THE SPECULUM AND THE SCALPEL:
THE POLITICS OF IMPOTENT REPRESENTATION
AND NON-REPRESENTATIONAL TERRORISM

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ABSTRACT

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Social philosophy at the end of the twentieth century must be prefixed by what it follows. It has become commonplace to describe our moment as postmodern and post-structuralist, perhaps also post-Marxian. While true enough, our situation more specifically must be post-Lacan, post-Althusser, post-Foucault, and post-Critical Theory. A number of theorists highlight the context this dissertation places itself in, but Slavoj Zizek and Judith Butler should be emphasized in this regard.

The positive project of this dissertation begins with radical doubts about the operation of epistemic truth in subjectivity and in language (of a sort first raised by Nietzsche). The dissertation is a series of case studies in the modes of failure of truth, and of the manner in which ideology functions within the void left by the necessary absence of truth. It has a political project of

determining what forms counter-hegemony can take absent a traditional assumption of a solid ground for veracity.

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I. INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

Terrorism is politics without metaphysics; and metaphysics, the textual form taken by
[political] reaction.

A. The Words of the Document

The title of this document will have been "The Speculum and the Scalpel: The Politics of Impotent Representation and Non-Representational Terrorism." And its first sentence will be, "Terrorism is politics without metaphysics; and metaphysics, the textual form taken by [political] reaction." I have gotten a little way in the analysis of these words: My project will, in the first instance, be an outgrowth of much "anti-theoretical" philosophy which runs from Nietzsche through such living, or recently living, figures as Althusser, Deleuze, and Zizek (and hence Lacan).

My first observation will be that words do not mirror the world. Words also do not resemble things (besides other words); words do not "picture the world;" words do not describe the world; words do not "refer to" the world. Words have none of the mystical properties philo-sophically (and commonly) ascribed to them, of standing in some special, but always murky, relationship to other things. Words simply are events in the world. Whatever regularity governs them is the regularity of a fully material world.

The problems with the above paragraph are evident. For one, my proclamation of materialism in the last paragraph can have no meaning. My sentence "the world and its words are only material" can refer to no world, because it denies its own referentiality. So there is simply *something* out there (where?) to which words do not refer. Any effort to name, and hence hypostasize this *something* (even my own with my current word 'something') is symptomatic of what Nietzsche would call a "resentful consciousness;" i.e. a consciousness which denies the unfixedness and, hence, indescribability of the world.

However, self-refutation is the lesser of two problems facing my irreferentialism. The arguments of self-refutation have already been dealt with, in a somewhat different context—though I think adequately—in a book by our colleague, Andrew Blais. More serious is naive irreferentialism's blindness to the subjective necessity of the referentiality of language. It is here that a reading of Lacan becomes necessary. Through the use of Lacan, and of the Lacanianism of Zizek, I hope to be able to articulate the contradictory necessities embedded in the referential pretense of all use of language. As Zizek writes in a slightly different context, "One cannot *attain* it, but one also cannot *escape* it." A major focus of this document will be to articulate, in several different concrete contexts, what it means for linguistic phenomena to present themselves subjectively as

simultaneously *necessary* and *impossible*. Such necessary and impossible linguistic phenomena will go by the very general name 'metaphysics' in this document; though 'metaphysics' will be discussed mostly in its concrete instances, such as its manifestation as nationalism, or as the semi-perpetual U.S. "War on drugs."

Associated with my irreferentialist and anti-realist program will be an anti-semantic, pragmaticist program for philosophy of language. I wish to make a pragmaticist[1] move because I thoroughly believe in the "linguistic turn." Words are very important; they *do things*! What I wish to do in this document is to move the paradigm of what words do from the dialectic and referential paradigm to a politicized pragmatic paradigm. It is for this purpose that I find the following prototypes very important: it used to be that the "best case" of what language does was dialogue—Socratic, communicative, descriptive conversation which showed the essential, intersubjectively available, nature of things. I prefer this: the "best case" example of what language does is a yell of "Fire!" in a crowded theater. All language does not more or less resemble dialogue, subject only to various distortions; all language more resembles a cry of "Fire!"—subject, equally, to various ideological distortions, various denials of the power struggles contained in every utterance.

Several flows feed and divert from the stream of this document. I am certainly not the first to pay attention to what words do. There is a certain stream of radicalism in European artistic communities which I find very valuable and interesting, going from Dada and Surrealism, to Situationism, and sprouting also in certain "Immediatist" strategies of post-punk America. The Oxford "ordinary-language" philosophers are of undeniable import in many regards. A structuralist trend of Marxism, encompassing—although in different ways—both Althusser and Negri, as well as, for example, Lefort, is central to understanding ideology in the concrete. But from inflows also come outflows, congealings, of some particular ideological analyses which I provide herein.

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[1]Linguistic *pragmaticism* is quite a different matter, of course, from philosophical *pragmatism*. Let us postpone any real talk of the latter.

B. Reading Words

Let me return briefly to the posturing I made above with a title and first sentence. Let
us just read it a bit more carefully, first:

"The Speculum and the Scalpel:"

Obviously, this is a metaphor whose terms are explicitly given in the subtitle. . . which I will get to. A
speculum is either of two things, and I wish to play off of both meanings. In the one case, from the Latin, it is
a mirror; i.e. it stands for the whole Western metaphor of philosophy/science/theory/whatever as "the mirror
of nature," or the mirror of something else. I wish, as I have written, to get rid of this metaphor. Secondly, a
speculum is a medical, primarily gynecological, instrument which opens, and hence reveals the contents of, a
bodily orifice, usually a vagina. Contrasted to a speculum is a scalpel. A scalpel simply changes the state of a
body, in a violent intervention, without making any pretense of either reflecting or revealing anything. I know
this is not entirely true, since there is such a thing as *exploratory surgery* (in fact, such will be my disserta-
tion, I hope), but I think the contrast is OK. Sometimes the use of a scalpel does something "good" to a body. I
am not unaware, however, of clitoridectomy, etc.!

"The Politics of Impotent Representation and
Non-Representational Terrorism."

"The body" is, in some sense, the *body politic*. I do not wish to say much about what organs, or what limbs
this body has—for it is a great part of my purpose to problematize this very possibility. Only by staying at a
metaphorical level can I avoid—or partially avoid—the error of claiming to represent the composition of this
"body politic," which is epistemically something like Kant's *noumena*. If I were to state here that the body is
composed of classes, or of genders, or of races, or of individuals in contradictory institutional roles, or
something else like this, I would exemplify the first sort of politics: impotent representation, metaphysics, and
reaction. Of course, this does not preclude using the same words, for example "the political world is divided
into two contradictory classes whose conflict shapes history," in other places, with other effects.

The phrase "impotent" suggests, of course, that "the body" is a sexual body in some sense. I hope, though,
that the sexuality of words is not understood in a narrow teleological directedness toward biological
reproduction. Sexuality is neither the phallocentric directedness of an organism toward reproduction, nor a
mere libidinal release—a simply entropic effect. Sexuality should instead be understood as Bataille does
and/or as a *simply transformative force* with neither aim, origin, nor object.

Words can do many things. However, let me paradoxically exemplify two of the things words almost always
do: words create representations and words intervene in existing representations. Let us say, neither
arbitrarily nor truthfully, that these two functions are always simultaneously present in any utterance; and
that these two functions exhaust the taxonomy of utterance.

Terrorism is politics without metaphysics; and
metaphysics, the textual form taken by
[political] reaction!

The first function of words, exemplified in my taxonomy—perhaps epitomized by taxonomy in general—is
metaphysics; it is what Nietzsche, according to my reading of Deleuze on Nietzsche and to my reading of
Nietzsche himself, called *ressentiment*.

Here my deliberately careless reading, or perhaps outright misreading, will be recognized. Would not a more defensible reading of Nietzsche consider the *creation* of representations *active*; and the mere *acting within* these given representations *reactive*, and hence resentful. What would be missed by the "defensible" reading would be that the acting ("intervening") *within* existing representations which I mention is specifically an acting *against* those representations. To put it in a Spinozistic metaphysical figure (again, a *Deleuzian* Spinozism is indicated), the metaphysical use of words acts in a manner which pertains to the *composition* of existing representations, while the *terroristic* use of words is that which pertains to the *decomposition* of these representations. In either case a semiotic closure is assumed: words act upon words within language, but upon extra-linguistic *things* only as *noumena* act upon *noumena*—i.e. in a manner about which we can *say* nothing.

The second function of words should not be named. Naming this function, even, for example, calling it a *function* only exemplifies the metaphysical function of words. Since one must write in the metaphysical mode—at least in so far as one writes *about* something—I will call this function "terrorism." Why not? Baudrillard writes about "the event" with the same purpose. It is in the terrorist mode that Bataille, echoing Sade, likes sex, as that which exceeds all description and direction (it never was that way for me—perhaps me readers have other experiences). I cannot both exemplify and name the "terrorist" function of language. I can point to the yell of "Fire!" mentioned above, and say "*that*'s what I mean." I can mention that I think some of my memos have attempted to be terrorist. But one cannot say what it is I am pointing at. The best I can do, perhaps, is choose the particular word "terrorist" to name the function which opposes metaphysics. Hearing the word—especially hearing it fondly, passionately, sexually embraced and positively evaluated—makes people react. It heats tempers. It prompts disbelief. It spreads confusion. It has many effects more difficult to name. Good.

C. Problems with Words

Objections. First it may be objected that the creation of representations acts toward the decomposition of old representations; that, in fact, my opposition itself denies the reality of flux/"the being of becoming"/will-to-power, etc., since it pretends that there is an entire mode of language (the metaphysical one) which leaves in place representations. Insofar as the opposition I make is a metaphysical one, I am guilty, resentfully, of denying flux. But the level at which the objection operates is slightly different from that. The advocate of the "being of becoming" of representations claims that change is simply change *tout court*. I disagree with this.

To understand my disagreement it is necessary to backtrack. I should mention, here while I backtrack, that I owe the problem of my dissertation to Alison Brown; whose dissertation (by now so long ago) addressed precisely the problem I have been discussing (though perhaps not in a manner easily recognized). I raised a question, way back at Brown's dissertation defense. I asked, approximately, whether her notions of a demogenic self and heterodemotic action—her notations for her attempt to understand a ground for radical political action—attempted to find a position outside of *Ideology*, or merely one opposed to particular

ideologies—as Althusser has distinguished the capital 'I' from the lower case 'I'. In brief, Althusser distinguishes, with the marker of capitalization, between the very Symbolic process of subjectivation and the particular contents which are interpellated into us. Particular Ideological State Apparati (ISA's) fill, transiently, subjectivity with content; and, in this sense, become temporarily determinate. However, the material base of subjectivation is referred to with the capitalized `Ideology'. Inasmuch as it is always *subjects* into whom ISA contents are interpellated, there must exist an *outsideless* Ideology which assure this interpellation "in the last instance." This is the meaning of Althusser.

I was not satisfied that Dr. Brown gave an answer at that time (though that was understandable given the circumstance). However, let us suppose that since she is both ambitious and optimistic she would wish to find a position outside Ideology. I am not nearly so optimistic. The only notion I have of the political possibility of *subjective* actions, including and especially speech acts, is of acting against the particular ideologies in which we find ourselves, not of acting against Ideology. However, I now believe that there exists a sense in which anti-ideology can immanently constitute anti-Ideology—but this sense can be neither *subjective* nor *objective*, and hence cannot be a *position* (but rather a "utopian moment"). This is the meaning of Adorno.

Althusser supposes subjectivation works. Suppose it doesn't. Perhaps when the Ideological imperative of subjectivation locates a desiring subject within the Symbolic order it locates it in a position which cannot be consistently held. This is the meaning of Lacan. Perhaps the very material base of Ideology already contains within it contradictions which are symptomatically expressed in the subjects into which it interpellated itself. This is the meaning of Zizek. Perhaps after the ground slips from under the speaking subject, she reemerges somewhere quite different than in subjectivi-

ty. This is the meaning of Deleuze and Guattari. These possibilities need to be explored.

I will make a geometric metaphor. If we imagine *ideologies* (i.e. systems of representation, regimes of signs) as so many positioned vectors fixed at a common origin, but not necessarily orthogonal, then we may conceive of *Ideology* as a (hyper-)space defined by all these vectors. An utterance considered under its metaphysical mode is simply a rotation from these vectors, but within the vector space; i.e. a vector sum of multiples of some number of existing vectors. Our purported Alison Brown would picture a demogenic self as speaking from an origin other than that common to the *ideology* vectors; and exercising a force which resolves the *ideology* vector origin to a new point in an absolute coordinate system. A terrorist act is one sharing the *ideology* vector origin, but pointing in a direction orthogonal to all ideology vectors. Such a vector is hence Kant's *noumena*, as I have said. However, since any particular speech act is a combination of its component (hence orthogonal) metaphysical and terrorist vectors, the total vector of a speech act lies outside the given vector space (Ideology), but nonetheless has a projection into it (the metaphysical vector). I imagine the effect of a speech act as expanding, reshaping, and resolving the vector space to include the combined speech vector—which will leave the terrorist vector outside of the vector space, but no longer orthogonal to all vectors in the space (it will have a projection, not only onto the combined speech vector now included in the space, but also any metaphysical vector which has the most recent combined vector as an element to resolve). The continual resolution and expansion of the Ideology vector space allows me to capture the notion of co-optation. A terrorist vector is completely free of co-optation only at the very moment of its enunciation, but nonetheless does not, at least for a time, become merely another *ideology* vector.

A second objection is more serious. Namely, distinguishing terrorist and metaphysical modes of talking—like praising "terrorism," as the word is commonly used—gives no ground for substantive political choices. The fascists may be terrorists, just as much as we may. But then, this is exactly the point: insofar as we speak in the metaphysical mode we do not act in a substantive political manner—we merely rearrange and permute dead ideologies, dead metaphors, dead regimes. If I act differently from fascists (and I do not know if I do) it is not because I can name the differences, but contrarily simply because the acts *are different*. In fact, I am trying, not so subtly, to exemplify the very terrorist action I praise, in the realm of theory, by naming my opposite in a particular way: 'fascist'. *Theory* cannot make the "ethical" distinction between fascism and radicalism; only *I* can (only an existing, living, radically inconsistent actor can, not an ideological, theoretical position). The same applies to the claims I "came on with" in these remarks. Materialism, as a metaphysical position, is incoherent and quite indefensible; but I am a materialist as a political conviction. Metaphysically, it is foolish and naive to think that history is the history of class struggle (as Marx always knew), but I choose to identify myself with the interests of the proletariat against the bourgeoisie—and to identify the proletariat as THE AGENT OF REVOLUTION—as a *political* choice.

D. Words before Words

The chapters below warrant a certain prefatory explanation. Perhaps by putting the moral of the various stories up front, a greater sense of doom and inevitability will adhere with the meandering details of particular stories. There is a certain literary device which Zizek points to affectionately wherein the fateful and fatal resolution of a story is contained in its opening scenes. Quite contrary to our common sense that anticipation of a story's conclusion is played out through its uncertainty, Zizek argues that a foreshadowed dreadful inevitability can paradoxically heighten our hopes of preventing a foreclosed conclusion. The moral of this one example lies in the close relation between contingency and predetermination, as Kant knew (but then so did Thomas Aquinas). In any event, let me introduce what I hope to do.

In Chapters II through V, I trace a path from the general to the specific. I follow an old eighteenth century progression through the "chain-of-being," which is still today sometimes echoed in divisions and hierarchies conventionally arranged between disciplines. We all *know*, after all, that sociology *rests* on the lower ground of psychology, abstracted; psychology, in turn, on anatomy and brain chemistry; human anatomy (despite Marx's contrary observation) on the biology and evolution of the diverse creatures which are older and simpler than humans; biology on bio-chemistry; and the whole shebang, ultimately, on basic physics. Not one to buck a trend, I'll start as close to the bottom as I can.

The path I trace goes from biology in a broad sense, to human sex and subjectivity, to that broad but historical horizon imposed on subjectivity by race and nationality, to more "specific" cultural events which we might well live through both the beginning and end of. From the universal to the local, in some broad steps. I read Hegel backwards, at least in Chapters II through V.

In Chapters VI and VII, I try to understand what the irreferentialist arguments in the tributary chapters (I-V)

mean *politically*. In Chapter VI, I want to determine *where we are*: What is it to live within totalizing ideology, ideology which creates its own referential necessity. In Chapter VII, I speculate about what we can nonetheless *do.* A kind of ideological referentiality is certainly *necessary*, but given that it is also *impossible*, it can be transgressed (which is not to say 'refuted', nor even 'resisted' in a traditional way).

On Biology and Beings

If my overall point is to observe the simultaneous necessity and impossibility of reference, I should trace this necessity and impossibility from the most basic to more rarified levels. So I start with some rather metaphysical remarks about the nature of biological beings in Chapter II, which perhaps touch upon some of those "lower" levels inasmuch as they assume a Nietzschean sort of "play-of-forces." But I think I cannot manage a quantum analysis of my thesis. Here is what I would like to ask: What if we pose the question of what representation is as a *biological* one? My hope is to engage in the activity promoted by a common sort of scientistic reductionist of a familiar type[2] in order to turn on its head empirico-scientific dogma about ideas, representations and reality.

The remarks I make in Section A, of Chapter II, are a reiteration of some basic observations in ethology and evolutionary biology; and in Section B, I make certain *philosophical* remarks about an ontological understanding of what biology is. I do not know

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[2]It is probably unwise to try to unpack the Sokal/*Social Text* affair here, since neither original protagonist is quite as clearly emblematic of idealized positions as their proponents claim. But there are certainly resonances there of some familiar positions. What one encountered in some of Sokal's defenders was precisely the sentiment that it is improper to ask my sort of "soft" questions that might cast doubt on the *purity* of representation. Hold in mind just that type as my intended interlocutor.

anything unusual—in the sense of scientific expertise—about either of these areas, which is both a virtue and a limitation for my purposes. I do not claim to discover some new factual content in biology, some esoteric research on particular organisms, but rather try to put into a different light the facts which any educated lay person knows about evolution. Or better, I try to use this new light to understand by homology how *speech* acts are just as badly described as ontologically referential as are the representational strategies of evolution through natural selection. Biologists, as most scientists or most laypersons, have generally been fairly unreflective in their referential (i.e. realist) assumptions about what they themselves do when they do science. As both a cause and effect of this unreflectiveness an effort to actually bring the "theory of referentiality" into the same view as studies in biology has rarely been made. Even those researchers who have looked at animal (or plant, for that matter) communication have started with a rigidly referential image in which the only question to ask has been "How do organisms *successfully communicate information?*" A better question, to my mind, to start with, would be "How do the general mechanisms of deception sometimes result in communication?" As I will argue, a more general success for organisms comes in achieving irreferentiality.

Section C of Chapter II, I step back from the scientific-philosophy of Sections A and B, and try to "go meta" with a bit of philosophy-of-science. Here I wish to look at a certain conceptual horizon which has inhered in several sciences. This horizon—formed of a certain conception of the distinction of self from non-self—is interesting herein for two reasons. On the one hand, I try to understand more precisely the referentialist bias which has been brought to biology, economics and philosophy, according to a homology among them. This is somewhat interesting to my project in itself, but what is more interesting is the second aspect of what I do in

Section C. I argue throughout that discourses—referential discourses—create their own totalization and close off their outsides. In the case of the particular horizon of biology and its sisters that I describe—and indeed I could not describe it otherwise—a certain crack in the closure has been created by two alternate understandings of (roughly) the same scientifico-ideological space. In different ways Haraway and Bataille un-center the referential horizon of these scientific fields, and thereby help us move within the irreferentialist space I stake out.

On Sex and Subjects

Ascending our chain-of-being a bit, we arrive at human specificity, which I argue consists of two things that are rather close together: sex and subjectivity. Subjectivity, in ratio-empiricist philosophy, lies in a mind full of representations of objects, and of itself as object. I have generally addressed myself to the schema in Chapter II, Section C, and it is generally well-known to any philosophical readers. This is what I want to unravel in Chapter III, through a use of Lacan and some ancillaries.

Naturally, for Lacan, Lacanians, crypto-Lacanians, and anti-Lacanians, subjectivity, in one manner or another, rests on sexuation. So within this part of my analysis, I must move from subjects to their sexual "ground"—and from there to their dismantling. By way of introduction, in Section A, I provide some preliminary and general remarks on Lacan. It is an introduction among any number of introductions. But I also hope to remind readers of some of general Lacanian ideas which I will utilize to further ends in Sections B and C, as well as throughout this document.

In Section B, of Chapter III, I address a peculiar and fruitful dispute among some Lacanians about precisely how to understand the failure of subjectivity which is sex. For all the Lacanians, the modernist representational subjectivity is a mode of failure. Understanding that mode is a key to understanding a post-modernist irreferentiality.

Section C, of Chapter III, might be called a set of strategic premonitions. I return, to a certain degree, to positioning myself vis-a-vis the positive and negative Lacanians. But more than that, I hope, in Section C, to provide myself a few more Lacanian tools to use in the final chapters on politics. They *are* Lacan tools, though, so I think it best to build them in Chapter III.

On Race and Nation

Yet another ring along our chain-of-being, the broadest feature one can distinguish about human subjects is that we are raced and nationed. The paired ideology of race and nation is arguably the founding referential necessity of modern subjectivity. To be—since Capitalism came to the world—is to be what one is (national identity), and not what one is not (*other* racial identity). Identity and non-identity are demands structuring subjects, and play out here a partial homology with Lacanian analyses of sexuation and subjectivity. What I hope to have done in Chapter IV is to both understand and give the lie to this identificatory logic of Capitalist identity. To have a nation and be a race is both a necessary and impossible condition of being a (modern) subject.

On Facticity and Fancy

Still higher up the chain-of-being—at the terminus, for my purposes—lay a number of transient, but totalizing ideological moments. Systems of belief can, in a variety of ways, form their own closure, their own cohesive strategy for disallowing refutation or resistance. And yet, such systems go away, never refuted but nonetheless rendered absurd, or merely forgotten. I will address this diachronic structure of ideology at a

theoretical level in Chapters VI and VIII. But antecedent to doing so, I will explore, in Chapter V, a few examples of some ideologies of recent memory, or still somewhat lived, but fading. As with all the chapters in my chain-of-being sequence, my anecdotal stories hope to illustrate, primarily, the quality of necessity attached to ideologies. The impossibility aspect is largely retrospective: The beliefs I discuss have largely gone from "How dare you deny…" to "Surely no one every really believed…". All in a few years, and all without having allowed refutation.

The examples I have are all of *bad* ideologies, which have left bad legacies, even after their disappearance from memory. I am frankly not certain whether good ideologies—if there are such—can also be totalizing, and whether they can leave correspondingly good after-effects.[3] It may be that I simply have too dour an outlook to analyze liberatory hegemonies; or that I have lived in bad times. Or it may be that it is just of the nature of totalization that no good comes of it. Obviously, *ideas*, and even *ideologies,* can be good; but can the good ones be totalizing?

The first particular system of belief I discuss, in Section

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[3]The two conceptual schemata that come closest, at least that come to my mind, are "October" and "1968." I am not really sure whether either can be considered totalizing in the sense I analyze, nor am I sure why both are most literally names of finite past time-durations. "October" comes close—or at least came close for a good while, mostly prior to my own life—to a totalizing effect, at least for some people. The concept around "October" is not simply that a certain group of people took some specific actions in a few weeks of 1917. It is also not an endorsement of particular Soviet policies or actions, nor maybe even of the Soviet Union itself. Indeed, if Stalin was brutal, or the Soviet Union of the 1970s wasteful and inefficient, that simply shows that neither is contained within the concept "October." Rather, "October" is an ideology (a good one) according to which the victory of the proletariat is possible, right, and actual. This idea indeed forms a certain closure, although it is not clear how to weigh, nor even clearly discern, its effects.

A, Chapter V, is that around the "AIDS plague." The general evocation—well meaningly uttered, no doubt—of the phrase "How dare you… when people are dying!" served as a kind of closure of thought and dispute, and wound up encompassing and engulfing all sorts of beliefs which leftists would otherwise hold dear. Because doomful prognostications allowed no refute (indeed, "How dare we…" try), non-totalizing ideals of liberation, discussion, autonomy, and so on, merely vanished. This was not because the AIDS ideas were *better* than the other ideas, but rather because of the difference in function and structure between totalizing and non-totalizing ideas. In retrospect—and this is a *short* retrospect, less than five years—with the essential disappearance of AIDS as both discourse and disease, the inside of that recent ideology seems as foreign and fantastic as Egyptian or Arthurian legend.

Another recent corruption idea-cluster is discussed in Section B, Chapter V. For a few years, and still clinging to remnants, the ideas of Satanic Ritual Abuse, child-pornography rings, repressed memories, and a few more elements, lived their 15 minutes of fame. Hundreds of innocent defendants remain in prison, and probably will for the rest of their lives. But even at its height, the totalization mechanism of these ideas remained more local to a few places, around a few prosecutions, than have the other beliefs I discuss. There has been a spread of these ideas from place to place, certainly, but totalization has functioned only in local outbreaks (almost like a Burroughs virus). What is most interesting to look at for my purposes is the manner in which *denial* functioned as *proof* (chiefly, but not only, in the testimony of the child "victims"), performing an obvious closure of refutation thereby.

