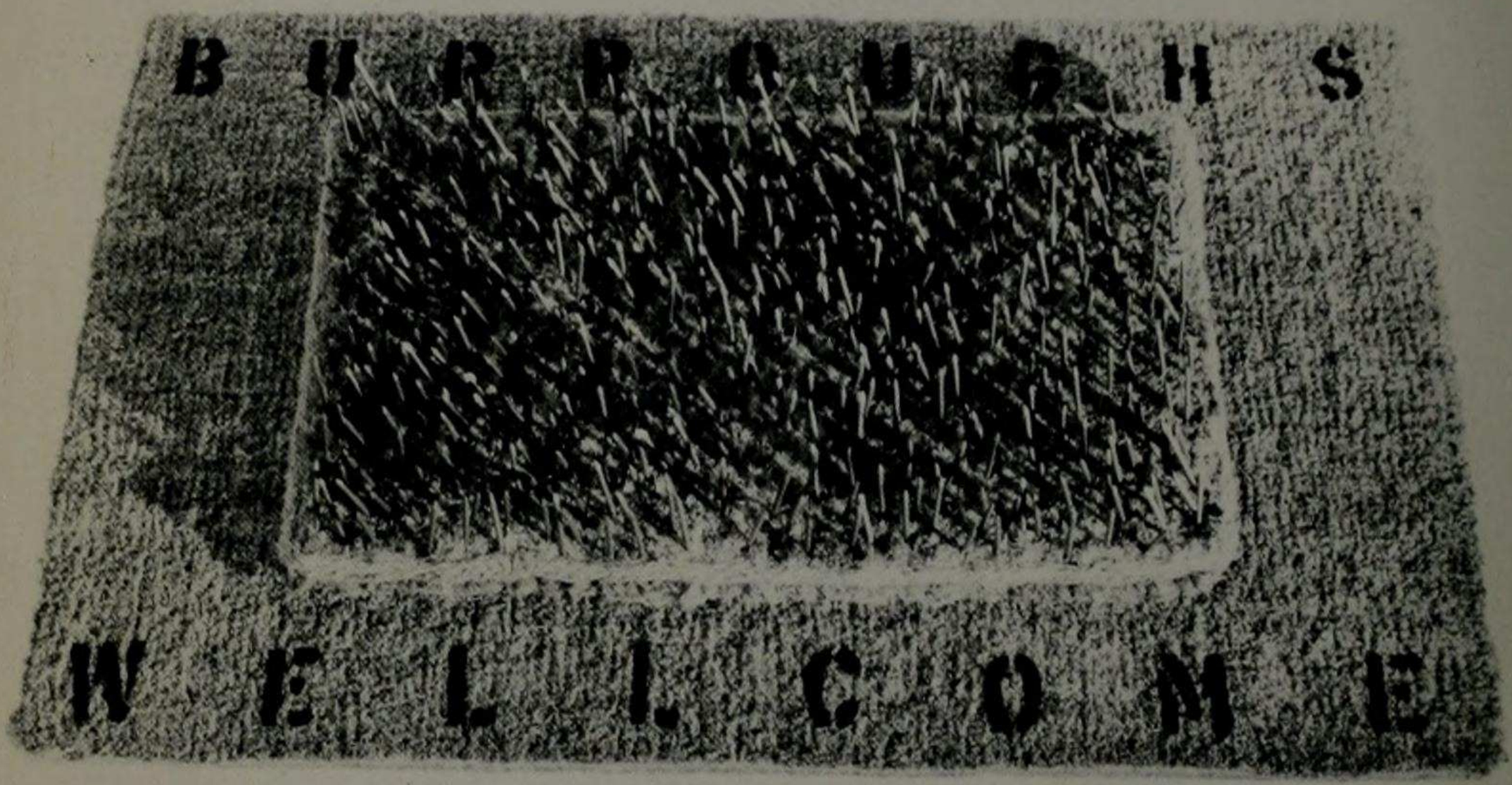
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