Finally in Chapter V, in Section C, I take a look at the perennial "war-on-drugs". The effects are obvious enough: prison populations have tripled in less than two decades in the U.S. The particular closure the ideas

effect is the required admonition that "Drugs are bad" as a ticket for entry into the conversation. Naturally, the price of entry forecloses any real refutational position.[4]

On Understanding and Forgetting

It is by arriving at an explicit discussion of ideology, at a *theoretical* level, that I can discuss materialism

concretely. Throughout the remarks I make in this document, I share in the general lay-materialism of most intellectuals. But in a way *nothing is at stake* in a materialist politics when making some remarks on biology, or about race and nation, or about the various little political histories I address in Chapter V. And even though a good understanding of Lacan will certainly turn on such onto-political issues, those are not really the issues I address in my own chapter. When one talks about ideology, a materialist commitment makes a difference.

I would like to answer a basic question: "How do conflicts in the *realm of ideas* play themselves out?" In one obvious way, no meaningful answer can be given; different conflicts come out differently, and history—including histories of ideas and ideologies—is almost infinite in diversity. That is not the question I hope to answer. Rather, there is a certain way of "going meta" here, and of discussing what it *means* for conflicts of ideas to be resolved, and what social mechanisms—both those of base and superstructure in the Marxian complements—are effective[5] in these mechanisms. One *theory*, if you will, of the resolution between conflicting ideas is that the epistemic force of the better argument, at least at times, wins. This is an idealist theory,[6] and therefore not one I care for as a

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[4]There is—or rather is not—another missing section for this chapter. I have dropped a discussion of "glimpsed terrorists"—the ideological *imago* of terrorism. But for reasons of time, of length, of personal conceptual limitations, I have allowed the war-on-drugs discussion to stand in the place of the terrorists one. In both, ideology operates by a peculiar interplay of appearance and disappearance. The media-self of a terrorist obtains a hyper-visibility only on condition the terrorist "himself" remaining hidden. Much the same logic works in my discussion of "drug-criminals," so I will let that stand as proxy. Still, there is a certain fittingness and symmetry to my ommission: terrorism is in the title of this dissertation, and its defense, of a certain sort, is the point of the document. By ommitting the discussion of "actual" terrorists, this document exemplifies the conceptual logic of the ideology of terrorism by hiding the *thing* in order to realize the *image*. Perhaps the absence of the section will serve in itself as a sort of ideology critique.

What I would have done, had I kept the section, would be to look at the still peripheral image of taint and danger of the *terrorist*. The image was, or is, totalizing without quite arriving at a level of specific beliefs. There is something of a xenophobic tinge to the image, particularly anti-Islamic or anti-Arab. But an image cannot be refuted. Surely, yes! Most Arabs, or most Muslims, or even most of those in liberation movements (so-called, or otherwise) do not commit the nefarious acts identified as terrorist. Ah… but they are not the terrorists, then! The terrorists are those who *potentially* commit nefarious pollutions of the purity of our American order. How can you deny the *potential*…?

There are two particular interesting things about the terrorist image. Or maybe they are both merely horrible, rather than interesting: The image has led to quite a few really awful laws from a civil-liberties perspective; and the image has been defused (though not *refuted*) by its reality. The unfortunate fact for the terrorist image is that its overt content has—through some historical accidents—undermined it covert content. Kaczinski and McVeigh are, unfortunately for the image, native born Americans. Kaczinski maybe can be bracketed since he had long hair, and wrote some vaguely left-wing sounding remarks. But McVeigh is a clean-cut Christian American soldier. It hasn't helped the image at all.

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[5]The word 'effective' here is intended in an ontological, rather than a practical sense. I am not interested in this description in the *success* or *consequentiality* of the mechanisms addressed, but rather their modality in the realm of *effects*, as opposed to a realm of ideas, of forces, of essences, or even of causes.

[6]Of course, the idealism of the "theory of the force of argument" is not quite the idealism of Transcendental Idealism. This idealism is a sort of lay-idealism which falls in no particular conflict—at least in a practical way—with the lay-materialism of most common-sensical academics.

materialist.[7]

For a materialist, ideology is material activity. I *do* believe in a base/superstructure distinction, but I cannot conceive this distinction as a difference between forces and their representations. Rather, effects are of primary and secondary sorts (causes do not enter here), and those effects which are primary we could call the "base." Ideology—the lived concretion of ideas—is precisely what we should call "base." These are Althusser's ISA's.

In Section A, Chapter VI, I try to address at a higher level of generality the pattern I have several times observed in the empirical histories of Chapter V. With a particular attention to Nietzsche's notions of forgetfulness (and perhaps a nod to Wing Fu Fing), I discuss the pattern in which dominant ideas, for all their totalizing effect, nonetheless pass. This chapter largely emphasizes exoteric effects *upon* ideological forms. The Real, if you like.

In Section B, Chapter VI, I spelunk inside ideology, bringing a materialist spray-paint can. There are some messages I want to mark there. Underground vandalism. From the inside, ideology looks as materialist as are the exoteric effects it undergoes. Ideology is social *stuff*. The effort I make is to comprehend

ideology not in terms of knowledge, but rather in terms of *belief*; not as epistemic, but as deontological. Ideas take a material form, but this material form itself contains an imperative. You cannot know, but you *must believe*! Through a use of Sloterdijk, Mocnik and Zizek I believe I make some sense of this material imperative structure.

In Section C, Chapter VI, I briefly address the concept of philosophical critique. A certain longstanding framework in philosophical radicalism has maintained the notion of a position of autonomy from which ideas of resistance can undermine dominant ideas. In its most sophisticated form, with Benjamin, and Adorno and Horkheimer, it has acknowledged the threat of totalization, and attempted to sustain a purely self-grounded position for critique, or a type of critique which can function as a pure ungrounded concept. For Critical Theory, though, counter-hegemonic ideas still overcome dominant ideas, at the level of ideation. For me, this is a wrong analysis. Nietzschean that I am, I certainly have no doubt that weakness can overcome strength; but materialist that I am, I still think it does so through a (reactive) force other than the "force of the better idea."

In Section D, Chapter VI, I provide some promised attempts at definitions. As best I can, I try to set out my Althusser-inspired notions of ideologies, Ideology, hegemony, ISA's, base and superstructure. After the context of its preceding discussion, throughout the earlier chapters, I hope my definitions will make a bit of sense.

Guy Debord's slender and influential volume anticipates a lot of what I am attempting in this document—as well as a lot of other work since then, such as Baudrillard, Lyotard, much of the Lacanian thought of the 1990s, odd bits of cultural studies and queer theory, and a variety of other social analyses. The difficult task of

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[7]A problem presents itself in the contrast I attempt. In a sense, I can hardly argue that the "force of the better argument" wins. In a way this statement is a tautology. The distinction within the distinction is between different conceptions of what this *force* is that the better argument has. One could make a naive materialist distinction between an *intrinsic* and *extrinsic* force of arguments. The lay-idealist believes in an intrinsic force to arguments, while a naive materialist sees this force as extrinsic (such as in the force of arms possessed by the party with the winning argument). But that's not quite the kind of materialist I am either. A better way to put it is to say that certain arguments have, as an intrinsic quality, the potentiality and the actuality to *go extrinsic*. In the *final analysis*, it is extrinsic forces which decide conflicts of ideas, but winning ideas themselves are already (intrinsically) extrinsic.

presenting a first reading of *Society of the Spectacle* is attempted in Section E, Chapter VI. Debord's writes of "the Spectacle," and means by it much what I do by "totalizing ideology." For Debord, Capitalism, in a certain period, has taken a form which coopts every representation, and in which the lived reality of its subjects is within representation. But as I do, Debord conceives representation in its full materiality, not in any idealist "mirror of production."[8] To flash forward a few

sections, I see Hakim Bey as standing as the heir apparent to Debord in tracing the evolutions of Capitalist world post-1968 (in, unfortunately, all to literal a sense after Debord's suicide in 1997).

On Transgression and Cause

Chapter VII is about transgression. Mostly, it is about transgressing sex. Other things might be transgressed, both those more general and those more specific in my chain-of-being, but sex is about the right size for my purposes; and moreover, it is quite big enough by itself for this moderate sized document. Sex—in the related senses of sexuality and gender—is certainly far too totalizing in its operation to be refuted, or even resisted straightforwardly. The outsides of sex are closed in on us, and all the world to see is within the ideology (for us, whoever *we* are). And yet, there is something precarious in the ideology of (that there is) sex. It wobbles, and perhaps it will fall, like Humpty Dumpty.

Transgression works in several manners. One threat to hegemony is a mechanism I analyze in which constellations of ideologies become connected. Even totalizing ideologies can wind up assuming all the frailties of non-totalizing, even transient, ones. I try to illustrate ideologies forming constellations. On the other hand, there can be something transgressive about *ignoring* hegemony. The various French Lacanian feminists (Irigaray, Wittig, Kristeva, also Butler) have provided variations on a theme of radical alterity, feminine jouissance, and so on. To me it always seemed to amount to almost the same thing as Adorno's "critique from nowhere;" and to prove—although certainly equally appealing—similarly less than satisfactory. My own *outside* is simply that from which dominant ideology is *ignored*!

Section A, of Chapter VII, I attempt a phenomenology (and thereby an ontology) of transgression and

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[8]These few words, of course, are a title of one of Baudrillard's early books, one which follows Debord's by only a couple years. Without here trying to unpack Baudrillard, either in that particular book or in his later turns, it is obvious that Debord and Baudrillard work in a close connection. The "mirror" shows two things—although perhaps the two are one—both representation and consumption, twin reflections of a reductionist Marxist "base." Despite certain commonalities, Baudrillard seems to want to analyze an internal logic of consumption/representation *paralleling* that of production, while Debord contrarily finds the logic of representation to already lie at the core of the logic of production.

totalization. Some notions from Benjamin lend themselves to this effort, specifically his distinction between homogeneous linear and messianic time. Homogenous linear time is the time of totalizing ideologies, and yet within ideology there is already a cooptation of messianic time. This cooptation is not complete, however. A Phenomenological analysis of messianic time points to a limit in ideology, even of ideologies which are otherwise totalizing.

In Section B, of Chapter VII, I discuss some literary transgressive gestures towards sex. A few films I analyze provide a useful framework to understanding exactly how acts, or representations even (which are, after all, acts), can escape totalization. Some films, or other literary forms, have utopian moments. For this concept, I owe a lot to Adorno. But then, there's utopian, and there's utopian; and I think the nowhere I want to locate is not the same place he found.

In Section C, of Chapter VII, I address an old Romantic "transgression." Romantic love has been posed at times as an antithesis to instrumental reason, even as the latter's transgression. Such an analysis is generally wrong, and is in many ways precisely a cooptive move by totalizations of sexuality. It is worth looking at this case especially from the point of view of understanding the sort of transgression which appears as an image *within* totalization, but which is not, thereby, the "real" transgression.

In Section D, of Chapter VII, the work of Hakim Bey is discussed. Bey presents a number of very rich and interesting concepts, most of which I endorse. His problem is much the same as mine, and he thinks he has a solution of sorts. In a generally locational metaphor, which might serve as a complement to my Benjaminian focus on temporalities, Bey, in *TAZ*, imagines the spaces from which dominant ideology can be ignored. He is specific here, the question of the temporary autonomous zones is not *resisting* hegemony,

but doing without it. In his later books, Bey also performs a number of parallels with my concerns with transgression, terrorist language, and totalization; these

are discussed also.

II. BIOLOGICAL REFLECTIONS

A. A Biological Critique of Epistemology

With all the value that may adhere to the true, the genuine, the selfless, it could be possible that a higher and more fundamental value for all life might have to be ascribed to appearance, to the will to deception, to selfishness and to appetite. It might even be possible that *what* constitutes the value of those good and honoured things resides precisely in their being artfully related, knotted and crocheted to these wicked, apparently antithetical things, perhaps even in their being essentially identical to them. Perhaps! — But who is willing to concern himself with such dangerous perhapses! [Nietzsche, 1973, p.34]

The Artifice of Truth

It is often imagined that the assertion of truths is *the* general function of language—and that error and deceit are no more than derivative possibilities arising from the general function of truthfulness. One often hears indignant exclamations to the effect that the notions of falsity and deception only make sense in relation to possible knowledge of what is *really* true. Let us imagine,[9] with a

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[9]Imagining is, really, just what I would like to do in this (or any) chapter. Metaphysics cannot be fully accomplished, let alone proven. What a good metaphysics can do is provide an ontological framework allowing a satisfying or useful clarity of thought. The stodgy Quinean that I am, my greatest hope is for parsimony; in this I believe the Spinozistic understanding of natural ecology is far superior to more traditional Smithian/Darwinian undertakings. Beyond parsimony, however, I would suggest that my manner of description has two additional rather decided advantages: On the one hand, it is rather simpler to describe the observations of natural history within the terms I use than with the more mystical systems which take a long detour through a Catholic and Baconian hermeneutics of forcibly revealed truth which are so dominant in scientific thought. There's the rather old matter of Ockham's Razor. A Spinozistic metaphysics accomplishes rather more with rather fewer terms than do those whose heritage passes from Plato through Descartes to Kant. On the other hand, those metaphysics of truth-conditional representation (which imagine substance behind the vacuity of Tarski's law) of which I'm not too fond must either cast a rather thick shell between semiotic/linguistic representation and natural phenomena to all appearances similar, or engage in rather painful contortions to maintain the truth-preserving tendencies of "representation" in biological organisms. A more natural, and—why not—a more *truthful* picture finds a common ground in biological and semiotic representation in an identical formal falseness.

More than a commitment to nominalism, however, what the metaphysics I try to present strives for is *shallowness.* There is a certain grain of nominalism even here, but the emphasis is somewhat different. I wish to avoid stratification of levels in ontology, reserving stratification and differentiation rather for the objects occupying the ontology. There is a sympathy here with *reductionist* or *monadic* materialism insofar as I wish to deny any division at the level of ontology. Things do not differ ontologically (where all essences are formally homogeneous), but rather merely *as things.* Of course, even a

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greater sensitivity to basic facts of biology, that it is instead deception which is the general form of representation—and that truth is only one highly rarified instance of this perfectly general deception.

What may we say about representation? Glancing at the composition of the word 'representation' we cannot help but notice that a representation is something which is 're'-presented, i.e. something which is made present for a "second" time. But why should such a re-presentation ever occur? What conceivable purpose might it support for living beings that they make such a second presentation. Without slipping from a "minimal" understanding of biological evolution to the "maximal" understanding I have elsewhere criticized [Mertz, 1989a][10] we may nonetheless suppose that for life so ubiquitously to utilize representation there must be some general "survival value"[11] in it.

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traditional reductionist materialism—for example Hellenic atomism—smuggles in a stratification of ontology I wish to avoid. After all, the reductionists still believe the various things not explained directly material to be *epiphenomena*; and this is still surely an ontological category. I propose a *shallow* metaphysics, not because I believe in metaphysics at the level of external truth and falsity, but because it is precisely the structure of ontological levels "representing" things at other levels (e.g. "Words stand for things") which I wish to critique. Inasmuch as possible I wish not to be hoisted by my own petard, but also inasmuch as I wish my critique not to rely solely on the sins I identify.

[10]In brief, I criticize the common tendency of understanding evolution as a process of organisms obtaining optimal "fit" with their environment, as opposed to simply not dying out. For more on this critique see also Levins and Lewontin [1985], Rose, Kamin, and Lewontin, [1985]; or for a typical and influential example of the error, Dawkins [1990].

[11]*Survival value*, is of course, a notion whose misuse is closely tied with the maximalist conceptions of evolution which I mention in footnote 10. The problem with approaches toward conceptualizing evolution which make casual use of the term *survival value* are of two general sorts. In the first instance, these approaches tend to view

environments in a mechanistic and hypostatized fashion. Not only do they suppose that environments are themselves static and independent of the individual organisms which act within them, but also, still more seriously, that there exists a single environmentally defined niche constraining the possible adaptations of an organism. Although the limiting assumption of staticity has problems, it also has some plausi-bility in many instances—however, such ubiquitous interactions as plants modifying the chemical composition of the soil they grow in already complicate the assumption of staticity. Restraining the niches within which adaptive change within a species occurs to one, or even several, is an even more glaring inadequacy in the approaches we criticize. Within the space of any environmental ecosphere or bioregion there exist huge variations in all microenvironmental factors. To chose just one arbitrary example, the temperature in many regions may differ by as much as 20 degrees Fahrenheit over the space of just a few inches, where boundaries of light/shade and proximity to plants exist in the region. An insect's "niche" may include the fact it travels exclusively in shaded areas; and indeed the insect may evolve towards maximum utilization of this shaded region. On the other hand, a different path towards maximalization of environmental utilization could involve migrating just those few inches towards sunlit regions. These two adaptations suggested present paths to utilization of two different niches; but these niches are already possibilities for the ancestor insect in the simple sense that the move from one to the other is well within the locomotive capacity of the insect. Similar niche distinctions occur across all of the thousands or millions of microenvironmental gradients and transitions within any creature's "bioregion" and "niche"

Still more serious than the criticisms mentioned in the above paragraph, is many biologists' (and biological popularizers') wanton disregard for the presence or absence of haplotypic variation within a population of a trait they suppose to have survival value—and, in general, for the genetically open paths for possible evolution. It is here important that one notice that phenotypic variation in a trait is simply not, in itself, sufficient. Many traits which vary phenotypically vary either due to environmental noise or systematic environmental difference, or due to a complex array of unrelated alleles (many of which will also control for non-selected, but potentially important, traits). Supposing a particular phenotypic trait to increase fecundity, but to be determined by an array of non-proximate alleles, the only way that this trait could become dominant or universal in a population is through elimination of alternate alleles at each of these gene sites. However, such an elimination will, in most cases, have other phenotypic effects on organisms—and will additionally affect the survivability of the population as a whole in a manner not necessarily correlate with the fecundity of individual organisms (in the simplest example, a population's survival may depend upon alternate alleles existing in rough proportion across the population as a whole—as for example with sickle-cell hemoglobin which when recessively paired increases malaria survivability, but when

Furthermore, this *survival value* is actually quite clear in its general features, though naturally it differs in every particular from organism to organism (or gene to gene, species to species, population to population—as you prefer). The *survival value* of representation is in the possibility of successful deception.

Before attempting to understand why representation as a survival trait has as its universal first nature deception we should first make a distinction which has been made many times before. Vološinov [1986] distinguishes between 'sign' and 'signal'; Pierce [Ducrot and Todorov, 1979] in his trinitarian fashion between 'symbol', 'sign' and 'icon'; Harry Redner [1994], following a tradition in which Erich Auerbach [Auerbach and Trask, 1953] is a notable name, between 'mimesis' and '(modern) representation'. No doubt many others of

monogenetic has mortal results for the individual organism). Even beyond this concern, those we criticize tend to imagine every phenotypically manifested haplotypic variation which they might posit to automatically exist in a given population. So, for example, human sociobiologists imagine that just because they can operationalize a phenotypically varying trait such as selfishness or xenophobia, it must *willy nilly* exist in a haplotypically selectable form within a population. Over and above the error made by assuming every experimentally operationalized phenotypic trait to be haplotypically variant is that made in facile judgements of *what* is actually selected *for*. Many—probably in some sense the overwhelming majority—of the traits which evolve in species, whether finally advantageous or disadvantageous, arise as "accidental" byproducts of traits directly selected for or against. So even, for example, if there could somehow be shown to be a haplotypic center for human xenophobia, this would not prove that it was xenophobia itself which was the subject of selective pressure (as opposed to some more general—or more specific—human [neurological] trait).

Besides Dawkins [1990], Wilson [Wilson and Landry, 1980; Wilson, 1988] is a clear recent culprit in this misuse. For a more sophisticated picture see Levins and Lewontin [*1985*], and Gould [*1977*]. It is somewhat dangerous to allow the use of the phrase under discussion in this document; and we are not unaware of its dangers. However, for the rhetorical purposes of this section of the dissertation we will continue to use the phrase, but put it in italics properly to indicate its status as a foreign phrase for which a proper translation does not exist.

whom I am unaware and aware make distinctions which amount to the same thing. For the purposes of this section, let us phrase the distinction as between 'expression' and 'representation'.

Expression, Attribute and Representation[12]

What is the distinction between 'expression' and 'representation'? In the first place, it can be noted that every representation is necessarily an expression. Later on we will notice that certain expressions may depend upon the possibility of representation as well (though without exactly thereby being representations). But before even this first place, we should try, tentatively, directly to define our terms. Roughly, an expression is an "alienable" indication that a thing is what it is. We could say that an expression expresses or indicates the essence a thing has, since it is only by being the thing it is that a thing can firstly produce the expression indicative of that essence.[13]

[12]I frequently call the metaphysics I employ here Spinozistic. It is not, in point of fact, however, Spinozian. The terms I use are different, and I use them for different reasons. As much as my inspiration and thanks goes to Spinoza, particularly as "expressed" in the works of Deleuze (especially, oddly, his book on Nietzsche [Deleuze, 1983]) and Negri [1991], my arguments are different. At a first brush, one might transpose several terms between my dissertation and the essays of Spinoza: my 'Essence' becomes 'Substance'; 'Attribute' becomes 'Expression'; 'Expression' becomes 'Mode'; while 'Representation' is orphaned in this transposition. There is a certain sense to these transpositions, but it is a limited one. None of my terms function identically to the transposed ones in Spinoza, nor still less do they function identically to the same terms in Spinoza. Overall, the reader should be best served by bracketing any effort to find a direct relation between my terms and those of Spinoza, while nonetheless acknowledging that there is a prevalent commonness in the desire for a *direct* and *shallow* ontology.

[13]We do not here depart from the Spinozistic cast in which we attempt to understand *essence* and *expression*. To wit: we do not suppose that the *essence* of a thing is ever anything apart from the immediate unity of its *expressions*, or, at least, of its *attributes*. *Expression* here is taken to be identical with the Spinozistic

attribute—merely considered from a different perspective. *Expression* and *attribute* are, for us, simply two sides of a coin, separated only by the special relations of alienability marked by the term 'expression'.

Considered from the point of view of a thing itself, an *attribute* as *expressive* is an alienated aspect of its essence. But considered from the point of a second thing, a first thing's *expressed attribute* is, contrarily and precisely, a feature of a first thing's immanence. This distinction is given in example within the main text, *infra*, but we will here detail it in its most abstract and precise form. Since a thing, from its own perspective, enters into relation with a second thing only insofar as an expression of its essence [see note 15, also] becomes simultaneously an attribute of such a second thing, an attribute is an expression only insofar as it is immanently alienated. From the perspective of a second, external thing, however, a first thing's expression is precisely the aspect under which it becomes a thing for the second thing. In this regard, therefore, every expression represents absolute immanence insofar as expression is the very mark which constitutes the essence of a first thing for a second thing. Without such a mark a thing cannot exist as a thing for a second thing.

In respect to the above, we appear to depart from Spinozism. We allow an (expressive/expressed) attribute to be attributive simultaneously of two or more different essences—though in relation only to different respective essences. We believe, however, that this departure is an appearance only. Our term 'essence' is to be distinguished from the Spinozistic 'substance'. By 'essence', as stated above, we do not mean any *thing-in-itself* apart from its attributes or parts. Rather, an essence is simply a state, or structure, or organization in which a collection of parts each act toward a collective unity. The clearest example we may give is also the one germane to this section of the dissertation: a biological entity has an essence precisely insofar as it is constituted by a homeostatic arrangement of constitutive parts. In particular, an *organism* exists essentially as such only as constituted by its *organs*. (We do not, however, confine our level of analysis to that of individual organisms only, species, populations, ecosystems, cells, mitochondria, and other biological entities may also exist *essentially*). It may be noted that a particular *organ* does not necessarily pertain uniquely to a particular *organism*—as is shown both by symbiosis and parasitism: respectively, the immediately constitutive and disconstitutive forms of expressive relations between organisms.

At the point of this footnote I start to show similarities with pragmatism. My connections with pragmatism. However let me here highlight, in sketch the (apparent) connection. We treat essence in a manner almost epiphenomenal to the homeostatic arrangement of parts. Such an arrangement, and such a teleonomic homeostasis (or other stability) is *prima facie* always a pragma of any organism/entity; and all other pragmata may be reduced, perhaps, to homeostatic tendencies of

This all seems tautological until we return to the word 'alienable' and its, in this context, closely associated 'meaningful', 'signific', etc. The nature of this "alienability" is precisely that marked by Pierce's [Ducrot and Todorov, 1979] word 'sign'. For example, puffs of smoke may function as a sign of a railroad engine (especially in Pierce's time) because it is part of the nature (or essence) of a railroad engine to give off puffs of smoke. These puffs are alienable from the engine firstly in the very literal sense that they become disincorporated from the engine as an enduring physical entity. But the puffs are alienable in the more important sense that they may participate, not only in the essence of the engine, but also in other things' interactions with their worlds. As an essence an engine cannot directly impinge upon anything external to itself, but insofar as this essence produces "alienated" expressions it may impinge upon other essences or their attributes. According to this characterization, the shape, color, weight and so on of an engine are alienable expressions of its essence just as are much as the puffs of smoke; and these may hence serve just as well as the puffs of smoke in the engine's impingement upon us.

Characterizing a representation is more difficult—especially defining a representation in such a manner as not immediately to assume what we will try to show. However, as an effort at a neutral definition, we could state that a representation is an expression which expresses an essence in a manner other than that by which the representational expression is produced. For example, in speaking the words, 'I am a man (male human adult)' I do not simply express my nature as a being capable of producing vocalic sounds, but also express in a secondary manner my "manhood." The attribute of my nature under which I am a being capable of producing (this English) verbal sound is different than that under which I am a male adult, insofar as females, children, parrots, and electronic devices can also produce verbal sounds. And yet, with representational expressions I can express one feature of my nature by utilizing another. Of course, it is by already having the particular nature I do (which thereby includes *male-adult*-ness) that I can speak the words mentioned—so in that sense the "meaning" of the words is a redundant *re*-presentation of the fact that *I* express these words (as against the *meaning* of the words). Why then should anything be redundantly re-presented, if it is already presented once in the same expression?

The trick here is that the essence re-presented in a representational expression is not firstly, and not always (and we later argue, not ever), the same as the essence directly expressed. In order to make this distinction between essences—firstly and secondly expressed—we must make reference to entities outside the expressive essence, particularly to entities such as living organisms which have a teleonomic tendency towards preservation of a relatively stable functional organization.[14] Given the external existence of these

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linked levels of essentiality. For example, if reproduction is a *pragma* of individual organisms, one plausible understanding of natural selection would insist that it is so only relative to a homeostatic tendency of genetic sequences. At a still more general level, however, it does not seem absurd to link every meaning of 'purpose' directly to the forms of reic constitutivity, *sui generis*. That is, any event/entity can serve a purpose of a thing only insofar as it acts, in some respect, to affirm the constitution of the thing. Read in such a manner, I will indeed insist that essence is always reduced to purposes—just as do the pragmatists.

[14]For Nietzschean reasons discussed elsewhere the writer feels a certain *dis-ease* towards nearly all of the words in the previous sentence (certainly, 'functional', 'preservation' and 'teleonomic'—perhaps others as well); but it is extremely difficult to explain what really goes on at a basic level in the world operating under the constraints imposed by Indo-European grammar and a three-thousand year hegemonic tradition of metaphysics. So there is nothing to do, at this point, than to go on attempting this explanation in the terms of the crude language available to us.

self-structuring entities, expressions of essence need not simply impinge upon external essences, but may do so in regular, structured manners.

Organismic Responses

In living organisms these regularities fall largely under the class described by Konrad Lorenz [Hattiangadi, 1987] as "trigger mechanisms". To take just one simple example, we may observe that the feeding behavior of many birds is triggered by the color pattern of the mouth of young birds of their species. This trigger however is a very broad gestalt feature, with little sensitivity to the particularities of the infant birds' expression; hence adult birds may be "fooled" into feeding a painted dish—or more relevantly for our purposes, a bird of a different species. Such is the case with the English Cuckoo bird which invades the nest of a variety of smaller birds, and is fed by these adult birds. A Cuckoo bird is, of course, able to display the color pattern it does because its nature allows this—it does not become essentially (or even accidentally) not a Cuckoo bird by virtue of this expression. However, the expression of a Cuckoo's nature mentioned herein also functions, in this context, as the expression of an essence other than a Cuckoo's: namely, that of an infant bird of a different species. The fact that living organisms may have regularized, functional responses to the expressions of certain essences also allows, by short extension, that they have these same responses to the representational expressions of essences other than those to which they "normally" react.[15] Causing

this "inappropriate" regularized reaction in other living organisms is, we believe, the general "survival value" of representational expression in living organisms. We may also call these representational expressions by a more common name: 'deception'. We can here state, somewhat paradoxically, that a thing may produce an expression by virtue of what it is, but may produce a representation (i.e. representational *expression*) only by virtue of what it is not.

Of course, it will not be possible herein to discuss every form of representation produced by living organisms, nor even any more than a minuscule proportion of them. However, let us mention a few representational expressions of organisms in order to provide a strategy for understanding those many we do not mention. Think for example of a blowfish: a blowfish, by puffing up produces a representational expression which prompt the reaction from other fishes "appropriate" to an encounter with a fish larger than a blowfish. How does a blowfish do this? It does so by *being* a fish larger than itself! In order to produce the expression characteristic of a large fish, the small blowfish takes the physical form of a fish larger than itself. However, since a blowfish is not "authentically" a large fish it must re-present its largeness through the artifice of puffing itself

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[15]The genitive in the phrase 'expressions of essences' has several compelling misreadings. The most usual (metaphysical) use of the genitive in this phrase would be what we might call an *external possessive*, in the sense of the genitive in 'the children of Cain'; i.e. the nominative noun stands in a purely external relation to the genitive. This is the model of the relation proposed by the Platonic notion of *simulacrum*: the genitive may, in some way, copy the nominative noun (and carry its taint/mark), but the relation is strictly metaphoric rather than metonymic. A somewhat better use of the genitive would be what we might call a *compositional* use, as in 'the hands of the clock'. Under this use expressions would be authentic parts of an essence, but might not be exhaustive—and *would not* be in any respect identical with the essence. This is a synecdochic (and hence metonymic) use of the genitive. The proper use of the genitive is difficult to get a hold on. We might call it the *constitutive genitive*. It occurs in a phrase such as 'a time of sorrow'; or, under a Dionysian reading, 'a flash of lightning'. The constitutive genitive posits no distance between the nominative and genitive nouns, but rather modifies the nominative in an almost adverbial fashion. 'A time of sorrow' is nothing but a 'time', *sui generis*, considered under a certain aspect. A 'time' subsists in and of itself, unlike a 'child' relationally, or a clock 'hand' synechdocally, constituted. We might also call this *the genitive of identity*. Such is the reading properly assumed of phrases, herein, like that mentioned above.

up. By contrast, a "genuinely" large fish has no use for such an artifice. It expresses its largeness (and hence its power to defend against predation) simply by being large; since this primary expression perfectly conveys its non-susceptibility to predation, the large fish has no need to re-present that which is already conveyed firstly by the immediate expression of its essence. It is only the small blowfish which needs a secondary expression to convey its non-susceptibility to predation—and this it needs only because it is, according to its first nature, quite vulnerable to being devoured.

Next consider camouflage, for example an insect which disguises itself as a twig in order to avoid being eaten by birds. Again, clearly our insect looks as it does because its nature is to look that way. However, by looking as it does, our insect *re-presents* itself as being other than as it is. In particular, our insect effects the "judgement" in insect-eating birds that it is a twig rather than an insect. That is, one of the functions an insectivorous bird must perform to reproduce itself is to act differently towards twigs and insects: to wit, it must eat insects rather than twigs. However, a bird's only access to the essential edibility or inedibility of a thing is through the thing's expressions—and in particular, only through some rather narrow family of expressions (such as through a splotchy brown coloring, or through the smell of carbolic acid). An insect whose expressions within that family of expressions judgmentally significant to birds' eating habits place it in the category 'twig' rather than that of 'insect' is less likely, all things being equal, to be eaten than another insect of which this is not true.

Still, why describe the animal expressions mentioned in the last couple paragraphs as 'representations'? Why not simply say, for example, that a camouflaged insect is not eaten by insectivorous birds *simply because it expresses its nature*? That is, why describe camouflage as a *second* presentation rather than a first

presentation, or just a presentation *simpliciter*? The reason for our nomenclature is that a camouflaged insect's nature *really is* to be edible to birds! To prove this we could change that alienable expression of our insect and let it be eaten by birds: for example, we could paint our insect a different color.

It will be objected that it is only by changing the expressible nature of our insect that we make it edible to birds. In a certain way this objection is compelling; however, re-read the objection actually strengthens our case. Yes, we must alter the expressible nature of a camouflaged insect to make it effectively edible to birds; but if we consider this fact from the point of view of the contingency of a bird's maintenance of its functional organization then we are prompted to consider our insect's original expressible nature to be representational duplicity. Why? Precisely because we could keep a bird alive by painting (changing a feature of the expressible nature of) a sufficient number of camouflaged insects. But for its one alienable feature of coloration our insect's nature is such as to allow for the nutrition of insectivorous birds. From the point of view of a bird's function, one feature of our insect's (expressible) nature contrasts with the other features of its nature.

Natural Selection and Deception

At this point the question of representation versus simple expression becomes complicated. After all, it seems absurd to suggest that we characterize an expression as representational and deceptive simply because it does not accord with its every other expression from the point of view of every function of every entity. Entities may surely be "mistaken" without their object of attention having automatically been deceptive. The trick here is the process of natural selection. A bird might also mistake a stone for a twig, just as it might so mistake an insect. But a stone has

not developed its expressible attributes through a process of selective evolution, no ancestors of stones had greater fecundity by virtue of being mistaken for twigs by birds.

The trick of evolution is that it allows an interpenetration of essences in manners inherent to the teleonomic self-structuring of the respective entities. Self-structuring is not unique to evolved life, a great number of inanimate essences have a teleonomic quality. For example, crystals reproduce themselves within a suitable substrate in a self-structuring manner. Furthermore, outside expressed attributes can act in a disconstitutive manner upon crystals: they can be broken down by heat, light, chemical environment, and so on. At first blush we might be inclined to believe that a crystal has a relation to a disconstitutive chemical solution which is homologous to that an insect has to a predatory bird. In a sense this is correct, in either case the expressive nature of the latter entity acts disconstitutively upon the former entity. But the difference lies in the different natural history of living and non-living entities.

A self-structuring crystal may be created through a variety of natural processes. What these processes have in common, for our purposes, is that they lack any systematic relation to the constitutive or disconstitutive expressions a crystal may undergo during its existence. In general, there is simply no regulative interaction between the process of creation, and the process of destruction of crystals (except sometimes in specific artificial situations). Quite the contrary is true for living, replicating entities. They come to exist as part of a specific natural history of the constitutive and disconstitutive expressions operating upon similarly self-organized entities (their parent(s)). The uniqueness of life is not in its self-structuring, or even its functional regularity in response to "environment," but rather in the substantial identity between its conditions of existence and its conditions of creation. What kills an

organism will have a strong tendency to kill its parents. And what kills an organism will assure the non-creation of further substantially similar organisms (at least of those whose causal histories are directly and specifically tied to the killed organism, i.e. the dead organism may still have nephews, but no children).

If a population of organisms systematically enters into disconstitutive expressive relations with a (type of) thing, what can the outcomes be? One straightforward outcome is that the population of organisms dies out because this expressive relation is sufficiently disconstitutive to prevent the reproduction of the organisms. The *only* other possible outcome, in the *very* broadest sense, is that some members of the population manage not to enter this disconstitutive relation, and the population continues reproductively. But that is overly broad. We should be able to discern several (non-distinct) subcases within this scenario:[16]

> i) All members of the population are constituted with the potential expressive attribute which allows entry into the disconstitutive relation. However, the systematicity of the presence of the

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[16]A great danger in describing the below cases of evolutionary success is to project purposes or a future-directedness onto a mere genotypic range of ancestrally-related (and in sexual organisms, interbreeding) organisms. It should go without saying that genes know no future. Unfortunately, the almost universal tendency in talk of evolution describes populations evolving "in order to . . .". This is a metaphysics we reject. It is from the point of view of a past's already achieved future in the present that natural histories appear to have a purposive nature. Perhaps such an appearance is, in fact, quite unavoidable [see, Gould, 1990]. In any event, in the below, we endeavor to avoid any teleological language in describing evolution, while nonetheless trying to capture the regulative structures governing genotypic and phenotypic change in the natural history of organisms. We talk in the below, sometimes, of 'trends', which while less than neutral, sound better than talks of 'directions', 'tendencies', or other generally teleological shorthand descriptions for infinitely detailed histories.

entity on the other side of the disconstitutive relation is sufficiently minimal not to outstrip the reproductive rate of the population. One possible evolutionary trend: fecundity of population increases and/or reproductive cycle shortens.

ii) The "environment" of the population is in fact composed of sub-niches in which the disconstitutive relation is *not* entered into, as well as those sub-niches in which it is. The organisms existing within non-disconstitutive sub-niches have unaffected reproduction. One possible evolutionary trend: selective negative and positive tropism vis. sub-niches.

iii) Some members of the population do not express the attributes entering into the disconstitutive relation. These organisms have unaffected reproduction. Likely evolutionary trend: selection of haplotypic variation for those organisms in the population not having the expressive attribute which enters into disconstitutive relation. This might represent a selective survival of particular morphological, biochemical or behavioral ranges within the original population. Even though this is only a small minority subcase within those discussed, it seems to be what is exclusively conceived by most people under the name 'evolution by natural selection'.

iv) Some members of the population, although possessing the expressive attribute potentially entering into disconstitutive relation, *represent* an

attribute impeding entry into disconstitutive relation. Just as in iii), the likely evolutionary trend is for morphological, biochemical or behavioral selective pressure. However, this is not the case of an evolutionary change away from the attribute allowing disconstitutive relation, but rather evolutionary change toward another attribute which *makes up for* or *hides* the first attribute. In many ways, this is likely to be an easier, and hence more common, evolutionary path, since it often does not require so fundamental a change in the basic essence of a species

The difference between iii) and iv) is the crucial point of this section. When evolution "chooses" the path in iv) this is the point where representation functions, and this is the point where representational expression is, in its evolutionary significance, a deception.

An issue which is orthogonal to our schema of population survival is the possibility that survival occurs, in a sense, directly at the level of population, rather than of a merely randomly differentiated subset of a population. That is, the possibility of avoiding disconstitutive relations by particular individual organisms might concretely depend upon the expressive properties of other organisms of the same (or perhaps different) species in a population. A rather overused, and under-evidenced, example of such population-level survival is that of "altruistic" behavior towards genetic relatives of organisms. One might, not unreasonably, go so far as to recognize this hypothesis as the raison d'etre of the field of Sociobiology. Apart from the crudely anthropomorphic and teleological example given by sociobiologists, population-level survival is a rather common phenomenon. A school of fishes, for example,

provides protection against predation to those fish on the inside of a school. Those fish more likely to be eaten do not swim to the outside due to altruism, but simply because of the nature of spatial relations: in a school, some fish must be at the outside. A population of schooling fish may survive under any of the above categories (or combinations thereof), but it merely need be understood that schooling behavior constitutes a haplotypic range which only functions evolutionarily when the behavior is shared by multiple organisms, and that a sub-niche may be defined by the behavior of other organisms (including those in the same interbreeding population). The requirement of a common species defining a sub-niche is not universal, of course. Lichen, for example, are composed of starkly genetically different algae and fungi (belonging to different Kingdoms of life, in fact), but the survivable

sub-niche of each organism is starkly defined by the population-level expression and survival of both algae and fungi. Also, a parasite or passenger has a sub-niche defined by a (population of) host organism(s).

We can illustrate the gap between iii) and iv) with the examples we have already mentioned. For example, a members of a population might enter into a discontstitutive relation in the form of predation by another species (this is certainly not the only example, but it is an easy one to grasp). The base attribute which allow members of the population to enter into this relation is simply their edibility by the predatory species. Certain species may evolve in a manner to make themselves inedible, but such an evolutionary path is likely to involve rather fundamental biochemical or morphological changes since edibility tends to be a rather broad matter of size and protein composition. It is certainly not impossible that a species develops internal chemical mechanisms which make it poisonous, nor unheard of that it dramatically change its size to avoid the predatory range of the second species. But a very frequent evolutionary path different from this is for a species to change a morphological property simply not to be *recognized* as food by a predator. Such a (superficial) morphological change has the specific evolutionary function *representing* a creature as non-food, *despite* its retaining a quite appropriate size and chemical makeup to otherwise be capable of entering into a discontstitutive relation as prey.

The negative case of discontstitutive relations is, perhaps, easier to illustrate, but the same evolutionary lessons of expression and representation can be drawn of constitutive relations. Often, of course, a relation (like predation) which is discontstitutive for one organism is simultaneously constitutive for another. So, for example, predators often use the same representational strategy of camouflage to attract prey that prey do to avoid predation. Fish, insects, and other animals often

have the appearance, or certain of their organs have the appearance, of something (like food) attractive to things on which they prey. In cases like these, or in other mutually constitutive relations like symbiotism, representational (deceptive) expressions may allow an organism to enter a constitutive relation.

The Simulacrum of (which is) Truth

Representations can sometimes be true. Rarely, perhaps, but the form of representation certainly admits of truthfulness. Of course, it need be understood that truth is a relative and relational potential aspect of expression. A representational expression may *make up* for or *hide* another potential expression, but insofar as it may, the more general rule of representation is *substitution*. Substitution, in turn, allows the possibility of *indication* or *signal* (i.e. *truthful representation*, insofar as such is not oxymoronic).

There are several nested levels within expression. At the first, through an expression two entities may enter into a constitutive or disconstitutive relation (constitutivity not being necessarily symmetric). At a second level, a different expression may *substitute* for the first, thereby transforming the nature of the relation between two entities by the occlusion[17] of the first expression. This second level by no means ceases to be an expression; at this and every level, entities may relate only by virtue of their actual expressions, and not by abnegation of them, nor through expressions they lack. At a third level, however, truthfulness is one type of representation. Too much weight should not be put

on such a case, truth is one specificity of falsehood/representation, but only one specificity among countless others. Certain substitutive expressions, while occluding other (primary) expressions, may nonetheless bring an entity into the very same constitutive or disconstitutive relation as would potentially be entered through the occluded primary expressions themselves.

The relativity and relationality of truth is, in general, the same as the relativity and relationality of all representation: an occluding expression only enters into relation with some other entities, and not with others. An evolved organismic trait, like a spoken phrase, may be truthful relative to one entity-relation, and non-truthful relative to another. The specific relativity of truth, over and above that of representation *sui generis*, lies in its peculiar banality. That is, a non-truthful representation occludes a particular expression vis-a-vis a specific potential relation, but in regard to relation with any other entity it need enter into no relation at all, or may enter into a non-representational relation with an other entity as a primary expression. On the other hand, a truthful representation, even if it contingently functions truthfully in every actual relation it enters, has *a priori* the form of a representational expression vis-a-vis a class of potential entities in excess of the actual truth-relating ones. That is, if an expression does not have the potential of occluding another expression, it cannot have that potential in the particular instance where such occlusion happens to be truth-creating/truth-preserving.

An organismic evolutionary example of truth should make the discussion more clear. Our good insect camouflages itself as a twig vis predatory birds by having (evolved through natural selection) a mottled brown shell. Although the pigment it deposits in its skin has very similar reflection characteristics to the tree branches on which it lives in the 770 to 400 nanometer range, it shows a distinctive brightness somewhere in

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[17]Interestingly, two of the less used meanings of 'occlude' have a nice resonance in this context. My American Heritage Electronic Dictionary gives the meanings, "3. Chemistry. To absorb or adsorb and retain (a substance). 4. Meteorology. To force (air) upward from Earth's surface, as when a cold front overtakes and undercuts a warm front."

the ultraviolet range. As the expressive visual characteristics enter into relation with most of the predatory birds around it (and most probably, with those species present during its ancestors' evolution), the relation is the quite non-disconstitutive one of being ignored. However, in entering into relation with a predatory bird whose vision extends into the ultraviolet (a bird that was most likely not local during the evolutionary history of the insect species, or which has itself evolved in this direction), the ultra-violet spike in the insect's shell pigment brings it into disconstitutive relation with the ultraviolet-sensitive bird species. In fact, we can imagine that the pigment even rather loudly proclaims the truth of our insect's edibility by the extreme brightness (within the UV range) of its pigment, thereby making our insect much more likely to enter this disconstitutive relation than is its unpigmented cousin.

The specific function of representation which emerges in our insect's evolutionary history is reversed when it becomes truthful. Rather than representational *substitution* having its usual function of *making up for* a primary expression, it instead simply allows a relation with an entity which makes the disconstitutive potentiality of the primary trait actual by way of a functionally homologous representational trait. The substitutive nature of a truthful representation should not be here mistaken. Although either its primary size and protein composition or its UV marker equally allow entry into disconstitutive relation with a UV-sensitive predatory bird, they are not identical. The former marks an insect as edible by virtue of its very property of edibility, while the latter marks its edibility through a property not only unrelated, but evolutionarily dissimulative of edibility.

Lacan makes a remark at the beginning of one of his lectures that by having written on his blackboard 'There is an elephant in the room', he makes up for the lack of elephants in the room. He continues with the

observation that were there an elephant in his lecture, he would surely not need to state the fact. I have told this story to a number of people, and a frequent reaction is a question about the indubitable possibility of stating an elephant to be present *even when one really is*. Whatever its banal lack of poignancy, surely nothing in such case prohibits the evocation of the words stating an elephant's presence (although the assertion would seem rather underwhelming next to the elephant!). The mistake my questioners make is in failing to understand the general structure of falsity in which an occasional truth (a rarified falsity) may emerge. It is not for the presence of elephants that we have the ability to name them, but for their more common absence.

Positive and Negative Metaphysics

One thing I hope to have accomplished in the preceding discussion is give a description of natural ecology lacking lacks. Besides eschewing the common "maximalist" description of evolution in which a species accomplishes an evolutionary innovation to match an environment, I also wish to resist (and discuss below) a picture of natural ecology based on scarcity. The maximalist evolutionary story, as well as any historical narrative whose plot incorporates a future into a present rests on a negative metaphysics of lack. The trope of these narratives rests on the accomplishment of a trait into the future propelled by the poignancy of its absence in the present. It is almost unnecessary, but continually not really recognized, to point out that haplotypic variation of genes, in reality, has no directedness to a future. Populations arise purely out of past natural histories, and are shaped purely by the forces in their present. The Spinozistic "positive" metaphysics I try to utilize allows for a pure presentism in understanding evolution, and the relations between organisms, and between organisms and inorganic environments.

An additional lack common to many metaphysics, as well as to many tropes of biological evolution, is that of essentialism. In Nietzsche's phrase, metaphysicians (and evolutionary biologists) imagine a "lightning behind the flash"—as if a doubling of a hidden entity behind the expressed attribute were necessary. To be clear: I would understand lightning as nothing but the sum of its attributes, and no attributes are not (at least potentially) expressed. 'Essence' is a perfectly fine shorthand for the sum of an entity's attributes, as long it is not understood in an *essentialist* manner as something which is lacking in *mere* attributes.

One lightning-behind-the-flash which evolutionists sometimes discover is a genotype behind phenotypes. Although I would not quite throw out these rather fine sounding words, I would urge a certain metaphysical suspicion towards them. A frequent conception is a rather Platonic notion of other-worldly genotypes expressing the pure form of phenotypic instantiation. This is an oddly idealist metaphysics for a purportedly materialist science. While the Central Dogma of Molecular Biology[18] is most certainly untrue, there is certainly a strong asymmetry in the determination of genetic and non-genetic material in organismic bodies. A parsimonious understanding would realize that genotypic material is not something apart from phenotypic realization, but simply one aspect of phenotype. Genes exist within bodies, and constitute, or allow, a particular range of expressive attributes of organisms. Genes are simply additional organs possessed by bodies, not formal determinations of bodies. A Spinozistic understanding such as this will aid us in our corrections to the politico-conceptual models of the biological sciences discussed below.

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[18]In Francis Crick's widely known characterization, the Central Dogma states that information travels from DNA to RNA to proteins, but never in the reverse direction. The broader notion is that Mendelian mechanisms make up all of evolutionary change, while Lamarckian mechanisms are mere fiction. Among the problems in the central dogma are the exchange of DNA material between genotypically distinct cells (universal among single-celled organisms, common also in plant hybrids, and in single-cellular organisms existing inside multicellular bodies); environmental influences upon rates and sites of chromosomal mutations; reverse transcriptase operative in viruses, and possibly in normal mammalian cells which replicates RNA sequences into DNA.

B. Active and Reactive Forces in Natural Ecology

'Exploitation' does not pertain to a corrupt or imperfect or primitive society: it pertains to the *essence* of the living thing as a fundamental organic function, it is a consequence of the intrinsic will to power which is precisely the will of life. [Nietzsche, 1973, p.194]

In Bataille's *bioenergetic* retelling of Nietzsche's Heraclitean "Will-to-Power," the principle of an *expenditure* acting toward the immanent disincorporation of every constituted body becomes a basic principle of the organization of life on the surface of the earth. That is, after Bataille's *Accursed Share* [Bataille, 1988], we can no longer rely on homeostasis as a property of biological bodies. In the next section, "Biology and Her Sisters," I discuss how when a move from the fixity of bodies is made, several systems of metaphors of constitutivity based upon the old model of bodies quickly unravel. If bodies are not stable, self-constituting systems, neither are the *minds* metaphorically (or metonymically, perhaps) cast in their image; and neither is the *body politic*. Or rather, to be more careful, the rethinking of the biological "body" which Bataille gives us allows a corollary rethinking of our images of "body-like" things. This rethinking, which is done throughout Bataille's works, in turn erases all of our "organic" models of stability.

Let us examine several remarks from *The Accursed Share* [Bataille, 1988],

> The living organism, in a situation determined by the play of energy of the surface of the globe, ordinarily receives more energy than is necessary for maintaining life; the excess energy can be used for the growth of a system (e.g., an organism); if the system can no longer grow, or if the excess cannot be completely absorbed in its growth, it must necessarily be lost without profit; it must be spent, willingly or not, gloriously or catastrophically.

> As a rule the surface of the globe is invested by life to the extent possible. By and large the myriad forms of life adapt it to the available resources, so that space is its basic limit.

> [Life suffocates within limits that are too close; it aspires in manifold ways to an impossible growth.

> [T]his atmosphere of malediction presupposes anguish, and anguish for its part signifies the absence (or weakness) of the pressure exerted by the exuberance of life. . . There can be anguish only from a personal, *particular* point of view that is radically opposed to the *general* point of view based on the exuberance of living matter as a whole. Anguish is meaningless for someone who overflows with life, and for life as a whole, which is an overflowing by its very nature.

A reactive force is, firstly, a force which is dominated. An active force is a force which dominates. One may not exist without the other. Consciousness, according to a certain Nietzschean understanding, is always a product of resentment, is a reactive force. We could explain this, as a first attempt, in a Freudian way: consciousness (ego) is a mental force created to be dominated by the id, in order that the id does not directly exercise its dominating potential.[19] Historically, consciousness must be developed by those unable or unwilling to dominate. *Will-to-power* is "the principle of

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[19]I do not suggest that the superego is not itself a dominating force of its own sort. The capricious fury of the superego is a phenomena well enough understood by Freud, and well discussed by Zizek in a number of places. But the dominance of the superego is an internalized dominance. Rather than the id act in a capriciously violent and aggressive way toward beings outside self, the superego turns capricious violence to the self itself.

the synthesis of forces;" or, perhaps, the principle which allows for a difference/antagonism of forces.

To place this in Bataille's picture we should consider *will-to-power* the general bio-energetic principle of life;[20] the generalized completeness of the extension of the biosphere in every possible direction, and the consequent necessity of an overall non-productive expenditure of energy. In this picture, no use of solar energy is possible in a generalized way; and insofar as such a use is possible in a particular instance it is only by displacement of necessary expenditure to a different place within the biosphere. The displacer, that individual, species or other unit, which succeeds in temporarily displacing the necessity of expenditure elsewhere constitutes an active force. The location of displacement, which must increase, perhaps to the point of its complete extermination, its non-productive expenditure, becomes a reactive force. An active force must, however, become a reactive force when it is no longer able to maintain its new degree of accumulated energy.

Concretely, take as an example two chlorophyllic species of single celled organisms completely covering the surface of a pond. One species (or call it an individual if you like—since every unit is genetically identical) can expand only at the expense of the territory covered by the other. Each species continues to absorb radiation from the sun, which brings it chemi-

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[20]This "bio-energetic" principle is, in essence, solar energy. The play of energy on the surface of the earth is caused, in the first place, by the energy received from the sun. I believe it is not unreasonable to read many of Nietzsche's references to the sun in relation to this. One might normally read these references to the sun as metaphorically standing for *will-to-power*; however, I believe Bataille's reading gives us a means to read these references quite literally. Any reading of Nietzsche which is not metaphorical is, I believe, to be preferred to a metaphorical one in light of his remarks in the *Genealogy* about the incomprehensible (to us) literalness of all original nobles.

cally to a state where some of its cells must either reproduce or die. If the latter, they dissipate the energy which they have absorbed in their mitochondria in a manner useless to the organism/species; if the former then they must cause just such a dissipation in cells of the other species. Most likely, each species becomes at the same time reactive and active—some cells die at the same time as other cells succeed in displacing those of the other species to reproduce—though, of course, there may well be a preponderance of domination in one direction. Even if the entire pond becomes monogenetic in the struggle for dominance, *will-to-power* does not thereby disappear. It merely operates instead exclusively at the level of individual cells.

Forces within the biosphere do not necessarily interact only through death, though this may be the most common result. We can also imagine two plants, for example, such as two grasses, which are in a struggle for territory where the reduction, and hence expenditure, of one does not result in its death, but merely its diminution. Death is simply the most absolute form of an entirely general principle of the interaction of forces.

Again, we may consider yet another biological interaction of forces. A lion eats a lamb. A lion becomes active, allowing it to act out its potential of storing a still greater quantity of energy, of biomass; while in the same event a lamb becomes reactive, releasing non-productively its accumulated biomass/energy. This allows us to consider several additional things. First, in becoming-active a lion simultaneously increases its potential for becoming-reactive and exhausts one potential relation for becoming-active; the very active force contains within itself the movement towards a reactive force. That is, a lion expands its biomass by eating a lamb, creating a still greater degree of stored energy to be non-productively released—as it will be eventually. An affirmation of life is an affirmation of the

movement towards death. Every moment in which *will-to-power* functions is a return to the conditions under which *will-to-power* must function. Even if our lion becomes active before it becomes reactive, it must become active in a different manner than it became active before—in relation to a different becoming-reactive force. *Will-to-power* always returns, but never in the same particular forces in which it has already been expressed. In this sense there is no active being, but only becoming-active; and likewise no reactive being, but only becoming-reactive. The much spoken of 'Eternal Return' is a return to becoming in each moment.

To talk about active forces and reactive forces is always to talk about a milieu or stratum. Within a milieu all the forces may be reactive forces; but they may only be so in relation to active forces on a stratum which grounds the stratum on which forces are exclusively reactive. For example, a monogenetic growth within a limited biological space is exclusively reactive on the species milieu. It does nothing but dissipate the excess of solar energy it receives. However, even this purely reactive species force becomes reactive only out of the substratic struggle of both active and reactive individuals. This is only an example, notice: it is not intended to suggest that individuals are universally a lower or more basic level than species. It may happen at other times that exactly the reverse grounding occurs—that a purely reactive individual emerges out of the antagonism between active and reactive species. The biosphere, having generally exhausted the space available to it, is as a whole entirely reactive—it may do nothing but dissipate its excess of energy. Reactive forces are "everywhere triumphant" [Deleuze, 1962/83]—or at least, looking everywhere at once we see nothing but reactive forces.

Reactive forces become conscious, in human beings, are known as *ressentiment*. The resentful will is the will to non-productive expenditure, to allow dissipation rather than displace it. This will "separates active force from what it can do" (D). A human being is capable of domination, but rather than become active in this domination she turns becoming-active force against itself to make it reactive. That is, rather than displace expenditure, the resentful being suffers it. The resentful consciousness in turning against itself creates metaphysical denials of the possibility of becoming-active—either, as in science by denying becoming, or, as in religion by denying the necessity of expenditure (either in this world, as in Lamaism, or by projection to an imagined world without the necessity of expenditure). The scientific principles which carry forth this denial in consciousness are those which equalize all things by quantifying them, and by positing the "laws" of conservation.

What Bataille's picture has done is to reverse the Darwinian conceptual schema of evolutionary pressure in two ways. In the first place, there is no longer any principle of scarcity in an organism's relation to environment—just the opposite, there is always an overabundance of resources, more than can ever be utilized. In the second place, there is no longer even really a bounded organism. Inside and outside no longer make sense—not because of a kind of "interactionist" merging of an organism with symbiots and environment as with those changes Haraway analyzes—but because the very active force which defines an organism's boundaries has as its immanent tendency the disincorporation of those same limits. The accumulation of energy defining each organism is *internally* the accumulation of the conditions of the destruction of that organism.

C. Biology and Her Sisters

Consider the One God Universe: OGU. The spirit recoils in horror from such a deadly impasse. He is all-powerful and all-knowing. Because He can do everything, He can do nothing, since the act of doing demands opposition. He knows everything, so there is nothing for him to learn. He can't go anywhere, since He is already fucking everywhere, like cowshit in Calcutta.

The OGU is a pre-recorded universe of which He is the recorder. It's a flat, thermodynamic universe, since it has no friction by definition. So He invents friction and conflict, pain, fear, sickness, famine, war, old age and Death. [Burroughs, 1987, p.113]

Two inseparable naturalizations of "the subject" have occupied these last "subject" so naturalized is at once, and immanently, both the "subject" of an economic/political order and the "subject" of a rationalist philosophy of consciousness—from Descartes, through Hegel, to psychoanalysis and existential phenomenology. The proper names for these two intertwined naturalizing schemata have been "evolutionary biology" and "economics." The series of identities I mention here has, of course, also been identified by Foucault, in *The Order of Things* [Foucault, 1973], so I cannot claim to be original in such identification. The real concern of these naturalizations of subjectivity—in biology, economics and philosophy—has in every case been the provision of a stable boundary between organism and non-organism, actor and non-actor, *self* and *non-self*. All of this ends, however, with the end of modernism.

That the conditions of stable subjectivity have been lost or abandoned in the second half of this century is not really in question. Rather we might ask whether the very terms of the "mainstream" loss of subjective closure are nothing more than the new structures of dominance in post-industrial societies—dominance no longer of bodies, but of networks; no longer of legitimation, but of information; no longer of constraints on rational choice, but of the preconditions of

rationality—but dominance nonetheless. The mainstream loss of any hermetic subjectivity occurs at the point where the self merges with the non-self at the external boundaries of constituted being; Donna Haraway [Haraway, 1991] marks this loss in the right-hand column of her series of oppositions appearing in her "Cyborg Manifesto," and slightly reworked in her "Biopolitics of Postmodern Bodies." We will discuss some of Haraway's oppositional pairs in the below section "Denaturing Subjectivity", but those familiar with Haraway will know in advance that this right-hand column expresses, on each line, an already achieved change in the regulation of society. Perhaps, as I also discuss below, all of these achieved changes act as mere smokescreens to a deeper challenge to subjectivity, and to the regulation of society, pointed to by Bataille.

Sorority

Only the briefest review on the common conceptual terms of economics, evolutionary biology, and rationalist philosophy is here possible; but let us proceed with a few "reminders." Each field is composed of an atomistic collection of individuals; each individual acts in relation to an external world through internal representation and rational choice. In the schemata of all these three disciplines, the basic function of every individual is the

preservation and reproduction of itself as an entity over time; it is here that representation and rationality function, since the means for preservation/reproduction are presumed to be in scarce supply in the world, and hence to require active, purposeful appropriation by the individual in question.

Basically, all three of these intertwined conceptual systems exclude mimetic-representation of individual's exteriors, and demand what Harry Redner [Redner, 1994] calls "true" representation. In the simplest terms, what gets represented in the exterior is *unlike* the thing which plays the representational role on the interior—and hence representation is a pure formal relation, rather than mere mimetic duplication. The death of mimesis is generally diagnosed as occurring at precisely the historical point at which these conceptual systems arise, so a certain consistency is thereby loaned to our analysis. Let us quickly step through this conceptual system as it is three times choreographed by our three fields.

In the non-Marxist economics (and in much of the "Marxist") economics since Adam Smith, the central trope has been that of the individual who attempts to preserve/reproduce her existence as owner of commodities through rational choice and internal representation of economic relations between commodities. Individual existence as consciousness of subjective position is here identical with stable identity-over-time of commodity ownership. It is less than half in jest that I tell my students that Rationalist philosophy of mind has been a series of efforts to make contracts binding.

Of course, commodities are always understood as alienable by subjects, but this is always only the contingent alienability of a *particular* commodity, not *universal* alienability of commodity relations themselves. Just as the Kantian "necessary unity of apperception"

answers the Humean skepticism about the contingency of particular impressions, the Smithian "necessary unity of commodity ownership" answers the nameless skeptic of private property. Continuing concretely the sketch given abstractly above, interior *represents* exterior in the relation between use-value and value. Value is the external, intersubjective existence of every scarce commodity; while use-value is the interior representation of commodities for subjectivity. The particular distinction of use-value and value is from Marx, but all economists repeat it in some language or another. Regarding much of this, see Alfred Sohn-Rethel's *Intellectual and Manual Labour* [Sohn-Rethel, 1978], a much under-appreciated book.

An almost identical trope is repeated in the coeval history of evolutionary biology. A biological organism is presumed to organize itself around the dictates of preservation of its unity through the utilization of various scarce particulars: food supply and optimal sexually-reproductive opportunities. The fundamental opposition is between *self* and *non-self*, and stable, identifiable boundaries are demanded. The same representational schema is played through here in evolutionary biology as in economics: this time the individual is called the *phenotype*; the representable exterior is called the *environment*; the interior representation is called the *genotype*. As in the economic schema, continued identity depends upon continually re-entering into relation with separate *particular* exterior objects, but it must be a self-identical individual which enters into *universal* relation to an external environment.

Our trope is repeated once more in Rationalist Phenomenological philosophy—as has already been explained obliquely. The stable subjective consciousness aware of itself constitutes its universal unity in the perceptibility of particular phenomena. Contra any Humean skepticism, the Cartesian/Kantian subject is stable across the accidents of particular impressions of

which consciousness is necessarily composed. The representational nature of the modernist image of consciousness has been so thoroughly discussed almost everywhere that it would be quite gratuitous to say anything further here; however, what may be less obvious is the principle of "scarcity" entailed by this image. Inasfar as the modernist subject perceives the world as *objective*, it always posits an inadequacy to the actual phenomenal experiences. In Nietzsche's phrase, the modernist consciousness posits "lightning behind the flash." The scarcity of the phenomena make it necessary to husband the actual phenomena to reproduce further phenomena behind the phenomena. The "given" in experience functions as commodity-inputs of production, not it's output.

Denaturing Subjectivity

One history of the denaturing of subjectivity, and of subject(ivat)ed bodies, runs from Nietzsche to Bataille. In his works, Bataille recognizes a loss of subjectivity at the very core of subjectivity. Further, he identifies this loss simultaneously in the three fields we have been discussing: evolutionary biology, economics, and Phenomenological philosophy. He also finds these three fields to suffer inseparably from a common misunderstanding in their common effort to uphold the modernist conceptual scheme we have discussed.

Haraway's work presents an intricate series of parallels with the denaturing of bodies in Bataille [Haraway, 1991]. Her figure for the impossibility of constituted biological bodies, however, lies not in the biological

functions of sexuality and death (or at least not firstly here), but rather in the image of the *cyborg*—a technologically coded and over coded amalgam of machine and flesh. Bodies are not homeostatic systems of self-constitution because our postmodern bodies are always already the *artificial* constructions of technologies and technological discourses. Her touch-point is, of course, Foucault's "bio-politics of power," but she goes beyond this as well.

Both Haraway and Bataille serve to deconstruct the modernist narrative of subjectivity, not in terms of a critique of the Phenomenological presuppositions of the Cartesian project (valuable though such is), but rather in terms of a denaturing of the very hidden biological metaphor on which such a narrative is based. Both open views onto what a post-modern non-subjective politics might look like.

External Boundaries

Everything described in the metaphorical field of the subject in biology/economics/philosophy ended at least thirty years ago. Haraway diagnoses this change, and the associate loss of unity of subjectivity under the newer "informatics of domination"—as she calls it. The change diagnosed, and to a great extent embraced, by Haraway concerns the point at which the self in the discussed conceptual system merges into non-self at the external boundaries of the previously stable self. The move away from our conceptual system of unitary identity occupies a myriad of different particular disciplines or fields. Those, at least, of evolution, economics and phenomenology are included, but the transition is still broader than this. Several names for two contrasting historical periods—the more recent starting near the middle of the twentieth century—have been proposed. Sometimes the distinction between modernism and postmodernism is utilized; others times, that between monopoly capitalism and multinational

capitalism, or between "society of the commodity" and "society of the Spectacle," are preferred. Other names are sometimes used as well.

Without putting too fine a point on the particular terminology used for these contrasting periods, let us take a look at some particular conceptual/historical items juxtaposed by Haraway. All of them tend to have the same moral. The transition which has occurred has occurred at many levels at once: it has been a change in the product of industrial production; a change in the process of industry; and a change in the conceptual-ization of humans and the world. This conceptualization itself will be treated in its aspects as economics, evolution, and phenomenology. Close homologies exist between each type of change, or at least so it seems from the "inside" of conceptualization. Let us examine these changes in the order listed: product, process, conception.

The product of industry used to be things; now it's information. This change is a matter of degrees, not absolutes, of course—but the change is pretty overwhelming when in the 1990's well over half the national product of industrial countries—measured simply in monetary terms—is information. Clearly, such a share was a mere few percent at the beginning of this century. The change here mentioned was mostly clearly diagnosed by the Situationists—although Haraway's debt to them is only implicit, not citational. A few of the pairs in Haraway's repeated chart of oppositions point to this change. The pairs representation/simulation and heat/noise make this fairly explicit. Where industrial production of *things* could be carried on wholly with a representation of the combinative process of inputs (a diagram for assembling an object, for example), production of *information* always involves a second order simulation of the consumer of the information; information's production can be neither conceptualized nor carried out without having already achieved its

consumption. In a way, we could say paradoxically that information has no inputs, but only outputs. The heat/noise pair "refers" to the inefficiencies within any productive process. But where the wasted inputs of a mechanical industrial process are dissipated as heat, the waste in an informational productive process is dissipated as noise (in the sense of the word given in computer and communications technologies: noise is whatever isn't signal).

The process of production used to be concerned with the expression of human abilities by the utilization of mechanical assistance. Now just the reverse is dominant: it is human-beings themselves who are mere biological prosthetics to productive machines—whether robotic or informational machines, though the former will be those addressed herein directly. A pair such as Labor/Robotics makes this clear; as does that between "Organic division of labor" and "Ergonomics/cybernetics of labor." The transition from a Taylorist micro-engineering of human motion to a cybernetic planning of a total productive process completely decenters any human subject in the process. Once upon a time it made sense to speak of the extension of human-beings' powers through machinery, but no longer is the human body a stable center and locale of productive processes. The distinction between the biotic and mechanical portions of productive machines has become entirely "artificial."

The conceptual parallel to the change in productive product and process is at least threefold. In economics, with Fordism and Keynesianism (to say nothing of Baudrillard) the questions of rational commodity choice is subsumed to the centrally-managed continuation of the generalized system of exchange. Both producer and consumer have fallen out as anything other than statistically amalgamated tendencies: there is no *subject* doing any of this.

In biology, the paradigm changes from a focus on organisms to a focus on biotic components and populations. The boundaries of a biological organism become merged with the breeding community in which it is embedded. Another of Haraway's pairs, Reproduction/Replication indicates the loss of the representational paradigm as well. Genotype no longer "represents" environment, since no stable organismic interior and exterior exist to define such representation. Rather, genes individually simply replicate in identical form. This brings us back to something akin to mimesis, but it's not quite identical to the earlier mimetic schema.

In Phenomenological philosophy, much the same loss of the boundaries of subjective identity occurs, for example with Foucault. The subject becomes wholly subject *of* various systems of societal power, and the locus of identity is no longer coherently that of a Cartesian/Kantian subjectivity. I think the whole story of loss of subjectivity and representation in postmodern philosophy will not be unfamiliar, so I hope I may leave this portion with this simple mention of the change. Interestingly, Slavoj Zizek [Zizek, 1992] identifies something like the contrast I am about to draw between Haraway and Bataille, between that parallel ratio Foucault/Lacan. That is where the first in each pair identifies a loss of subjectivity where subjectivity is pushed outward past the exterior bounds of its intelligibility, the latter identifies the loss of subjectivity at the very most interior point of subjectivity, and hence makes a much more radical gesture. It can be no accident in this regard that Bataille and Lacan were each, at different times, married to the same woman.

Internal Limits

Bataille makes precisely this same move with his analyses of economics and of subjectivity. With economics, first, Bataille identifies the central principle of his *general economy*—opposed to the *restricted economy* of neo-classical economics—as *expenditure*, or as *the accursed share.* That is, every society produces in excess of the minimal requirements of its own reproduction (including the physical reproduction of its human beings); and hence the excess of its product must be somehow expended in strictly non-productive activity. Various societies manage this excess in a variety of manners—whether in Potlatch, religious sacrifice, luxury consumption, war, or in other ways—but every society, by necessity, manages this excess somehow. From the perspective of *general* economy, all these forms mentioned are generically forms of *waste*; and waste is dominant in all societies to such an extent as to make "scarcity" meaningless, or even paradoxical.

The second modernist conceptual paradigm—that of "boundary"—is similarly abandoned in Bataille's *general economy.* There is no longer any "closed circuit of production," because every object in a rational economy of production functions simultaneously in a fundamentally irrational circuit of expenditure/consumption. There is no longer any Smithian transcendental unity of alienability, because that *accursed share* which is alienated as pure sacrifice undermines the whole basis of the commodities-system in the exchange of equivalents.

Finally, subjectivity suffers the very same immanent disappearance with Bataille as have economy and evolutionary biology. If the conceptual field which had created the Rationalist notion of a stable philosophical subject had depended on the theoretical and practical naturalizations of economics and biology, then the reversal of these naturalizations leads automatically to a reversal of the form of subjectivity. Such, anyway, is the argument made by Bataille. Even if a subjective disincorporation does not *necessarily* follow the disincorporation of its metaphors, such a disincorporation is independently argued for by Bataille.

Bataille's analysis centers around *desire* and *sexuality* at the core of subjectivity. Desire is always implicit in every rational conception of the world, and of self—and yet it is the one aspect of world and self which is never fully conceptualizable by self. Desire is the very ground of self in what is fundamentally non-self: the organic basis of consciousness. This non-self at the basis of self lies in the primary drive to *sacrifice*, which is always at its basest core a sacrifice of *self* itself, before it is a sacrifice of anything else. The sacrifice of self at the core of human existence, however, is nothing more than the general form of all biological existence. It is the active-force in Will-to-Power which always immanently the becoming of a reactive-force; it is the accumulation of biotic energy whose accumulation only leaves more to be expended in death; it is the acquisition of commodities whose abundance demands their sacrifice in non-productive utilization.

III. LACANIAN SUBJECTS

A. An Old Fashioned Story about Lacan

Hegel: "The Spirit is a Bone."

Lacan: "The Spirit is a Boner."

[Alex Pienkenagura, 1994, Unpublished remark]

The Mirror Stage

A good place to start an exposition of Lacan is at the place where Lacan begins: the mirror stage [Lacan, 1949/77; 1948/77].[21] "The Mirror Stage" works through Lacan's first topological model of the circuit of desire and subjectivity. Although Lacan's career can best be seen as a series of devastating critiques of his own earlier conceptions [Zizek, 1991a], the *picture* drawn in this first essay gives the contours, if not the details, of each later epicycle. Lacan takes the term "mirror stage" from the phenomenon in which an infant presented with its own reflection will "*perceive* a unity of an image. . . [although it cannot] produce this unity in its own body" [Weber, 1991, p.12]. For a human pre-subject, imaginary unity of its image precedes any somatic unity of its volition. In Lacan's words,

> [T]he child anticipates on the mental plane the

conquest of the functional unity of his own body, which, at that stage, is still incomplete on the plane of voluntary motility." [Lacan, 1948/77, p.18]

Its ego is fundamentally situated in this externalized imaginary unity. Hence "*méconnaissances* [misrecognitions]. . . constitute the ego, the illusion of autonomy to which it entrusts itself. . . .[and] characterize the ego in all its structures" [Lacan, 1948/77, p.6]. The mirror stage is already an identification with an Other, or with "oneself" conceived as exteriority—although the use of the term Other [*Autre*] does not become a key term until later. In Lacan's words,

> We have only to understand the mirror stage as an identification, in the full sense that analysis gives to the term: namely, the transformation that takes place in the subject when he assumes an image [Lacan 1948/1977, p.2].

From the Imaginary to the Symbolic[22]

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[21]"The Mirror State as Formative of the Function of the I as Revealed in Psychoanalytic Experience." For purposes of exposition, it also makes sense to include the contemporaneous essay, "Aggressivity in Psychoanalysis" within our characterization of this point in the development of Lacan's thinking.

[22]This topic heading, while perhaps obvious enough in a discussion of Lacan, is borrowed from Jonathan Scott Lee [Lee, 1990].

Although "Aggressivity in Psychoanalysis" [Lacan, 1948/77] started to toy with a crucial signification (or failure thereof) to the term *Other* via Hegel's dialectic of master and slave, it is really with the Rome Discourse [Lacan, 1953/77][23] that the Other assumes a register beyond that of a bodily imago. With the Rome Discourse, the phenomenon of an identity constituted by or through an Other is extended further to explain the Symbolic Order, and with it the subject. The former circuit of the imaginary/Phenomenological mirror-image is expanded into a circuit in which our reflection is an image *in language*. Flesh goes word, as it were.

> For Lacan the subject [after the Rome Discourse] is constituted through language—the mirror image represents the moment when the subject is located in an order outside itself to which it will henceforth refer. The subject is the subject of speech. [Rose, 1982, p.31]

This image which appears in language creates a division within the speaking subject: on the one hand, the subject retains her aboriginal drive (the imaginary realm); on the other, the subject internalizes the contradictory system of signifier (the Symbolic Order). Rose continues,

> [T]he subject can only operate within language by constantly repeating that moment of fundamental and irreducible division. The subject is therefore constituted in language as this division or splitting. [Rose, 1982, p.31]

Hence "for Lacan, men and women are only ever in language. Men and women are signifier bound to the common usage of language" [Rose, 1982, p.49].

The Symbolic Order names we might call the semiological;[24] it is that which concerns the exchange of signifier for signifier. Lacan makes the move from a still essentially Phenomenological view of the subject in "The Mirror Stage" to a Saussurian structuralist one via a reformulation of the unconscious—or rather through a "return to Freud's" unconscious through the obscurities of ego-psychology and object-relations theory.[25] In the Rome Discourse, the unconscious is, famously, "structured like a language."

> The unconscious is that part of the concrete discourse, insofar as it is transindividual, that is not at the disposal of the subject in re-establishing the continuity of his conscious discourse. [Lacan, 1953/77, p.49]. . . .[T]he unconscious of the subject is the discourse of the other. [p.55]

The crucial Saussurian move by Lacan is in not naively conceiving the unconscious in the manner of (especially American) ego-psychology as a sort of homunculus or second consciousness residing alongside the ego. Rather, the *un*conscious is here conceived as precisely that which is excluded from belonging to the ego by virtue of the "*transindividual* reality of the subject" [Lacan, 1953/77, p.49]. After this structuralist reading of Freud, Lacan sees even the drives as fully subject to the Symbolic Order. For example,

> [T]he anal stage is no less purely historical when it is actually experienced than when it is reconstituted in thought, nor is it less purely grounded in

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[23]The full title of this 1953 address, often referred to as the "Rome Discourse" is "The Function and Field of Speech and Language in Psychoanalysis," or in its French, "Fonction et champ de la parole et du langage en psychanalyse."

[24]Borrowing here from Kristeva, who distinguishes 'semiology' from 'semiotics'. This distinction closely parallels the one Lacan starts to make from the 1970's between the Symbolic and the Real. Kristeva essentially wishes to name a Saussurian structuralism with her use of the former word, while distinguishing her owns conception of freedom in language in its concrete speech aspect with the latter term.

[25]Characterizing his "return to Freud," in the first sentence of the main text of the Rome Discourse, Lacan asserts that, "[P]sychoanalysis has only a single medium: the patient's speech."

intersubjectivity. [Lacan, 1953/77, p.53]

Lacan describes the structuralist subject in an eloquent metaphor,

> A certificate tells me that I was born. I repudiate this certificate: I am not a poet, but a poem. A poem that is being written, even if it looks like a subject. [Lacan, 1973/81 ,p.viii]

The Other and the Phallus.

We may give a thumbnail sketch of how the split in what functions as the subject comes about. Two terms need be brought to the fore for this sketch. These are the 'Other' and the 'phallus'. The Other is firstly the marker of the intersubjectivity in which the pre-developed speaking subject becomes subjectivated. We may think of this primary object as the mother, or at least call it by the term 'mother'. The phallus stands beyond the Other, and is the signifier of the object of the Other's desire. Lacan explains these terms and their relation to the subject:

> If the phallus is a signifier then it is in the place of the Other that the subject gains access to it. But in that the signifier is only there veiled and as the ratio of the Other's desire, so it is this desire of the Other as such which the subject has to recognize. . . [T]he child wishes to be the phallus so as to satisfy this desire. [Lacan, 1958/82, p.83]

Rose echoes this relation,

> [T]he child's desire for the mother does not refer to her but beyond her, to an object, the phallus, whose status is first imaginary and then symbolic. [Rose, 1982, p.38]

However, "[T]he status of the phallus is a fraud" [Rose, 1982, p.40]. There is no object which stands in the place reserved for the phallus. It is when the pre-subject

finds the absence of an actual phallus that signification begins. A shift to the symbolic occurs, and the absent phallus is made present, though not as the object it claimed to be, but rather as a signifier. In our societies, it is the penis which plays this role of signifier; however, in keeping with Saussure's arbitrariness of the sign, any signifier could work equally well. In fact, all signs do work just the way the penis fills in for the absent phallus: the signifier is necessary only with the absence of the signified. The phallus does not, however, stand on the same level as all signifiers. As Lacan writes, "The phallus is the privileged signifier of that mark where the share of the logos is wedded to the advent of desire" [Lacan 1958/82, p.82]. That is, the phallus is the signifier which bridges the imaginary and the symbolic, and which originates signification.

The Autonomy of the Signifier.

With the advent of the signifier in the psyche comes "the incessant sliding of the signified under the signifier" [Lacan, 1957/77, p.154]. That is, the signified drops out of the determination of the psyche when the phallus is seen to be missing. This process is not confined to the occurrence of the privileged signifier of the phallus. With the production of every signifier, a split is recreated in the human psyche, in which the signifier is inserted into the place of the absent signified. Between the signifier and the signified is always a play of presence and absence, with the present terms (the signifier) forming, as a consequence, an autonomous network. Lacan writes,

> [W]e cling to the illusion that the signifier answers to the function of representing the signified, or better, that the signifier has to answer for its existence in the name of any signification whatever. [Lacan, 1957/77, p.150]

But in fact, "The signifier alone guarantees the theoretical coherence of the whole as a whole" [Lacan,

1956/77, p.126]. Where the whole in question here is both the system of language and the psyche which reflects it.

With this autonomy of the signifier we arrive at the conclusion that "the meaning of each linguistic unit can only be established by reference to another" [Rose, 1982, p.32]. That is, there is no subject who may master a sign, and fix the signifier/signified links in her mind. For Lacan, "the truth of the subject, even when he [sic] in the position of master, does not reside in himself, but, as analysis shows, in an object that is, of its nature, concealed" [Lacan, 1973/81 p.5]. The truth of the subject may be taken to mean the signification of the subject; and the concealed object is in the indefinite signifier links which always exceed the subject. These links must lie in the whole practice of the community of speaking beings, that is, in ideology.

B. Two Lacans and the Immanent Negativity of Gender

Raise Boys and Girls Skirts the Same Way.

Raise Boys and Girls the Same Way.

Raise Boys and Girls the Same Way (Ghengis Khan Autobiography).

Raise Boys and Girls the Same Way and You Lose Life.

Raise Boys and Girls the Same Way but Rear Sheep Differently.

Raise Boys and Girls the Same Way, Damnit!

Raise Boys and Girls the Same, Then Reject the Null Hypothesis.

Raise Boys as Girls and Girls as Boys.

Raise Boys to Kill Girls and Eat Them.

Raise Boysenberries the Same Way You Raise Blackberries.

Roast Boys and Girls the Same Way.

[Jenny Holzer, http://www.adaweb.com/project/holzer/cgi/pcb.cgi]

Positive and Negative

There are two Jacques Lacans whom we might call the "Kantian Lacan" and the "Hegelian Lacan;" or in a similar vein, the "Positive Lacan" and the "Negative Lacan" (or perhaps the "Structuralist" versus. . . well, versus what!? [hint: not 'Post-Structuralist']). On the one hand, there is the Lacan criticized by Felix Guattari [Guattari, 1972/84; 1992/95; Deleuze and Guattari, 1972/83], Luce Irigaray [Irigaray, 1988], Judith Butler [Butler, 1993; 1990], and many others, defended by Samuel Weber [Weber, 1991], Jane Gallop [1982], Jacqueline Rose [Rose, 1982] in a special way Louis Althusser [Althusser, 1971], and most everyone in French and Comparative Literature departments in the USA. This positive, Kantian Lacan is the radical structuralist critic of ego-psychology, for whom "subjectivity is structured like a language" [Lacan, 1978], and who can cast an identification with the phallic law as the structuring principle past which identities cannot be thought. This Lacan is the one who gives a profound glimpse into the functioning of totalization, where positive limits—Ideology writ large—foreclose speaking at the horizon of being. It is this Lacan who can be well criticized for falsely universalizing a particular set of historically located sexual relations, who imagines as binding on all human beings a few conventions of power/knowledge which date not more than a few centuries in a few places, and who grandiously touts patriarchy. It is probably this Lacan whom I shall most want to defend.[26]

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[26]I shall, however, have to forego rehabilitation efforts for the positive Lacan until the section *Hegemony and Signifiance*, later in this chapter, and through certain parts of other later sections and chapters. To foreshadow, I might note that the rehabilitation I will later hope to accomplish concerns not any falsely ahistorical patriarchal assumptions per se, but rather the fundamental structure of Ideologies which are rather well exemplified (critically) by the positive Lacan.

On the other hand, in the last few years another Lacan has come forward from his grave, firstly in the books of Slavoj Zizek, but also in the associated writing of thinkers like Joan Copjec [Copjec, 1994, "Sex and the Euthanasia of Reason"], Mladen Dolar [Copjec, 1994; Zizek, 1992a], Jacques-Alain Miller [Miller, 1997], (perhaps) Ellie Ragland-Sullivan [Ragland-Sullivan, 1991] and Renata Salecl [Salecl, 1994]. Against the positive Lacanians—either advocates or critics—who see subjectivity as determined by sexuation, by the nature of one's relation to a Symbolic phallic identification, the negative Lacanians see sexuation as occurring precisely with the *failure* of identification, i.e. with the *loss* of subjectivity. Copjec writes of this *radical antagonism between sex and sense:*[27]

> As Lacan puts it, 'Everything implied by the analytic engagement with human behaviour indicates not that meaning reflects the sexual, but that it makes up for it.' Sex is the stumbling-block of sense. This is not to say that sex is prediscursive; we have no intention of denying that human sexuality is the product of signification, but intend, rather, to refine this position by arguing that sex is produced by the internal limit, the failure of signification. [Copjec, 1994, p.18]

For all the Lacanians, sexual difference has the form of a fiction; none imagine the sexual categories are achievable as fixed identities within subjectivity. Sexuation is for all a contradictory, *negative*, incomplete act at the core of subjectivation. But this *negative* is of a different sort between the two Lacans. In Hegelian terms, we might say that for the positive Lacan, sex is the abstract negation of language; it expresses merely abstractly the failure of language to complete the cycle of signification which might ground subjectivity. For the negative Lacan, the negation of language by sex

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[27]Here, and throughout this section, *sex* should be read in terms of 'sexual identity', that mostly of a binary gender self-identification rather than a preferential sexual partner, and not as sexual acts or their ancillaries.

becomes a determinate negation. Rather than merely occupying an external limit of signification, sex *is* immanently the very negativity at the core of signification. As Copjec writes distinguishing her position from Butler's,

> Sex is, then, the impossibility of completing meaning, not (as Butler's historicist/deconstructionist argument would have it) a meaning that is incomplete, unstable. Alternatively, the point is that sex is the structural incompleteness of language, not that sex is itself incomplete. . . . For sex is here not an *incomplete* entity, but a totally empty one—i.e. it is one to which no predicate can be attached. . . *Sex serves no other function than to limit reason, to remove the subject from the realm of possible experience or pure understanding.* [Copjec, 1994, p.20-21, emphasis in original]

The contrast between the language of the positive Lacanians and negative Lacanians is clear. For example, positive Lacanian Rose, even while characterizing the fictional nature of sexual categories seems to treat them as *fait accompli*, or at very least as contradictions postponed,

> For Lacan, the unconscious undermines the subject from any position of certainty, from any relation of knowledge to his or her psychic processes and history, and *simultaneously* reveals the fictional nature of the sexual category to which every human subject is *none the less assigned*. . . sexual identity operates as a law—it is something enjoined on the subject. [Rose, 1982, p.29; second emphasis added]

Or,

> The subject *is therefore constituted* in language *as* this division or splitting. [Rose, 1982, p.31; first emphasis added]

Or,

> [S]exual difference is a legislative divide which creates and reproduces its categories. [Rose, 1982, p.41]

For Rose, the division or splitting between sexual positions and/or between ego and Other may uneasily constitute subjects, but it *is* such a constitution. For the negative Lacanians, sexual positions are immediately the immanence of the *failure* of constituting subjects.

A Digression on the Antithesis of Sex and Reason

Luis Buñuel's last film, *That Obscure Object of Desire* [Buñuel, 1977], makes a gesture to the negative Lacan (quite likely Buñuel was even aware of Lacan). In a great number of films we might find an argument for the positive Lacan. A protagonist, or some other character, struggles with her (sexual) identity[28] throughout the film, being drawn first one way, then another. Or perhaps a film shows the unfolding of an identity thought already complete at the beginning of the film, but revealed to have greater depth and additional facets which were brought out either through events portrayed or through self-reflection on the limits of a previous identity.
After this portrayed process of identity expanding and unfolding, we may be left with the implicit or explicit moral at the end of the film that untold additional possibilities lay inside the character's identity. This sort of analysis, which in many cases need be little more than a scene-by-scene description of a film's events, is the stuff of many feminist, cultural-studies, or post-modern essays on film, which often, though not necessarily, make explicit reference to Lacan. Many of Butler's analyses, for example, take roughly this form.

Buñuel's film does not well lend itself to such an analysis. *That*

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[28]The sexual identity of concern, on first brush, is that identity as male or female (or neither, both, etc.), but as we see in the Buñuel's character Conchita, this *gender identity* is rather inextricably entangled with both an imaginary and symbolic sexual object choice—not just in the sense of a male vs. female sexual object, but also in senses such as many vs. few vs. no sexual object and different meanings of sexual object choice.

Obscure Object of Desire carries out a story of the "affair" between Mathieu and Conchita, in which although Conchita agrees to live with Mathieu, at his request, she insists on remaining chaste from any sexual activity with him. Throughout the film, Conchita insists on the importance of her virginity, although throughout suggestions are made that Conchita is promiscuous, and perhaps a prostitute. With the ongoing refusals of his advances, Mathieu becomes more and more obsessed with Conchita; but each *rapprochement* he tries to reach with his own desires toward her—whether acceptance of a Platonic relationship, sexual fulfillment, or complete abandonment of the relationship—is rebuffed by Conchita. She alternates between an apparent sexual desire for him and a complete indifference or repugnance, but in every event, her feelings are precisely opposite those which Mathieu approaches acceptance of. Conchita herself makes remarks to the effect that she changes so continuously in order that Mathieu not pin her down to a concrete nature.

All of this so far lends itself easily to a positive Lacanian/Butlerian analysis. The nature of woman, or of feminine identity, a positive Lacanian might argue, cannot be pinned down in a single category, but must remain open and contradictory. A woman might try to have a virginal identity, but this identity might overflow to promiscuity and prostitution. She might be consumed by sexual desire for a man, but have desire spill over to repugnance. A man might have sexual desire for a woman, but it might be in the nature of this desire that she remain unavailable to him. These are perfectly ordinary positive Lacanian observations, ones contained in a pair of familiar slogans. From Freud, "There is something fundamental to desire which is antithetical to its satisfaction." From Lacan, "There is no sexual relation."

That Obscure Object of Desire successfully resists this interpretation through a brilliant anti-interpretive gesture by Buñuel. In a manner reminiscent of Brecht's efforts to block the suspension of disbelief, Buñuel has the role of Conchita (whose character is Spanish) played by two different actors, French Carole Bouquet and Spanish Angela Molina. Both actors are in turn overdubbed with the voice of a third French actor. Likewise, Buñuel modifies Pierre Louys' novel *La Femme et le Pantin* to have a French rather than Spanish male protagonist, but then casts Spaniard Fernando Rey as the French Mathieu, but with Rey's lines overdubbed by French actor Michel Piccoli. The differences between French and Spanish characters or actors are not in themselves necessarily of any significance (in other films it would be merely a matter of accident), but the imagined differences between French and Spanish identities is one of the subcurrents of the story of *That Obscure Object of Desire*. If Buñuel chooses these particular combinations of French and Spanish actors to play and speak his roles it is as a gesture against the fixity of meaning which his characters imagine in national identities.

The immediate response of a positive Lacanian interpreter of Buñuel's film might be to try to read the use of the two/three actors portraying Conchita in the light of her own hypothesis of the non-fixity of sexual identity. Indeed, a viewer can hardly resist hypothesizing in this framework until the film itself slaps us down for trying. What seems natural as an interpretive strategy of the two/three Conchitas is to imagine that Buñuel intended to convey the notion that Conchita's identity was sufficiently unfixed or multiple that its different sides might well be portrayed by entirely different actors. The interpretive hypothesis springs immediately to mind, and we try merely to fill in the symbolisms of the two Conchitas. Perhaps the two actors represent the different characters of the French and Spanish, we speculate. When that proves untenable, we try to see how the two Conchitas represent virgin and whore within the character's identity. Failing any consistency in that interpretation we suggest that the two symbolize the sides of Conchita affirmative and critical of a relationship with Mathieu. But each hypothesis of the difference in "meaning" of the two Conchitas unravels to inconsistency with Buñuel allowing absolutely no consistent "interpretation" of his use of two

(three) actors in the role.

What makes Conchita desirable to Mathieu, and what makes this desire so obscure, is precisely that she, as a sexual being and sexual object, lacks an identity. She is ineffable (and therein desirable) *not* because her identity is so transcendent, so ambiguous, or so transgressive. She is ineffable because she simply does not have an identity (with herself). In playing through all the different "sides" of Conchita, Buñuel is just playing a jest on his audience, pretending that her sexual identity might lie in the unity, synthesis or conjunction of virgin/whore, French/Spanish, intimate/unattainable, or the like, when, in fact, her sexual identity (what makes her a being of desire) lies precisely in her absolute non-(self-)identity.

Various Negativities

The type of negativity pertaining to gender subjectivity flows in the circuit of the Symbolic Order. The positive Lacanians (perhaps with the exception of Felix Guattari, particularly in his last book [Guattari, 1992/95]) cast the Symbolic Order as a kind of *indefinite* negotiation of intersubjectivity. The Symbolic Order, for them, like the subject, is a book in the process of being written. However, this *postponed* Symbolic Order is still much too ontologized for Lacanians of a negative cast. Ragland-Sullivan, for example, writes,

> [W]e are surrounded by primordial losses that reappear as effects in every human act. There is no *the* symbolic order then, no totalization of anything, not even drives. [Ragland-Sullivan, 1991, p.64]

She continues, interestingly, in a strikingly Deleuze/Guattarian tenor,

> Repetitions prove to us that we exist, although we fade from continuities. By retrieving pieces of thought from an Other, an opaque *savoir* just out of grasp, we speak and act, drawing on the signifying structures that in-form us in lightning flash instances. Yet, using words means canceling them from memory *as they speak us.* [p.64, all emphases in original]

Ragland-Sullivan states the negative Lacanian case for the centrality of gender in Symbolic identification, "Gender fictions are at the base of the illusion that one has or is a being" [Ragland-Sullivan, 1991, p.51]. Since under Ragland-Sullivan's reading of Lacan, the phallus is precisely the signifier of *difference as such*, lacking signified, and since masculinity is defined by an identification with this purely differential signifier, she concludes,

> While the masculine is defined in opposition to the feminine, the feminine is not opposed to itself. Although subsequent unconscious signifier do imply relation based on opposition (S_1/S^2), the first universally countable signifier for difference *qua* difference is the signifier marking gender difference as a position taken toward language and law. . . The phallic signifier, thus, denotes difference as arising in reference to a null set, in reference to void or loss. [Ragland-Sullivan, 1991, p.57]

It is really Slavoj Zizek here, paralleled in many other places, who succeeds in generalizing and clarifying the more profound anti-essentialist gesture of the negative

Lacanians against their "anti-essentialist" critics. Ragland-Sullivan characterizes such a move by Zizek,

> While deconstruction and Marxim [sic] define themselves in anti-essentialist terms as affirming an irreducible plurality of theories and studies that depend on the radical contingency of the social-historical process, Zizek says that Lacan, by contrast, 'enables us to grasp this plurality itself as a multitude of responses to the same impossible real kernel'" [Ragland-Sullivan, 1991, p.67; quoting Zizek, 1989, p.4]

A Recurrence of a Digression: The Asymmetry of Difference

Despite the incompleteness of the above digression, in *That Obscure Object of Desire*, it would be a mistake to assume that Conchita's female sexual identity is the only one lacking self-identity. Just as much, but in a different, dependent respect, Mathieu is a non-self-identical sexual being. A hint to this non-self-identity is given in Buñuel's gesture of separating the actor who visually portray's Mathieu from the one who vocally portrays him, as well as with the onion-skin construction of Mathieu as a Frenchman within a Spaniard within a Frenchman within a Spaniard, at least reading the meta-narrative of the film's creation. However, we are fortunately able to read the "impossible real kernel" within the film's frame apart from reference to the casting of Mathieu's portrayal.

Ragland-Sullivan in naming the phallus as the signifier of *difference* as such really just iterates the familiar Lacanian slogan that "men claim the phallus, but women *are* the phallus" in negative Lacanian terms. Mathieu, in claiming a male sexual identity, does no more than claim to be self-identical insofar as he desires that *other* identity known as woman. His desire is constituted through the desire of the other. But this other fails to be "pinned-down" as the object of his desire, not just insofar as her desires vacillate in a manner he cannot catch, but insofar as she lacks any kernel of self-identity whatsoever. Desire is always a relation of non-identity, of *difference*. Mathieu has a sexual identity solely inasmuch as he marks himself as different from, as desiring, a being whose strict nature is non-existing. A feminine identity is not marked by such a reflection, a woman simply *is not*, she has no need to *not be* something else.

The end of *That Obscure Object of Desire* serves as a comedic-grotesque reminder of the impossibility of Mathieu constituting himself through a desire or relation which marks anything other than pure difference. Throughout the film, Conchita hints that if only Mathieu were to marry her they could have a realized sexual relationship insofar as she could then have a real concrete existence within the Symbolic Law. Finally at the end of the film, Mathieu comes to the point of giving up his desire for Conchita, although it means necessarily a simultaneous abandonment of his illusion of self-identity. During the argument/ *rapprochement* at the end at which Mathieu abandons Conchita the camera moves to a shop window behind them in which a wedding dress is being sewn, then they are all obliterated by a terrorist bomb: Mathieu, Conchita, the dress and shop. As soon as desire is abandoned, but also as soon as it becomes real concrete rather than pure difference, existence stops.

The Antinomies of Gender

Let us (finally) get right to the point about the negative Lacan and sexuation: Sex has nothing to do with a different relation to signification, or to a "master signifier." Everyone fails equally to relate successfully to signification. The differences between the sexes is precisely in situating this failure, these antinomies of sexuation wherein, paraphrasing Kant, sex inevitably falls into contradiction whenever it seeks to signify itself. The difference between the sexes is rather the

difference between the dynamical (male) and mathematical (female) antinomies. Such a diagnosis, which I find *compelling* more than I necessarily do *convincing* was made first (and *only*, so far as I know, except herein) by Copjec in "Sex and the Euthanasia of Reason" [Copjec, 1994] and by Zizek in *Tarrying With the Negative* [Zizek, 1993].

Copjec characterizes the antinomy of signification:

> [The] rule of language enjoins us not only to believe in the inexhaustibility of the process of meaning, in the fact that there will always be another signifier to determine retroactively the meaning of all that have come before, it also requires us to presuppose 'all the other signifiers', the total milieu which is necessary for the meaning of one. The completeness of the system of signifier is both demanded and precluded by the same rule of language. Without the totality of the system of signifier there can be no determination of meaning, and yet this very totality would prevent the *successive* consideration of signifier which the rule requires. [Copjec, 1994, p.19]

One recognizes at once the parallel between this antinomy of signification, and Kant's first (mathematical) antinomy [Kant, 1965, p.396 (A426/B454)]. When the question is posed whether the world has a beginning in time, and a limitation in space, both the thesis of such limits and the antithesis of infinite space and time are demanded equally by our conception of the world as an object of experience. On the one hand, the thesis points to the absurdity of experience synthesizing a simultaneous infinity of experience of an infinite world. On the other, the antithesis points to the symmetric absurdity of finding a limit within experience, past which phenomena end, and which would place the objective world in relation to the non-objects lying outside it. Kant's solution is to assert at once that *there is no phenomenon that is not an object of possible experience* and that *not all phenomena may become objects of experience*. Both the thesis and antithesis are negated,

shown false, insofar they share a common illusion in conceiving the world as a thing in itself. Rather, critical reason shows us,

> [T]he world does not exist in itself, independently of the regressive series of my representations, it exists *in itself* neither as an *infinite* whole nor as a *finite* whole. It exists only in the empirical regress of the series of appearances, and is not to be met with as something in itself. [Kant, 1965, p.448 (A505/B533)]

Whither the world, thither signification!

Does a Brain-in-a-Vat Have a Gender?

Like the world, woman does not exist in the very Kantian sense that it is impossible (within the Symbolic) to render of woman a judgement of existence [Copjec, 1994, p.34]. "[I]n order to say 'it exists', it is also necessary to be able to construct it, that is to say, to know how to find where this existence is" [Lacan, 1975, p.94, quoted by Copjec, 1994, p.32]. One might assume that man, resting on an identical antinomy of signification similarly does not exist. Copjec does not:

> [Why is it] assumed that the philosophical subject must be neuter? . . . What grounds it, those who hold it suppose, is the subject's very definition as constitutionally devoid of all positive characteristics. From this we may infer that those who desexualize the subject regard sex as a positive characteristic. . . [But] *male and female, like being, are not predicates, which means that rather than increasing our knowledge of the subject, they qualify the mode of the failure of our knowledge.* [Copjec, 1994, p.24-5, emphasis in original]

A predicative gender would be a mere assignment of traits to define a gender: A woman is a being who cares for children; a man is a being who wears a corset (as with the Ibitoe of New Guinea); etc. As "sex radicals" like Butler are quick to point out, the particular predicates defining a gender seem to be historically and

synchronously open ended: traits being recruited to define gender, traits falling from significance, or even traits reversing their gender meaning. If we start with the *a priori* that gender is predicative, then the sex radicals have a point. The "predicates" '(is) male' and '(is) female' sure do seem open ended. The negative Lacanians radicalize (*find the roots of*) the sex radicals by noticing that the judgment of gender precedes the almost comical and trivial predicative judgements we mistake for gender.

Copjec's surprising difference wherein we have no trouble asserting the existence of man parallels our surprise at finding Kant asserting of the dynamical antinomies that *both* sides are true, rather than neither. For Copjec and Zizek,

> Since the existence of the universe was regarded in the case of the woman as impossible because no limit could be found to the chain of signifier. . . . [T]he limit on the 'sinister' [i.e. left], or dynamical, side does not produce the possibility of metalanguage, but simply covers over its lack. This is accomplished by adding to the series of phenomena (or signifier) a negative judgement regarding what cannot be included in the series. [Copjec, 1994, p.37]

In Kant's third antinomy precisely the same *negative element as limit* occurs. The complete determination of events by natural laws of causality is, for Kant, *consistent* with the existence of a separate determination by freedom. The consistency of the antitheses, as opposed to their mutual inadequacy rests on the different arithmetic nature of the sets of

dynamical and mathematical antinomies. In the mathematical antinomy, the *addition* of phenomena to a series produced contrary false conclusions when this indefinite addition was pushed past its inherent limit to address the question of the totality of existence. However, in dynamical antinomies, what is performed is a *subtraction*. Taken away from the totality of causes is free action, which then allows reason to form a closure of causality by the world's limitation to natural causality. The *world* which could not exist as a totality of phenomena is brought into existence as a totality of causation through the *exclusion* of non-natural causation. But once the world is so conceivable as a closed totality of causes, it's ultimate determination *as object* by other causes (freedom) becomes graspable by reason.

The same circuit of limitation as in Kant's third antinomy determines *man* as a positive existence (albeit, a fictitious one). Man—whose name names a signifier, a mark, not a being—is defined by *lack* via the castration complex. Man's is the existence which lacks the Phallus. Woman, on the other hand, lacks nothing, and thereby fails every judgement of existence. The limitation of signification by a transcendental signifier he cannot claim to master allows man (the category) to claim a positive totality of signification. That "all pretensions to masculinity are, then, sheer imposture, just as every display of femininity is sheer masquerade" [Copjec, 1994, p.41] does not contradict the existence of man—to the contrary, it is the clearest expression of this existence. Lack is simply the meaning of existence within the Symbolic Order; hence, as previously quoted on page 40,

> While the masculine is defined in opposition to [as lacking] the feminine, the feminine is not opposed to itself. [Ragland-Sullivan, 1991, p.57]

The Logical Structure of the Antitheses

In his lecture, "A Love Letter" [Lacan, 1975/82, p.149], Lacan first presents his *formulae of sexuation.* As Copjec and Zizek each point out, these formulae precisely mirror the forms of the two types of Kantian antinomies:

Dynamical/Male	Mathematical/Female
$\exists x \, \neg M(x)$	$\neg \exists x \, \neg M(x)$
$\forall x \, M(x)$	$\neg \forall x \, M(x)$

The distinction here lies with two quite different negations of phenomena. Zizek writes,

> This difference in the structure of mathematical and dynamical antinomies hinges on the double negation which defines the status of phenomena: noumena is a non-phenomenon, a limitation of phenomena, and, furthermore, the field of phenomena itself is never complete or whole. Mathematical antinomies are antinomies of the "non-all" of the phenomenal field: they result from the paradox that, although there is no object given to us in intuition which does not belong to the phenomenal field, this field is never "all," never complete. Dynamical antinomies, on the contrary, are antinomies of universality: logical connection of the phenomena in the universal causal nexus necessarily involves an exception, the noumenal act of freedom. [Zizek, 1993, p.55]

So with the dynamical antinomy of causation and freedom, Kant asserts at once that every phenomenal X belongs within the causal order ($\forall x \, M(x)$) and that there is something (freedom) which lies outside the causal order ($\exists x \, \neg M(x)$). On the other hand, with the mathematical antinomy of the finiteness or infiniteness of time, Kant asserts at once that it is *neither* the case that there are phenomena not preceded by other phenomena ($\neg \exists x \, \neg M(x)$) *nor* that all phenomena have precedent phenomena ($\neg \forall x \, M(x)$). Similarly, in space neither are any phenomena limited by an end to space, nor do all phenomena have phenomena beyond themselves.

Read within the formulae of sexuation, the "predicate" Phi is simply 'submitted to the Phallic Law'. So whereas in male identity everything is submitted to the Phallic Law ($\forall x \, M(x)$) just inasmuch as there is there is something in masculinity free of the Phallic Law ($\exists x \, \neg M(x)$), in female identity not everything is submitted to the Phallic Law ($\neg \forall x \, M(x)$) just inasmuch as there is nothing free of the Phallic Law ($\neg \exists x \, \neg M(x)$). We can make an attempt to understand these formulae by way of the Freudian parable of the primordial sons who kill an originary father in a struggle to gain sexual access to women. In the parable, the dead father comes back as the Phallic Law confining the sons' pleasure within Symbolic dictates. In the parable, as well as in the classical Freudian Oedipal complex, all those claiming masculine identity are subject to the Phallic Law, but strictly on the condition that there is *one* representative of masculinity who escapes the dictates of Law, who therein serves as the very foundation of Phallic Law.

On the female side of the formulae the logic is more difficult. Not everything in woman is subject the Phallic Law insofar as the Symbolic is insufficient to name woman. Something in feminine identity eludes every attempt to subjectivize it within a Symbolic frame. However, Lacan does not thereby project a pure domain of femininity outside of Law and language, in the manner certain French Lacanian feminists might (Irigaray, Wittig, Kristeva). This is the point of the second portion of the formula. Merely because the Symbolic does not grasp feminine identity does not mean that there is some other *positive* feminine identity independent of the Symbolic order. In other words: there is still no *thing* free of Phallic Law ($\neg \exists x \, \neg M(x)$). The Symbolic cannot encompass woman because she *does not exist*, not because she has another nature

parallel to the Symbolic masculine one.

C. Hegemony and Signifiance

A certificate tells me that I was born. I repudiate this certificate: I am not a poet, but a poem.
A poem that is being written, even if it looks like a subject. So fuck you bitch, don't try to pin
that rap on me. [Lacan, 1978, p.viii].

Parole Contra Langue

For my purposes in this dissertation, a centrally useful Lacanian concept is *signifiance*. The first published use of this term, interestingly, comes from the essay "The Phallic Phase and the Subjective Import of the Castration Complex," which was the unsigned first article to appear in *Scilicet*, in 1968—written by students/disciples of Lacan whose identities I do not know. The concepts of this article were derived from Lacan's Seminar XI, in 1964. The term denotes precisely the sort of necessary and impossible relationship which I believe political subjects have to hegemonic ideologies—including that grand hegemony, Nietzsche's "Prison House," of language itself—which are *unthinkable-beyond* at precisely the point where they create their own immanent contradictions. Rose [Rose, 1982, p.51] characterizes signifiance as,

> the place where meaning falters, where it slips and shifts. It is the place of *signifiance*, Lacan's term for this very movement in language against, or away from, the positions of coherence which language simultaneously constructs.

Kristeva, as well, makes use of the neologism (or more technically, the archaism) *signifiance*, in a sense similar to Lacan's. While there are certainly contrasts in the senses used by Lacan and Kristeva, both include the notions of limits transgressed immanently in enunciation. It is perhaps worthwhile here to provide the entire translator's notes for this term given by Leon S. Roudiez, and certainly worthwhile to provide the last

couple sentences:

> SIGNIFIANCE (*signifiance*). "Meaning" corresponds to *sens* and "signification" to *signification*; "signifiance" thus being available for *signifiance*, it might seem unnecessary to resurrect the obsolete "signifiance," especially since "significance" carries the connotation of covert rather than ostensible meaning ("The Rubicon . . . was a very insignificant stream to look at; its significance lay entirely in certain invisible conditions"—George Eliot, as quoted in *Webster 2*). "Signifiance," nevertheless, has been retained, partly to avoid other connotations of "significance," partly because of its very obsoleteness. *Signifiance*, as Kristeva uses this word restricted to its Freudian sense (See *Introductory Lectures on Psychoanalysis*, Lecture 13). It refers to the work performed in language (through heterogeneous articulation of semiotic and symbolic dispositions) that enables a text to signify what representative [i.e. *representational*] and communicative speech does not say. [Kristeva, 1980, p.18]

While we are not here concerned with the challenges facing a translator as such, Roudiez provides a useful framework in opposing the work performed in language to what it (language) is able to say. We shall below employ our own usages of *signifiance*, taking inspiration, if not loyalty, from both Lacan and Kristeva, and, in particular, juxtaposing signifiance with another term, *hegemony*.

Ducrot and Todorov provide further inspiration for our adoption of the term signifiance. In a discussion of "The Text as Productivity", they lead into a definition of 'signifiance',

> Defining the text as productivity amounts to

saying—to bring ourselves now, and symmetrically, to the ultimate *theoretical* implications of such a definition—that the text has always functioned as a *transgressive* field with regard to the system according to which our perception, our grammar, our metaphysics, and even our scientific knowledge are organized, a system according to which a subject, situated in the center of a world that provides it with something like a horizon, learns to decipher the *supposedly prior meaning* of this world. [Ducrot/Todorov, 1979, p.357]

What we shall wish to call the "system to which our perception, our grammar, our metaphysics" etc. are organized is simply an "ideological formation"—and in certain cases forming a "horizon", a *hegemonic* one. Ducrot and Todorov continue,

> To the idealism of a meaning anterior to that which "expresses" it, the text would then oppose the materialism of a play of signifiers that produces meaning effects. . . . To "work the language" is thus to explore how it works, but on the condition that the models for what speaks meaning on the surface and what effectuates it in depth are not specified as the same. "We shall designate by the term *signifiance* this *work* of differentiation, stratification and confrontation which is practiced in language, and which deposits on the line of the speaking subject a signifying chain which is communicative and grammatically structured." [Ducrot/Todorov, 1979, p.357-358][29]

The notion which Kristeva, in particular, is aiming at is the manner in which the systematicity of a language—but also of any other semiotic structure—fails to capture the enunciative possibilities of real concrete speakers. Although language—and here I would add that language is, to my analysis, one ideological formation among others—forms a horizon beyond which no

counter-language or metalanguage can be posed, that is not equivalent to language (ideology) completing a closure of the possibilities of speech. Language has no outside, but it *does* have freedom and indeterminacy at its interstices. Most specifically, language may be used against itself by forcing the raw enunciative quality of words to fight against meanings.

A Return of the Positive

It can be recognized here that I have completed a return to the positive Lacan, at least at a formal level. In signifiance, language forms a positive horizon, not a merely negative limit. We can perfectly well know and say within language what it is that language does not allow us to say. Rather than the negative mathematical limit of a transfinite unreachable, and unapproachable, by any series of enunciations, the limits of language are the most banal commands made in grammar school. To put words or sounds together in disobedience to the rules of our language's phonetics, morphology, grammar and pragmatics is not to be damned to non-being, nor to find the disincorporating immanent negativity at the heart of subjectivity; it is simply not to speak meaningfully, not to be understood.

A Banal Example: Blue Star Blitz

The examples Kristeva and others adduce for signifiance, transgression of language against itself, generally come from the canon of "high" literature. Authors such as Beckett, Joyce, William Burroughs and Kathy Acker are good English language examples of authors who strain the bounds of language "from the inside" in the manner of signifiance. However, I would like to utilize a much more banal, and, in fact, crudely non-literary text as an example here. I can not, of course, guarantee that the below text will have an effect on other readers, but I found myself unable to drive from my mind an insistent bewilderment at the

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[29]The quoted sentence defining signifiance might be reasonably presumed to be taken from *Semeiotekè* [Kristeva, 1968], but Ducrot and Todorov do not provide an explicit citation for the quotation.

slap in the face to meaningfulness which the below text "enunciates" for a number of days after reading it. While the below text will be justly soon-forgotten next to Burroughs profound cut-up methods or Surrealist autonomatism, it has the advantage of being curiously straightforward in its transgression.

Two points by way of background, before I present my text. One manner (not the only one, clearly) of transgressing language within its system of syntactic, semantic and pragmatic rules is by the imposition of additional "artificial" rules on a text. These rules, through their artificiality, draw a sort of deconstructive attention to the "natural" rules through which meaning itself is necessarily created. Examples here are anagrams (interestingly, the topic of Saussure's uncompleted book), palindromes, texts written with restricted word or letter choice (such as a book without the letter 'e' or the word 'the'). The text I present falls under this category, mediated by the particular typographic form in which electronic texts are often transmitted.

The second background point concerns the "urban legends" of which the below is a (parodic?) example. A large number of stories or myths circulate very widely, which although untrue (or expressing a more archetypal form of particular true events), are almost universally reported as having the same sort of truth of *news stories*. These stories, although subject to variation in details tend to fall fairly neatly into finitely many types,[30]

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[30]In many, perhaps most, cases urban legends are identifiable by verbal elements quite idiosyncratic to a particular legend. For example, a particular myth or legend which is otherwise variable, will be "pinned down" by the near universal use of a particular proper noun (a person's name, or a place, for example) which always crops up in the story, even while having no essential connection to the moral of the story. In the below example, even though the "moral" of the story has to do broadly with corruption of children by drugs, the particular *point-du-capiton* of the name "Blue Star" remains throughout other variations in

crystallize constellations of fears, anxieties, pleasures, prejudices, and other widespread social emotions or attitudes. We hear these stories from the schoolyard, to the workplace, to social gatherings; but the rise of fax machines, then of the internet, has led both to new possibilities and new documentary fixity to these stories. One particular event which occurs seemingly with the regularity of clockwork is that one of several well-known urban myths will be re-discovered by a credulous reader, who then feels so moved by the pathos of the story to widely (and inappropriately) distribute the story over newsgroups, mailing-lists, and E-mail (and earlier over fax networks). The possibility of ready mechanical reproduction allows for the possibility that new readers will further distributing the story in essentially identical form.

The story of the "Blue Star LCD Tattoos" apparently dates back to the early 1970's in its earliest forms. However, during the last eight (or so) years of widespread internet use, the story seems to have a cyclicity of about eighteen months. That is, about every eighteen months it is widely and quickly distributed, only then to disappear within a couple weeks, either from its refutation by followers of urban legends, or through the simple forgetfulness of internet readers. It is clearly ideologically loaded with all kinds of themes about the innocence and corruptibility of children, the wickedness of drug-dealers, the cravenness of profit, and other themes for which no great subtlety or insight is required to see their appeal to many members of US cultures. This particular urban legend has also repeatedly made its way into redistribution by credulous police departments, schools, radio and TV stations, newspapers, and a variety of other ideological loci; eventually each is factually refuted, generally to the embarrassment of the distributor of the story. This

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the story. But surely, the "meaning" of the story does not depend on this odd, although perhaps memorable, name.

version of the "Blue Star" story was distributed in early June, 1996. I have no knowledge of the actual

chronological date of the text, nor of its creator.

WARNING TO PARENTS: If you have children or know anyone who
does, regardless of their ages you should read this! A form
of fake tattoo, called "BLUE STAR" is being given to school
children. It is a small, postage-stamp sized piece of paper
the size containing a blue star. These papers are SOAKED IN
LSD, in order to addict children to this dangerous drug.

The moisture and oils on your hands will react quickly with
the paper, SIMPLY HANDLING IT is likely to cause the LSD to
be absorbed into your skin. It has been confirmed that some
contain deadly amounts of STRYCHNINE, which is used to bind
the LSD to the paper.

THERE HAVE BEEN SEVERAL DEATHS FROM OVERDOSES, AND MORE DUE
TO THE STRYCHNINE. LSD is EXTREMELY DANGEROUS and extremely
addicting.

Symptoms to watch for include: hallucinations, mood swings
uncontrolled laughter, drop in body temperature, dizziness,
severely dilated pupils, and severe vomiting. Up to an hour
can pass between contact with the drug and the beginning of
the LSD "trip". If you suspect that your child has become a
victim of one of these blue star tattoos, you must take him
or her immediately to the hospital and call the police.

These usually come wrapped in foil. Some have been reported
to have different designs on the paper, but by far the blue
star design is the most common. You are advised to call the
police immediately if you find anyone suspicious selling or
giving away fake tattoos to children, especially those with
a blue star design or wrapped in foil.

Sources of above information are: Javier O'Donnell (Danbury
Hospital Outpatient Chemical Dependency Treatment Service),
Charles Fisher (New York State Police), and Burton Goldberg
(Mount Kisco Hospital, Mount Kisco, NY).

NOTE: Please feel free to reproduce this article and spread
it within your community and work place. This danger to our

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children must be made known. Distribute the warning as wide
as you can, this is growing faster than we can warn parents
and professionals.
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The syntactic, semantic, thematic and organizational structure of the above text is an unremarkable example of the "Blue Star" legend.[31] Even the grammatical errors are characteristic of renditions of the legend. The lead in is the address to the slightly absurdly broad group of those who "have children or know anyone who does." A few moderately clinical sounding phrases are used about the negative effects of LSD and its "contaminants" (another widely-believed urban legend in itself). Some sources are cited as evidence (who would prove either fictional or unaware of the text, if traced). Finally, a plea is made for redistribution of the text. All of the above is the slavishly standard *modus operandi* of this myth.

Typographic Transgression

There is nothing remarkable, and most certainly nothing *transgressive*, about the above "Blue Star" text, until one focuses upon a peculiar *typographic* detail of its presentation. This typographic peculiarity would be unrecognizable or non-existent if the text were read aloud. The peculiarity would even be extremely difficult to discern if the text were presented in any of the proportional fonts used in newspapers, books, magazines, and, for that matter, through most of this dissertation. The peculiarity would not even exist if different margin widths were used in reproducing the text. However, the above text was distributed to a network of computers, the vast the vast majority of which will display the text in a monospaced font with the locations of line breaks preserved by each display. It is also reproduced here in conformity with that rule. Presented in this specific manner, it is not difficult to notice in the above text that all lines except the last, in each of the seven paragraphs are *exactly* 59 characters long. The effect is to right justify each paragraph; but this is accomplished without varying the spacing following periods or other punctuation (nor inserting extra interword spaces), as one might do in a typesetting system. Whoever composed the quoted Blue Star story must have spent an enormous amount of time playing with word choice, paraphrases, word order, and so on, in order to accomplish this remarkable, but slightly covert, typographic effect. It might seem like a trifling coincidence that the line lengths are so uniform, but any reader who attempts to produce any single paragraph on the topic of her choice conforming to this rule will quickly recognize the challenge in writing according to this convention (much as with restrictions mentioned above, such as finding palindromes).[32]

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[31]For a rather exhaustive history of the origins and evolution of the Blue Star *meme*, see the Web page http://www.nepenthes.com/Tattoo/index.html, created by Dave Gross. Gross notes in personal E-mail that some of the concrete minor changes made in order to fit the text to its convention. For example, the name J. O'Donnell which is frequently used in the Blue Star legend is expanded with the first name Javier, which Gross asserts is original to the cited text. Gross' own explanation of the cited text is that it has taken a form fairly impervious to *mutation* in order to preserve within it a secondary hidden meme. The structure of this explanation is interesting insofar as it casts the text as operating, in a sense, as its own metalanguage. But insofar as I am unable to discover any real secondary meme operating within the text, I am not convinced that preservation of such a covert content is the actual value of the text's rigid structure.

[32]Another, less compelling, word play was later apparently posted from the same E-mail address, morph10625@aol.com (MORPH10625). The below text also takes a special typographic form, and repeats the same Blue Star legend. On two points, this text seems like *merely* wordplay as opposed to real signifiance. On the first point, the very obviousness of the typographic convention prevents the text from passing, even momentarily, as non-parodic (although the intent of the parody is not necessarily evident). Having nothing covert within the

The effect which the described typographic signifiance

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                    I
                   had
                  heard
                from my
                co-worker
               about a big
              problem today.
            It seems my kid
            and your kid, all
             of our kids have to
            worry about evil drug
            dealers giving out fake
            tattoos with acid in them.
           This is not a joke or rumor.
          This is a serious threat that
          must not be taken lightly. They
         have a blue star on them, but not
        all - some have cartoons or such on
       them. You must be very careful with a
       blue star tattoo because the strychnine
      can be absorbed into your blood from just
     handling the paper. This horrible thing has
    a reason to it - the dealers want LSD addicts
   to buy more after they are hooked. Symptoms you
  should watch for are: hallucinations, mood swings,
  uncontrolled laughter, drop in body temperature,
   dizziness or disorientation, severely dilated
    pupils, and severe vomiting. Some time - up
     to an hour, can pass between contact with
      the drug and onset of symptoms. If your
       child has fell victim to this heinous
        crime, you must take him quickly to
         a hospital. Children hare already
          died from this, LSD overdose is
           easy. If you see a suspicious
           person giving tattoos, foil
            wrapped especially, phone
             your police immediately.
             This is a real danger
              and is growing much
               faster than I can
                spread warnings
                alone. Thanks
                 for reading
                  this that
                  I wrote
                   about
                    LSD
                     !
```

parodic structure seems to weaken the transgressive effect of the enunciative (or readerly) act. Secondly, the text is much more artificial in its composition at a syntactic and semantic level. The sentence structure and semantic flow appears forced in a way that fails to provide a gap between its overt meaningfulness and its typographic reduction, or deconstruction, of this meaningfulness. If one were to typographically reformat the below text to eliminate the evidence of its peculiarity of construction, the text would still seem strange and unnatural. With the earlier 59-character text, a typographic reformatting of the text would hide its peculiarity of construction, but the text would otherwise pass for a perfectly "authentic" example of a credulously circulated Blue Star text. Of minor note here is that the below text is not even fully consistent in conformity with its own line-length restriction.

has is to make it deconstruct the meaningfulness of a text, but not merely to make a text *meaningless*. The 59-character Blue Star legend is not gibberish. It does not violate grammatical or semantic dictates of language. But the text *slips away from* each meaning we try to assign it. Whether we try to read the text as a warning of the drug-menace facing children or as a stupidly credulous condensation of a war-on-drugs ideology, its trivial typographic convention prevents us from accepting an interpretation. It is natural, then, to *step behind* the text by attributing various motives to the text's author(s) for creation. Quite aside from the speculative nature of these assigned motives, and from well known arguments of their undecideability, it should be recognized that this *stepping behind* is not a way of *pinning-down* the meaning of a text, but rather of *making up for* the (lack of) meaning. The text cannot be given stable meaning, but rather than admit to this, we evade the subject by talking about the conditions (i.e. authorial) of the text's creation.[33]

An Evasion of Positivity and Negativity

Metalanguage can be described as a sort of second language which assures the fixity of meaning in the language actually spoken or written. Assumptions that meaning is necessarily found (or find-able) within those text which at least obey all the ordinary precepts of language—syntactic, semantic and pragmatic (in the Grice/Austin sense rather than that of Pierce/Dewey)—seem necessarily to posit this sort of ground. Zizek, in this light, remarks,

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[33]Derrida's extensive writings on logocentrism—a metalinguistic grounding of texts in authorial authority—is, of course, of great relevance here. The author in many cases, perhaps essentially, functions as a dodge to the question of fixity of meaning. But any exegetical discussion of Derrida must remain, unfortunately, outside the scope of this dissertation.

> Metalanguage is not just an Imaginary entity. It is *Real* in the strict Lacanian sense—that is, it is impossible to *occupy* its position. But, Lacan adds, it is even more difficult simply to *avoid* it. One cannot *attain* it, but one also cannot *escape* it. That is why the only way to avoid the Real is to produce an utterance of pure metalanguage which, by its patent absurdity, materializes its own impossibility: that is, a paradoxical element which, in its very identity, embodies absolute otherness, the irreparable gap that makes it impossible to occupy a metalanguage position. [Zizek, 1989, p.156]

It is remarkable how prevalently meaningfulness has to be *made up for*. We have arrived at this conclusion a number of times already, and shall continue to so arrive throughout this dissertation. The negative Lacanians find sex making up for meaning where self-meaning—i.e. *sense* or *identity*—fail. Pursuing the notion of signifiance through some (post) Lacanians, notably Kristeva, we can identify (additional) places where meaning immanently fails. In the materiality of its enunciation (or of its otherwise physical, e.g. typographic, production) speech can create a tension, an abscess, within language. Things said in obedience to the dictates of language can still stubbornly resist incorporation within these formal confines.

On the face of it there seems to be a formal difference between negative and positive Lacanians, even at the point where they both reach the immanent failure of meaning. For the negative Lacanians the condensation of meanings' failure in gender seems painfully determinate. Every failure of meaning must be called gender, and never anything else. For those positive Lacanians focussing on signifiance, and the openness of enunciation as against the formalism of language, transgression is cast as absurdly volunteerist. Refusing meaning is just something we do as we wish, and because we want to. A dialectical synthesis here would realized the common identity of determinacy and

openness; it would draw forth an understanding subsuming both positive and negative Lacanian meaning of gender.

I am no dialectician. I have already written on page 37 of this dissertation that I will side with the positive Lacan, so there is no mystery here. We really are free to transgress language or identity (in the *signifiance* sense) pretty much as and when we wish. Perhaps a Marxian truism of the sort that the Symbolic dictates which we freely transgress are not those we freely determine is in order. Or perhaps this is merely a summary of the Saussurian division of *langue* from *parole*. In any event, my sympathies are clearly volunteerist, if not uncomplicatedly so.

Covering Fantasies and Hegemony

The negative Lacanians are in certain respects quite valuable. They well diagnose the structure of the Real within the Symbolic as the point of immanent negativity, or failure, of the Symbolic Order. A useful topological model is that of a ball covered with hairs or iron filings:

no matter what pattern of continuities exist overall in the direction and flow of the strands, at least two points exist on the surface of the ball where a discontinuity exists, and no direction (*derivative*, in calculus terms) can be assigned.[34] Where the Symbolic Order—or, I argue in this dissertation, particular ideological formations more specific than the Symbolic Order *sui generis*—reaches its own impossibility, a *fantasy* covers this gap. Gender is one such fantasy. On the same level Saussure's *langue* is another such fantasy. And likewise, as I explicate in another section, a (racial-)national identity is a *covering fantasy* in exactly the same respect as are gender and metalanguage. In fact, quite contrary to the negative Lacanians who, at least in those arguments addressed above, seem to reduce every gap in the symbolic to sex, I would multiply the number of covering fantasies indefinitely.

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[34]No particular attention should be paid to this minimum number of discontinuities of two for this particular topological/physical model. If anything, a better model for Ideology (writ large) might insist upon infinitely many discontinuities, such as in the Cantor set.

IV. IDEOLOGY, RACE, NATION

A. A Psychoanalysis of Race

Q: Hath not a Jew eyes? Hath not a Jew hands, organs, dimensions, senses, affections, passions? Fed with the same food, hurt with the same weapons, subject to the same diseases, healed by the same means, warmed and cooled by the same winter and summer, as a Christian is? If you prick us, do we not bleed? If you tickle us, do we not laugh? If you poison us, do we not die?

A: Hell if I know?

The Racial Other in Nationalist Subjectivations

Etienne Balibar [Balibar, 1991], in an article in *New Left Review*, entitled, "Es Gibt Keinen Staat in Europa: Racism and Politics in Europe Today" raises the question of the relation of the State to both racism and nationalism. The question in his paper is more specific than shall interest me in this essay—his particular interest is in the new forms of racism which are developing in Europe at this particular juncture—however, by focussing on a few of Balibar's remarks, and expanding them within the conceptual context laid out in Slavoj Zizek's magnificent first book in English, *The Sublime Object of Ideology* [Zizek, 1989], we may be able fruitfully to address these issues of racism and nationalism at a general conceptual level.

At the level of abstraction at which this essay shall operate, I hope to identify a *constellation* of relations amongst racism, nationalism and State(ism) which hold common through most or all of the myriad forms of all three within the two hundred year horizon of their common existence. In the fourth section of this chapter, I will attempt to show how the conceptual scheme which I develop out of Zizek and Balibar belie Benedict Anderson's severing of the relationship between nationalism and racism near the end of his otherwise profound and fundamental examination of nationalism, *Imagined Communities* [Anderson, 1983]. The central importance of such a critique of Anderson lies in his representativeness of many on the Left who believe it possible effectively to combat racism *within* a context of nationalism. The argument in the first part of this essay suggests that every political challenge which truly confronts racism—rather than simply altering its terms incrementally— must simultaneously confront the ideological forms of nationalism and statism.

Let us examine an illustrative remark made by Balibar,

In essence, modern racism is never simply a 'relationship to the Other' based upon perversion of cultural or sociological difference; it is a relationship to the Other *mediated by the intervention of the state*. Better still—and it is here that a fundamentally unconscious dimension needs to be conceptualized—it

is a *conflictual relationship to the state which is
‹lived' distortedly and ‹projected' as a relationship to
the Other.* [Balibar, 1991, 15].

These remarks by Balibar divide naturally into two parts:
first, modern racism is a ‹relationship to an Other based
upon perversion of cultural difference'; second, modern
racism is not this relationship *simpliciter*, but is rather
‹mediated by the State'. The first of these parts is
perhaps commonplace. And perhaps it is equally
apparent that Balibar's first thesis (if I may call it such)
is not adequate, that it requires a supplement—in the
sense of a supplement as that which is necessarily, and
essentially, excluded by the original part. Such a
connection between the two theses is the argument of
this essay; it is not an argument Balibar himself makes.
That is, although racism is clearly a perversion of
cultural differences with an Other, it presents itself as
such precisely to mask its true nature which is
something quite different from this.

Where Balibar suggests something interesting is with the
phrase ‹conflictual relationship to the State'. Let us look
at a suggestion made in this regard by Zizek. Zizek
addresses a very particular racism in terms of its
"societal" function, namely anti-Semitism.

> ‹Society doesn't exist', and the Jew is its
> symptom. . . . [T]he stake of social-ideological
> fantasy is to construct a vision of society which does
> exist, a society which is not split by an antagonistic
> division, a society in which the relation between its
> parts is organic, complementary. The clearest case
> is, of course, the corporatist vision of Society as an
> organic Whole. . . . The ‹Jew' is the means, for
> Fascism, of taking into account, of representing its
> own impossibility. . . . [However,] far from being the
> positive cause of social antagonism, the ‹Jew' is just
> the embodiment of a certain blockage—of the
> impossibility which prevents the society from
> achieving its full identity as a closed, homogeneous
> totality. Far from being the positive cause of social
> negativity, *the ‹Jew' is a point at which social
> negativity as such assumes positive existence.* . . .
> Society is not prevented from achieving its full
> identity because of Jews: it is prevented by its own
> antagonistic nature, by its own immanent blockage,
> and it ‹projects' this internal negativity into the figure
> of the ‹Jew'. In other words, what is excluded from
> the Symbolic (from the frame of the corporatist
> socio-symbolic order) returns in the Real as a
> paranoid construction of the ‹Jew'. [Zizek, 1989,
> 125-7]

What is going on in this excerpt from Zizek? The
passage cannot be read "logically" insofar as it
attributes to a non-being a definite attribute (a
symptom). Society does not exist but society is
retroactively created by its own symptom. This formula
will be found suggestive of Laclau and Mouffe's use of
the concept *hegemony* [Laclau and Mouffe, 1985],
which also concerns retroactivity in the foundation of
group-being, and from which Zizek acknowledgedly
borrows much of his analysis. The ‹Jew' is a symptom
of society's anxiety over its own unity; but this unity
only exists retroactively insofar as the ‹Jew' functions

as the disruption of this unity. An organic unity of society exists only in so much as this very organic unity projects onto some fictive figure of alterity its own immanent contradictions. The unity "exists" Symbolically, but not in the Real. Pay close heed to the paradoxical formulation of this projection: the notion of alterity formulated by Zizek radically contradicts the simple notion, also rejected by Balibar, of a simple loathing of cultural/racial differences. Rather, the very possibility of anti-Semitism or other racisms presupposes the existence of society as an organic unity, but this organic unity is created only through the projection onto the ‹Jew' (or onto some such figure) of the fantasy of Otherness.

The simple notion of loathing of cultural differences is naive precisely because it supposes that cultures exist independently of their exclusion of Otherness, that a culture may constitute itself as an entity without in the same act constituting the "cultures" it excludes from its own definition. In fact, these excluded "cultures" have logical precedence over the cultures which create them; not in the sense that an "included" group, in order to form its sense of self-identity, must have come in contact with a foreign group which had historically preceded the "included" group in constituting an identity—indeed, the process of identity construction retroactively creates an historical aboriginality of the interior group—but in the sense that the existence of the exterior group is conceptually necessary for defining the interior group.

An excluded exterior group—*in respect to its function in the nationalist fantasy*—is in no sense a concrete collection of people who, empirically, may or may not have the traits loathed by the interior group, but is precisely a fetishistic projection of the nullity of the interior group's existence. To be clear, according to the analysis here, the image created of alterity used retroactively to found identity has nothing whatsoever

to do with the empirical traits of the groups excluded (the fact that the excluded group may indeed have the traits ascribed to it is quite simply irrelevant). In Poland, to choose an example, anti-Semitism is becoming the unifying national identity of a nation unable to face the fact that the Capitalism being rapidly introduced into the country is precisely a system of schisms amongst "the people," a disunity of national identity. Jews—or rather ‹the Jew'—become the projected site of disunity which allows "Poles" to maintain a fantasy of unity. What makes this situation's paradox particularly glaring is the fact that there are virtually no Jews in Poland.

According to my reading of Zizek, the "Jew" in anti-Semitism occupies the same position as that indicated by the sign S(Ø) in Lacanian theory and analysis—or rather, anti-Semitism is the process of displacement from the position S(Ø) to the "Jew." S(Ø) is the sign which marks the impossibility at the core of the Symbolic order (marked by the capital ‹Other'). Those familiar with Lacanian theory[35] will realize that the use

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[35]An excellent beginner's introduction to substantially all major aspects of Lacan's thought is Jonathan Scott Lee's *Jacques Lacan* [University of Massachusetts, 1991]. Zizek's *Sublime Object of Ideology* is a nice introductory text itself, although it does much more than just introduce Lacan's thought.

Lacan's project as a whole might be said to be a succession of efforts to ground the *impossibility* of the subject. Before all the later "postmodernists" who share his conclusion, and more radically than the many "anti-Cartesians" who precede him, Lacan performs a radical critique of Cartesian subjectivity, as a dictum for psychoanalytic practice. For Lacan, psychoanalysis *starts* with the non-Being of the subject, then slowly unravels the subject's pretensions to Being.

One of the blockages encountered in the Lacanian "unraveling" is the point at which the non-subject "blames" its non-Being on the non-Being of the *Symbolic Order*. The Symbolic Order is the common domain of communicative exchange in which the subject *demands* it be subjectivated. This S(Ø) is merely one of several of what we might fancifully describe as ‘roadblocks on the road from non-Being to non-Being'—but it is the important one for the conceptual analysis of the Racist/Nationalist complex at hand.

of the mark S(Ø) for the anti-Semites' "Jew" indicates another conclusion shared by Zizek: that racism is always tied to a surplus of enjoyment, the *jouissance* of a fantastic projection of a moment of subjectivity before subjectivation/castration. We have a fear of losing something we never "really" had—and it is precisely this fear which presupposes the existence of the object. This object grounds the Symbolic order, but signifies an impossibility or self-contradiction (a thing which only exists by virtue of the fear of its loss). But it is, in turn, only insofar as there exists this strangely grounded Symbolic order that we are able to situate ourselves within it and become Subject(ivated) within it. The role of fantasy is precisely to mask to the Subject the impossibility which grounds the Symbolic order within which she necessarily locates herself. To put this back in terms of the racist/nationalist complex about which this chapter speaks, we may say, "If society *could* constitute itself as a real-empirical unity, it would not need *the Jew*."

Here we return to the initial question of the relation of the State to racism and to nationalism. My use of Zizek has allowed me to claim that nationalism is a function of racism in the special sense that racism is the mask which allows a nationality to conceive itself. This does not seem to require the State to play any particular role in this "spirit of nationalism." But then we can not help notice that in the two hundred year history of "Nation-States," the State has always played a very marked and crucial role in every conception of nationality and nationalism. Indeed, for these last two hundred years there has been no "Nation" in Europe or in the sphere of European imperialism which did not at the same time have statist ambitions, and no "State" which did not have nationalist ambitions. To understand the brief history of the Nation-State's syncretic self-conception I will turn shortly to the recent book which, despite its recentness, defines this field of understanding—and to which both Zizek and Balibar acknowledge their

debt—Benedict Anderson's *Imagined Communities* [Anderson, 1983].

The Subject Supposed to Know

Let me present a thesis that I believe is consistent with the spirit of Anderson's book, which attempts to insert Anderson's thinking into the framework given in Zizek which I have adopted. If, for nationalists, a racially alterior group holds the position of S(Ø), then the State holds that of the Lacanian *Subject Supposed to Know*. If I can make a convincing case for these two positionings, then I will have succeeded in finding something like the kind of close relation between racism and the State which Balibar supposes to exist.

What is the "Subject-Supposed-to-Know?" The position of the Subject-Supposed-to-Know has a *fantastic* function; it is the Subject in whom we fantasize the ability to know the "truth" of subjectivity. In the classical psycho-analytic encounter the analyst comes to occupy just this position for the analysand, through transference; the analysand fantasizes that the analyst has found the true unconscious nature which underlies her symptoms. The Subject-Supposed-to-Know has a fantastic function because, as I have written, the function of fantasy is to mask the impossibility at the core of the Symbolic order—and the Subject-Supposed-to-Know's fantastic ability to know the "truth" of subjectivity allows the further fantasy that the Symbolic order (through location in which subjectivity is possible) has an essential core.

In the psychoanalytic encounter, there is a fundamental resistance to the "working through" of fantasy, because the end result of the full visibility of the structure of fantasy would be the disincorporation of the subject, who is only subjectivated within the fraud of the Symbolic Order. Transference is an attempt by an analysand to block the process of analysis. Whereas the

inherent direction of the analytic encounter is to reveal the incoherency on which subjectivity is founded, transference onto the analyst acts as a stop-gap to this process by staking the claim that subjectivity must have a "truth" insofar as the analyst may *know* and *reveal* it. Similarly, we may speak of the subjectivity of a *National Subject* insofar as it becomes the State itself which acts as the stop-gap to the realization of the incoherency of any real-empirical national-identity.

The central claim of this essay is just the following: Whereas racially alterior groups are the object of displacement of the antagonism at the core of the national/Symbolic order for nationalists, the State functions for them as the Subject-Supposed-to-Know. For these explanations to make any sense at all, a trick of prestidigitation must have been performed. This trick, however, is not the blithe and unreflective equation of individual Subjects with "national subjects." The correct trick involves making nationality central to a subjectivity defined by the "natural" answer to the question, "What are you?" The history of this "trick" is the subject matter of Anderson's book.

It must become possible for people to say ⊲ am an American' (for example) with the same blind conviction and willful obliviousness to glaring absurdities as one says ⊲ am a man' (or, alternately, ⊲woman') —rather than with the kind of measured confidence and

assurance with which one says ⊲ am a Marxist' or even ⊲ am a Christian.'[36] But somehow, through conditions which were entirely historically contingent—almost accidental, in fact—over these last two hundred years the majority of living human beings have come to believe in nationality with just the conviction I have mentioned—*what* they are is members of a given nationality. If we talk about nationalism, racism and the State in the terms of the most basic processes of human psychic development, it is nonetheless with the knowledge that it is entirely contingent, and only

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[36]The absurdity here is, of course, the presupposition that one names **any** real-empirical trait with the claim of national-identity. A more accurate way of understanding a claim of national-identity is as a pure performative which stakes a claim to a particular enunciative position—but which has no **referential** meaning whatsoever. However, nationalist—not only fervent *political* nationalist, but the ordinary citizens who conceive themselves as nationals—inevitably insist that their claim to national-identity is a substantive statement which describes an independent real-empirical nature. The distinction between the claims of national-identity and those of political affiliation which I mention becomes clear when one poses a question of the conditions of knowledge of the different identities. With national-identity, it is possible to **discover** one was not what one thought—for example, by discovery of adoption into a family, or of other previously unknown circumstances surrounding one's birth (or even of one's parents' birth or *blood*). However, we cannot normally **decide** not to belong to our national-identity: we may reject the values, politics, religion, etc. of our nation, but still it is the values, et alia of **our** nation we reject. Just the opposite applies to a political/belief affiliation. It makes no sense to **discover** that we are not really Marxists (or Democrats, Tories, etc.), as we had thought—but it may be possible to **convince** us no longer to hold such beliefs (I leave aside such trivial possibilities as finding that one has forgotten payment of one's party dues, and hence are no longer *technically* a member of a given group). This is clearly because our political affiliations are better understood for what they are: performative claims to enunciative positions.

One of the most influential discussions of the performative nature of *sexual/gender* identities, in particular, is Judith Butler's *Gender Trouble* [Routledge, 1990]. She argues persuasively that there really is something rather absurd in our belief in genders. Ann Fausto-Sterling does likewise, in *Myths of Gender* [Basic Books, 1992], from the rather different perspective of a biologist. In any case, to claim these absurdities are "glaring" is hardly to claim they are widely noticed. Many things shine without being seen.

recently, that we can talk this way—though no less accurate for that.

The State is, in some sense, composed of concrete individuals. But the State as a Symbolic function is of a fundamentally different order than the collection of individuals who compose it. Just as racism has nothing to do with the empirical properties of Symbolically exterior groups, what we might call ‹Statism' has nothing to do with the empirical properties of the individuals who compose the State. Of course, the particular individuals who have or seek political power within (or over) States are quite likely to play off the racist and nationalist sentiments of a State's populace, in as jingoistic and as opportunistic manner as they are able. Of course, particular Capitalists do their utmost to divide the working class on racial lines in order to break unions, and to create situations of so-called "super-exploitation." Of course it is an empirical property of most politicians that they actively increase the viciousness of the racism and nationalism within their "nation." But all of this misses the point in explaining the Statist function; just as much as does examining the actual properties of Jews in understanding anti-Semitism (maybe they really do own the banks, and steal our children, and so on, but so what?). The banal facts that Capitalists are racists, and politicians Statists brings us no closer to understanding the centrality of race, nation, and State in subjectivity.

If we, as Subjects, have an essence—as is, indeed, demanded by our being *as Subjects*—we only have it as Subjects *of something*. The ‹something' to which we are Subject(ivat)ed is generically, in the Lacanian language, the Symbolic order, i.e. the ‹Paternal Law'; but this ‹Paternal Law' is only spoken by a Subject-Supposed-to-Know, a Subject supposed to be able to speak the truth of the Subject. The Subject has an essence only insofar as this essence has been interpellated by the Subject-Supposed-to-Know, but the Subject-Supposed-to-Know

exists only insofar as it can adequately (re)present the Subject. The Subject-Supposed-to-Know is ‹in us more than we are in ourselves' since it is always *onto-symbolically* prior to the self, though only as a fiction of the self. In other words, in projecting onto an object the function of the Subject-Supposed-to-Know, the Subject retroactively creates what must have *always already* been at the core of the self.

All of this goes for the State. Insofar as subjectivity has become, in these last two hundred years, a National—or, perhaps better, Nationalized—subjectivity, the Subject-Supposed-to-Know which onto-symbolically grounds the Subject has become, at least in part, the State which onto-symbolically grounds the Nation. But, as I have written, the State may so ground the Nation only insofar as it also (re)presents the Nation, insofar as it speaks the truth of the Nation. Clearly it is not the essence of States, *sui generis*, to represent Nations—as the existence of pre-National dynastic States shows—but rather is an historical property of modern ‹Nation-States'. Despite its historical recentness, the National form which modern States have taken has become the universal and necessary condition of their political legitimacy; and they have taken this form precisely insofar as National-Subjective entities have come into historical existence in relation to these States. We can see the retroactive creation by States of *always already* given Nations quite easily in the archaic pretensions of Nations. As just one of many examples we may notice that one of the first acts of the Swiss State, at the very eve of its creation as a political entity in 1891, was the decision of ‹1291 as the date of the "founding" of Switzerland' [Anderson, 1983, 123]. Although no surety exists of such decisions entering the "popular imagination" (or more precisely, the "popular Symbolic"), we can see factually that in a great many cases they have.

Let us turn, then, to Anderson's historical "reflections

on the origin and spread of Nationalism" (these words make the subtitle of his book). Anderson's text is crucial for understanding the history of nationalism wherethrough subjectivity has become *nationalized* in the fashion I have suggested above. An anomaly has already been mentioned regarding Anderson: although the last topic[37] Anderson addresses in his book is the relationship between Racism and Nationalism, he concludes that the two are unrelated. Yet my reading of his own text serves strongly to reinforce my belief in the connection I have been explicating. How can I explain my disagreement with Anderson? I believe that Anderson, despite his brilliant explication of the contingency and recentness of Nationalism, in the end—in a very subtle manner—actually winds up taking Nationalism's self-perception of necessity and archaity too seriously. Where Anderson notices the contingency of the historical construction of Nationalities, he fails to notice their continuing contingency at every moment of their existence; where he recognizes the creation of Nationality as mere machinations of States, he still supposes that this creation comes to exist at the level of reality as opposed to that of Symbolic fantasy.

Anderson's Imagined Communities

The single most important historical precondition for the development of the Racial/National complex I analyze has been the evolution of a particular conception of *time*. The notion of *simultaneity* is the conceptual forerunner of nationalists' notions of the *commonality* or *identity* between national subjects. Time, like any cultural meaning has a particular history and genealogy; and in these last few hundred years, the history of time has been the history of Nationalism. In order to understand how time has changed, it's useful to trace

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[37]In the first edition—the second edition does not modify this conclusion, but only its position within the text.

the associated development of Nationalism.

Anderson breaks the development of Nationalism into three stages, corresponding not only to the historical sequence in which they have arisen, but also to the differing political and technological circumstances which make them possible. In all cases an imagined community which corresponds to certain real potentials for communication and interaction forms the basis of what becomes a Nation. In the first two stages, the existence or creation of a common vernacular across the *imagined community* plays a central role; in the third stage, both because of the newer technological supersession of print by radio and television and because of the universal "political" legitimacy of Nationality, common language comes to play an ancillary role. The three stages are, in thumbnail sketch, late 18th to early 19th century American nationalisms claiming basically the same regions covered by British, Spanish or Portuguese colonial administrative units; 19th century Statist/dynastic "official nationalisms," in which pre-National States more-or-less consciously reshaped themselves to cover existing, or create plausible, linguistic/National boundaries; and post-World War I/League of Nations "last wave" nationalisms which adopt nationalism essentially as a narrowly "ideological" tool.

In the first stage, that of nationalism in the Americas, we notice several features which allowed for an imagined common community. Preceding, but supposed by, all the specific determinants of American nationalisms, however, was a conjunction of two phenomena in Europe during those same centuries in which America (and so much of the rest of the world) was being colonized. These were the simultaneous rise of print technology and of Capitalism—neither entirely unknown outside this time and place, but never before present in conjunction. It was these conjoined phenomena, as well as relatively independent "literary" innovations, which through a kind of cunning of Reason

produced as an inadvertent consequence a widespread cultural belief in the *simultaneity* of diverse events.

Two written forms whose importance in the history of Nationalism Anderson emphasizes are also important for the analysis of the notion of simultaneity. These are the newspaper and the novel. The other forms of media, electronic, broadcast and so on, with which we are currently inundated fall broadly under the category of extensions of one or the other of these two printed forms. What is essential to each of these literary forms? The novel is the easier case, so let us start with it. Novels generally, if not necessarily, have contained in their literary form not only an implicit imagined audience who may recognize themselves as addressed—any literary form must have such an audience—but have also an implicit possibility of including the audience in the narrative itself. How may this be so? When we give the answer our modern reader may doubt that there is any literary form which does not also contain this possibility, but this first reaction will be too narrow in its cognitive specificity. The novel contains the implicit possibility of including the reader in its narrative because the novel takes place within a time structured by the possibility of simultaneity and succession—a structure of time which only became conceptually possible around the time that the first novels were written.

The distinction which Anderson utilizes between *homogeneous linear* time and *messianic* time is borrowed from Walter Benjamin. Time structured in homogeneous linear form, like that in a novel, always allows for the imaginary insertion of the reader into the text itself. Since the form of time of a novel allows for the temporal relation of all events, it allows for the reader to be inserted into this same temporal order. Perhaps there are some few novels written which do not allow this, but we should notice that even novels of "science-fiction" or "fantasy" generally place their narratives either in the distant past or the distant future,

or perhaps in a distant place, so as still to allow the possibility of the reader existing somewhere within the temporal relations of the novel, even if at a remove from the concrete events. Even those few novels which may rule out a literal placement of the reader within the narrative (or in an extended version thereof) give conceptual explication of the homogeneous, linear time which is a condition of "national imagination."

With Anderson's remarks about newspapers we can see most clearly the relationship between homogeneous, linear time and imagined national communities. Insofar as time is homogeneous, every reader can be placed in the (limited) relationship of simultaneity under the emblem of the date at the top of the paper. A community of newspaper readers is imagined in part on the basis of the reality that a particular group of people will be reading this same newspaper; and partially on the already "imaginary" fact that this *news* is news for a particular imagined community rather than for any other human beings.

A conception of homogeneous time allows both for the direct conceptualization of the "real" fact that readership of newspapers is simultaneous and limited and of the "imaginary" fact that the "news" is simultaneously newsworthy for all the imagined readership. As I have mentioned, the "facts" about newspaper reading repeat at both a "real" and an "imaginary" level the imaginary location of a reader within the narrative of a novel. Of course, the structure of homogeneous time, and of the imaginable communities which depend upon them, does not necessitate that imagined communities be *national communities*, but it at least opens that possibility to emerge from more narrowly "political" interests—in just the manner described in Anderson's book.

Let me return to my accusation that Anderson takes the pretensions of nationalists too seriously—or better,

takes the reification of imagined nationality as an accomplished act rather than a constant, uneasy process. Anderson presents two data which he claims show the inconsistency of the linking of nationalism with racism. The first,

> In an age when it is so common for progressive, cosmopolitan intellectuals (particularly in Europe?) to insist on the near-pathological character of nationalism, its roots in fear and hatred of the Other, and its affinities with racism, it is useful to remind ourselves that nations inspire love, and often profoundly self-sacrificing love. . . On the other hand, how truly rare it is to find *analogous* nationalist products expressing fear and loathing. [Anderson, 1983, p.129]

In other words, argues Anderson, racism (loathing of the Other) is concerned with hatred, and nationalism with love—so therefore they are different. Second, since nationalism is concerned with one's own nation in opposition (moral, military or ideological) to other nations, it must be different from racism which manifests itself ‹not across national boundaries, but within them'; whose purpose is, ‹not so much foreign wars as domestic repression and domination.' [Anderson, 1983, p.136]

Returning to "National" Subjects

What is wrong with the arguments against connecting racism and nationalism which Anderson makes? Most broadly, Anderson fails to understand the basic Freudian point that the self is divided and contradictory. If, for example, nationalism is central to subjectivity, and the conscious form of nationalism is love of country, that simply does not imply that there is not simultaneously—and essentially—an unconscious basis for nationalism in hatred and loathing (i.e. racism). Of course, merely pointing out that many processes are unconscious does not in itself show that the unconscious desire of which nationalism is the

conscious expression is one of hatred and loathing. However, when we realize that the "Nation" loved by nationalists is not an object with a coherent identity, but is a teeming mass of contradictions and impossibilities, we begin to understand the psychic imperative for exclusion of alterity which is contained at the heart of the "love." To repeat and expand this critique at a deeper level: Where Anderson writes throughout his book of an "imaginary" identification of a Subject with a Nation, what is really central in the relation between Subject and Nation is a "symbolic" identification. Although Anderson does not use his word ‹imaginary' in a specifically Lacanian sense, his problem is that his meaning turns out to concord exactly with the Lacanian meaning of ‹imaginary', as opposed to with the Lacanian ‹symbolic'.

Zizek asks,

> [W]hy precisely is this difference between how we see ourselves and the point from which we are being observed the difference between imaginary and symbolic? [Zizek, 1989, p.108]

He answers,

> In a first approach, we could say that in imaginary identification we imitate the other at the level of resemblance—we identify ourselves with the image of the other inasmuch as we are "like him," while in symbolic identification we identify ourselves with the other precisely at a point at which he is inimitable, at the point which eludes resemblance. [Zizek, 1989, 109]

Put in terms of nationalist "love:" if this "love" were an imaginary identification it would really rest on a wish to be like the National ideal—like the sort of nationalized subject created in Anderson's accomplished narrative; but since it is, instead, primarily a symbolic identification it rests on a wish to be seen by the "Nation" as having the proper National character. However, there is no

"truth" to the "National character," nothing empirically to emulate; all there is is an almost infinite diversity of persons and several systems of schisms between antagonistically divided societal groups. Of course, these societal groups themselves are composed of diversity and antagonism (the proletariat, for example, is unified in nothing besides their opposition to the bourgeoisie).

Since our "love" of Nation is actually an identification with the very position from which "the Nation" views us ("how we appear in the eyes of the nation"), it is always an unfulfilled love, marked by a blockage. In order to deny this blockage within *need* (i.e. *desire* through the lens of an identification with that whose desire our desire is the desire to fulfill), the blockage is projected on to an object of alterity which is fantasized as responsible for the blockage. We might say: as in ontogeny, so in phylogeny; just as psychoanalysis finds a particular site which condenses an individual's failure of subjectivation, every National subject's failure to achieve national-identity is condensed onto the racial

Other. Our relation to that fantastic object which blocks the fulfillment of our love of Nation is inevitably one of hatred and loathing. It may well be, as Anderson claims, that the relationship to Nation within nationalism is one of love, but this love like so many others is an unstable accomplishment of a repressive psychic function—a function whose transferal side effect is a loathing of alterity.

Anderson's second objection vanishes also, under the reading we have given in the above paragraphs. Nationalism as a consciously articulable state of subjectivity is indeed directed against extra-national entities, and racism thusly against intra-national entities; but at the unconscious level which unites these two functions of subjectivity, the simple distinction vanishes. If racism is intra-national that is simply because an intra-national Symbolic exclusion must have already taken place before "the Nation" as an entity opposable to other nations can exist. Racism and nationalism are related precisely in that racism is the prop needed to maintain an illusory nationalist subjectivity.

B. The American in Me

> [W]hat is hidden behind the phenomenal appearances? Precisely the fact that there is nothing to hide. What is concealed is that the very act of concealing conceals nothing. [Zizek, 1989, p.193]

The first section of of this chapter suffers two notable failings. While the "psychoanalysis of race" above may have managed to point to the unity of the necessary/impossible pair in the form of its nation/race instance, the analysis is purely synchronic, and completely avoids the diachronic aspect addressed at greatest length in the Chapter V. The first section reveals a phenomenological level on which neccessary and impossible are adhesed together; but it fails to reveal the *dialectic*[38] enacted by the adhesion.

The second failing of the first section of this chapter is that it is just plain not very American. The backdrop of U.S. notions of race and nation is formulated in terms of black and white, and it always has been. While the analyses of Zizek, Balibar and Anderson—and I hope, to a lesser extent, my own contributions to their discussion—are both profound and important, they feel desperately incomplete in a context of writing an essay in the U.S., to be read predominately by life-long residents of the U.S. Race in the U.S. wears a different color than does anti-semitism in France, or even anti-African prejudice in any parts of Europe.

However, I shall not examine the fundamental black/white horizon of racial and national consciousness in the U.S. directly. Although this basic race-formation

of the U.S. has certainly evolved over two centuries, certain panoramic features have remained enough the same that it is difficult to discern the modes of ideological eclipse while focussing on the U.S.'s fundamental ideological racial (and national) construct. Sometimes it is possible to see more in a glimpse of peripheral vision than within that blindspot at the center of vision. Therefore, I would like to discuss, briefly, in this section, the evolution of the boundaries and concept of *whiteness* in the last century and a half. By looking here, we can see racial ideologies which have undergone forgettings that we can not quite yet imagine of black and white.

There are two recent texts I will rely on specifically in discussing the changing boundaries of whiteness in the U.S. With a title that wonderfully condenses the whole of this discussion, Noel Ignatiev's *How The Irish Became White* [Ignatiev, 1995] provides a worthwhile touchstone. However, it is Matthew Frey Jacobson's *Whiteness of a Different Color* [Jacobson, 1998] that serves as my direct reference here. Jacobson, in his introduction, characterizes U.S. racial ideology in much the same manner I have done above,

> [T]he vicissitude of Jewish whiteness is intimately related to the racial odysseys of myriad other groups—the Irish, Armenians, Italians, Poles, Syrians, Greeks, Ruthenians, Sicilians, Finns, and a host of others—who came ashore in the United States as "free white persons" under the terms of reigning naturalization law, yet whose racial credentials were not equivalent to those of the Anglo-Saxon "old stock" who laid proprietary claim to the nation's founding documents and hence to its stewardship. All of these groups became Caucasians only over time. . . . White privilege in various forms

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[38]I keep observing through this document that I am not a dialectician. I do so again here, but without being able to eliminate a certain sentiment for a dialectic. I use my insufficiently forbidden word again as a shorthand not just for the peculiar manner in which 'necessary' and 'impossible' are in an odd complimentary and contradictory relationship, but for the manner in which the histories of ideologies need to be contemplated through this relationship.

has been a constant in American political culture since colonial times, but whiteness itself has been subject to all kinds of contests and has gone through a series of historical vicissitudes. [Jacobson, 1998, p. 4]

Jacobson later in his introduction chides anachronistic projections of our 20[th] century understanding onto 19[th] century racial ideologies. We are prone to imagine that where we clearly recognize a variety of ethnic groups, 19[th] century thinkers and legislators through mere carelessness characterized what they saw as separate European races. Obviously, a more Foucauldian sensitive observation—or merely a greater common-sense—will recognize that thinkers actually did speak their own ideologies well, rather than merely our late-20[th] century ideology poorly.

Several points relevant to this dissertation might be drawn out of both our blindness to older racial ideologies and out of the very fact of change in these ideologies. In a way, all the points relate to ideological totalization. Racial ideologies have been ones with comparatively distant horizons. Perhaps not quite so distant as the notions of causality and of gender that I discuss in Chapter VII, but by all means of more distant historical horizon than some of the case studies I present in Chapter V. In general, the time scale of race (and nation) is longer than the length of our individual lifes, but not so long as good and concrete historical records documenting the ideologies.

It is difficult for us to believe—difficult as a phenomenological act—that those fairly recent 19[th] century American thinkers really meant what they wrote about "the Irish Race," "the Slavic Race," and the "Anglo-Saxon Race."[39] It seems that the phrases must

be mere metaphors and hyperboly, devoid of any referential fixity. For after all, *we know* what race actually is, and those are not its categories. Racial ideology contains a totalizing closure that colors other racial ideologies so that they appear just like our own version; or at worst, as less clearly stated versions of our own racial ontology. The very same totalizing closure functioned in nearly the same manner a century ago. And yet, our ideology—while still unquestionably a racial ideology—somehow has obtained a quite different ontological division.

The change in the categories of race was not achieved in the last 100 years through any critical attack on the epistemic basis of old racial categories. Although eugenics and other various (pseudo-)sciences indeed made various proclamations of an overtly objective and epistemic sort, these were never a real motive force in ideological change. Both Spearman's statistical innovations in the name of reifying intelligence, Herrnstein's and Murray's *The Bell Curve* (for example) weakly echoing the same science, serve as scientific "foundations" of racial ontologies. And yet it is distinctly different racial ontologies they provide bedrock for—Spearman for the immigration exclusion of undesirable European "races", Murray and Herrnstein for the abandonment of educational programs for "blacks." The "science" is not fundamentally different between the different social scientists, but they operate under different ideological regimes; racial ontologies that necessarily function at a more basic level than the relatively superficial epistemic "ground" that support these ideologies. Indeed, Murray and Herrnstein probably do not even know or understand that they are arguing for a fundamentally different ontology than

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[39]"The Jewish Race" is still recognizable today, however. Although the phrase strikes us as a cue that the speaker is an "Aryan" white-supremicist type (or perhaps a Zionist!), the phrase does not quite

sound like an entirely empty metaphor—rather just as a way it would be better not to speak.

Spearman was.[40]

What has happened, of course, during the change in racial ideology in the U.S. has been that generally exogenous political histories have undercut and reformed racial ontologies in ways and for reasons invisible to the ideologies themselves. This is what I argue throughout this dissertation happens to ideologies in general. In this special case of race, however, these political histories have been uneasily both exogenous and endogenous. European races, as an ideological construct, have always been somewhat subject to competing pressures to start with, have largely come and gone out of the very ideological pressure exerted by the more fundamental dualism of white/non-white racial ontology. So in this way, change in racial ideology has had an endogenous element, although one could certainly not describe this pressure and motive force as *critical.*

Jacobson provides a nice snapshot of the endogenous instability of "white" races:

> Thus in this period [circa 1870] of volatile racial meanings, peoples such as Celts, Italians, Hebrews, and Slavs were becoming less and less white in debates over who should be allowed to disembark on American shores, and yet were becoming whiter and whiter in debates over who should be granted the full rights of citizenship. The discourse of immigration restriction favored a scheme of hierarchically ordered white races, that is, and found some of these sorely wanting in the characteristics required for self-government, whereas naturalization discourse discovered fundamental and unforgiving differences between the white races on the one hand, and the hordes of nonwhite Syrian, Turkish, Hindu, and Japanese claimants who were petitioning the courts

for citizenship on the other. [Jacobson, 1998, p.75]

Although the specific history of U.S. racial ontologies is not necessarily central to my general observation of the nature of historical changes in ideology, this history probably still warrants a brief summary at this point. In its broadest form, the history of racial ideology in the U.S. can be divided into two chronologically disjoint (or just slightly overlapping) trends. In 1790, the first U.S. Congress created immigration law allowing the entry of "free white persons" into the U.S. This law reflected the black/white ontology of race predominantly operative in Colonial America. As a whole, the period between 1790 and 1924 saw an increasing racialization of European immigrants, starting especially with the large Irish migrations of the 1840s, and accelerating with the late-19th century immigration of Eastern European groups. As observed in the above Jacobson quote, this trend was not univocal.

The Johnson Act of 1924 set immigration quotas according to 1890 census data, and represented a culmination of racial distinctions within European immigrants, the victory of Eugenics, and politically, the exclusion of a large number of "undesirable" European potential immigrants. In the period since 1924, previously racialized "white" groups have become more-and-more uniformly "Caucasian"—an odd and almost accidental invention of 19th century Ethnology. The whitening of these various European groups (who have become "ethnic") has not been univocal either; but as much as it has been a dominant overall pattern, the making of the Caucasian race has served to support the ontologization of excluded "Negros," "Asians," and American Indians (with "Hispanic" occupying a strange not-quite-ethnic but not-quite-racial position in current racial ontology).

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[40]For that matter, and perhaps ironically, Murray and Herrnstein probably belong to precisely some of those "racial" groups that Eugenicist of the late 19th century and eary 20th century (such as Spearman) were trying to exclude.

V. HEGEMONY, AND OTHER PASSING FADS

But there must be still other countless errors of the same sort that no living man can yet detect, because of the fog within which our type of Western culture envelops us. Cultural influences have set up the assumptions about the mind, the body, and the universe with which we begin; pose the questions we ask; influence the facts we seek; determine the interpretations we give these facts; and direct our reaction to these interpretations and conclusions. [Gould, 1987b, quoting Gunnar Myrdal, *An American Dilemma* (1944)]

A. Forgotten AIDS Myths

Time Flies like an Arrow, Fruit Flies like a Bananna.

[Jenny Holzer, http://www.adaweb.com/project/holzer/cgi/pcb.cgi]

The New Left's AIDS-Related Scientism

In the last two decades, the so-called Sexual Revolution of the 1960s and 1970s died. It did not die in the sense that people's sexual habits reverted to some pre-1960 standard of heterosexuality and monogamy. Actual behavior changed very little in the 1980s; and, at any rate, the 1950s and before were never as sexually limited as they are often imagined in contrast to what seemingly "must have" happened with the Sexual Revolution. In a sense, very little has probably changed in human sexual behavior since the advent of mass urbanization in the early nineteenth century.

What has changed dramatically in a decade is the ideological tools and strategies used in conceptualizing sexuality, and the relation of sexuality to broader notions of social power, political struggle, freedom and responsibility. Most of the renegotiation of sexuality has been a determined effort on the part of the right-wing to reinstitute its fantasy conception of "family values," normative heterosexuality, and condemnation of non-monogamy. An additional contribution to such a conservative renegotiation of meaning has come from certain self-identified feminists who have repeated the puritanical strains of 1920s "first wave" feminism in its "anti-prostitution/anti-vice" crusades. Both of these renegotiations have been extensively critiqued and analyzed in leftist philosophical circles. What has been overlooked by most of us on the Left has been a third current of renegotiations of the ideologies of sexuality which is associated with the meanings given to AIDS. Or perhaps we have not overlooked it, but have been so completely blinded by its glaring ubiquity that we have not seen the ideological functions of AIDS.

AIDS has succeeded in shifting the left-wing discourse of sexuality away from one of *liberation*, *freedom* and *resistance*, to one of *responsibility*, *danger* and *obligation*—concepts much more at home with a right-wing scheme of social control, xenophobia and authoritarianism than with anything on the Left. "Safe sex" has succeeded in performing this conceptual shift—a shift which would be seen through if it came from traditional conservative forces, and which would be largely resisted if it came from anti-porn "feminism"—precisely because the language of "safe sex" is one inextricably signed with the imprimatur of medico-scientific authority. Sexual liberation has not always been liberatory, sexual freedom not always free, and sexual resistance not always contrary to broad forms of domination. Sometimes, and in some ways, it has been, in other times and ways not. But there was a time, before these last decades of AIDS, when the discursive apparatuses of liberation, freedom and resistance had not been blanched out of sex. My concern, and my belief, is not that any given form of sexual activity is in itself an act of liberation, but rather that certain ideological apparatuses act in advance to foreclose the liberatory potentials of sexual acts which function situationally and contextually as resistances to forms of domination.

The altars of science—in particular scientific sounding pronouncements about AIDS—have been the one significant form of social authority generally unquestioned—or at least not very deeply questioned—by academic leftists. Somehow science has served in dismantling the language of liberation in the Left more than any other institutions possibly could have, because the Left has not gone beyond an automatic doxastic presumption in favor of moralism bearing the imprimatur of science.

A Factual Gloss.

The places where AIDS-science and its popularization have gone wrong are rather numerous. The HIV-hypothesis itself, despite its longtime almost univocal

acceptance by official science and by the media, rests on much shakier evidence than would be accepted in a less politically contested area of science.[41] For reasons having little to do with the sexual moralities discussed herein, there is a bias of reductionism and mono-causalism in science which makes the HIV one-virus/one-disease model very appealing, even where evidence does not support it.[42] Beyond that, the "war on cancer" of the 1970's promoted a more limited bias towards explaining disease with viruses, and with retroviruses in particular.[43]

Quite independent of what is causing it, *something* is going on with some new kinds of deaths in the last twenty years.[44] The two dogmas, as it were, of the

folk-epidemiology of AIDS seem to be (1) that it is an ongoing epidemic; and (2) that it is poised on the verge of afflicting non-traditional groups (basically non-drug-injecting heterosexuals). These dogmas have been held pretty firmly by just about everyone since about 1984: both scientists and laypersons. I recommend disregarding all the articles, scientific and popular, which excitedly, almost reverently, declare an explosion of AIDS cases amongst heterosexuals, and go straight to the raw data. AIDS is mostly a gay-male disease, and those persons with AIDS who are not gay-men, whether male or female, are overwhelmingly intravenous drug users.[45] An argument can additionally be made that even many of the cases which are reported as exposure from heterosexual contact are false reports which hide other risk categories.[46]

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[41]See, for example, Root-Bernstein (1993).

[42]For general remarks on reductionist bias in biology, see, for example, Levins and Lewontin (1985). Many feminist critics of science have observed this bias, also. For example, Keller (1985).

[43]An excellent discussion of this appears in chapter 3 of Adams (1989). See also, Root-Bernstein (1993); Lauritsen (1993).

[44]This section was originally written, and presented at the Radical Philosophy Association national conference, in 1994. A subsequent revision of that conference paper was published in *Rethinking Marxism* [Mertz, 1996/1997]. This section, in turn, expands upon the *RM* article. Much of the factual presentation in this article might perhaps benefit from additional analysis of recent data; however, despite my general observation that more recent data strongly supports my points, such data would miss an important point. The purpose of this section is primarily to examine some mechanisms of transient ideologies of the late-1980s and early-1990s. The real point of my use of specific data is to show that a variety of false beliefs were easily accepted, that could easily have been established as false during the period under discussion. 1994 already marked the beginning of the end of the ideological mechanisms I am interested in. Any facts which happen to post-date the ideological mechanisms and effects I discuss cannot provide any real justification of false beliefs held in, for example, 1992, by those I criticize. Similarly, it may well occur that some new form of disease will occur decades after the moment I write these words (May, 1999). Whatever the factual contours of this hypothetical disease, they

will say nothing about those specific discourses of 1992.

[45]Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (1994). See Table 3. "AIDS cases by age group, exposure category, and sex, reported July 1992 through June 1993, July 1993 through June 1994; and cumulative totals, by age group and exposure category, through June 1994, United States." Fifty-nine percent of cumulative AIDS cases are in the exposure category of men who report having sex with men (some of whom also inject drugs), while an additional 25% of cumulative cases are reported in injecting drug users exclusive of men who have sex with men. Seven percent of cumulative cases are purportedly transmitted by heterosexual contact. See Mertz, Sushinsky and Schüklenk (1995) and Schüklenk, Mertz and Richters (1995), for evidence that the actual heterosexual transmission may be less than is here reported.

[46]The simple noteworthy fact is that people sometimes fail to report to their doctors their engagement in stigmatized activities, such as homosexual intercourse and injection of illegal drugs. Such underreporting is facilitated by a widespread prior belief by doctors and patients that AIDS is, *in fact*, being transmitted heterosexually in significant numbers. Hence patient reports of exclusively (non-stigmatized) heterosexual contact are an easily accepted evasion of unpleasant inquiries from doctors. However, more than just as a general sociological observation about people's reticence about stigmatized activities, the demographics of the reported heterosexual risk category indicate that misreporting is occurring. See Schüklenk, Richters and Mertz (1995); Mertz, Sushinsky and Schüklenk (1995).

The other dogma about the plague-like epidemic does not do too well with the raw numbers either. In 1994, the total number of new AIDS cases in the United States declined significantly.[47] They will very likely continue to decline at roughly the same rate, year by year, that they increased prior to 1994.[48] The increase in cases in 1993 was purely a statistical artifact of a definition change in January 1993 which defined a lot of people as having AIDS who would not have been defined as having AIDS had they presented to doctors in 1992. If you look at only the cases under the 1992 definition, 1993 also showed a significant decline in cases.[49] If you look at deaths, rather than at new diagnoses, the peak was probably reached sometime in 1991 or 1992. Whenever the normal distribution reached its exact maximum, the fact is that AIDS is not going to be fundamentally different from every other new disease in human history in following a bell curve of initial incidence.

As terrible as it is that as many people have died as have, the worst is over, and this worst doesn't come close, for example, to the three million people who died in a much shorter time of so-called Asian Flu in 1917 and 1918—when the U.S. had about half its current population. My point is not insensitively to dismiss AIDS deaths on the grounds that they lack the magnitude of influenza, but rather to observe that however many more people died of influenza earlier this century than will die of AIDS, influenza never carried the same pretense of its very numbers making moral and political arguments. Those were merely deaths: tragic, regrettable, unfortunate, but not able to convince us to compromise a language and hope of political liberation. Similarly, a lot of things like cancer, heart-disease and auto-fatalities kill a lot more people than AIDS—but leftists do not insistently and obsessively lecture on the techniques for prophylaxis against these deaths. On the other hand, there was another disease of the early 20th century which wore the same shady *deontic* veil that AIDS does now: syphilis, which is discussed later in this paper.

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[47]Just how far cases declined is more difficult to say than one might expect. Unless the CDC changes its reporting procedures yet again, it will become easier to quantify the 1994 decline when later reports are issued. My own estimate is that the real decline was of the order of about 1/3. The actual reported numeric decline in the report current when this section was researched, between the period July 1992-June 1993 and that of July 1993-June 1994, was small: from 85,122 to 84,268 adult/adolescent cases (CDC (1994) Table 3). However, as discussed in the main text, January 1993 saw a significant change in the criteria for AIDS, which classified many more people as suffering from the syndrome. Since the earlier annual interval only contains six months under the expanded definition, it is not fully comparable to the later interval in direct numeric terms. Under the 1987 and pre-1987 definitions of AIDS, there was, in fact a decline in AIDS cases between July 1991-June 1992 and July 1992-June 1993 from 50,802 to 42,714, or a 16% decline (see Table 10, *ibid*). The reported figures by definition category for July 1993-June 1994 seem to be incomplete (although this is not indicated in the appropriate chart), but of the 40,946 cases classified by definition category for this first reporting interval fully under the 1993 expanded definition, 56% of cases fell under the expanded definition. Retroactive diagnosis of earlier cases, because of the inherently incomplete information on which they are based, show smaller percentages of cases which would have fallen under the 1993 expanded definition had it been in effect in earlier reporting periods.

[48]The epidmiological principle of a bell-shaped curve of disease incidence plotted against time is known as Farr's law. Bregman and Langmuir (1990) summarize Farr's Law as,

> Farr's Law of Epidemics, first promulgated in 1840 and resurrected by Brownlee in the early 1900s, states that epidemics tend to rise and fall in a roughly symmetrical pattern that can be approximated by a normal bell-shaped curve.

They further attempt to use an analysis of the change of inflection in increase of AIDS cases to deduce the total expected incidence of AIDS. Although their 1990 estimates for the total epidemic of 200,000 cases is an underestimate, even accounting for the significant broadening of the definition of AIDS since then, the decline in cases over the last several years suggests the general shape of the epidemic obeys Farr's Law.

[49]CDC (1994), Table 10. See footnote 47, supra.

Abjection and Moralism.

When I was writing an earlier version of this paper, and mentioned it to friends and colleagues on the Left, the *very first* reaction I received was inevitably a sort of gasp, followed by an exasperated warning that I had best be careful to emphasize the importance of "safe-sex." For speaking before a group of leftist academics, my colleagues' implicit premise remained that lest I admonish my audience explicitly on the virtues of condoms—and perhaps of monogamy—I might precipitate a breakdown of all standards of sexual restraint in my audience, thereby exposing them to the sexual diseases. Most importantly and insistently, a ritual prescription of safe-sex is insisted upon for speech before the "innocent" undergraduates whom we teach. The magical powers attributed to a simple *lack* of obedience to the idol of safe-sex is quite remarkable. A faith in this new orthodoxy of safe-sex has, in my experience, brought out some shockingly unprofessional behavior in leftist academics whom I know. Leftists have been amongst those who vilify HIV-dissenters like Peter Duesberg on the grounds that insufficient dogmatism about the HIV-hypothesis might somehow lead to insufficient respect for condoms and monogamy—even though etiological doubts are quite orthogonal to epidemiological facts. It is not just those who denounce safe-sex, like the Christian Right, but those who fail to preach safe-sex with sufficient enthusiasm, who raise the ire of safe-sex'ers.

"Safe-sex", I believe, has become a secular scientistic religion of the Left. Certainly many non-leftists share in the faith, but the fundamentalism is greatest amongst us. The cardinal sin according to this religion is an old Catholic one: accidie, the failure to perform one's duties with sufficient zeal. Under this sin, silence becomes death, or more precisely murder; wherein everyone not mentioning condoms in every context becomes culpable for AIDS deaths. The absurdity of the imperative only witnesses its structural importance. Condoms are now made to be exhibited, in a kind of paean to the *regulation* of sex. Condoms serve as talismanic objects for the feel-good "do something about AIDS" testifiers, amusingly safety pinned onto clothing in a manner to render any functional potential void, and advertised on buses and billboards underlined by homilies intended to affirm the political radicalism of the passive viewer who assures herself that *she* knows their importance. The content of this regulation is a bit ethereal: it doesn't prescribe all that much, and what it does prescribe is hardly ever followed by its proponents. The percentage of heterosexuals in any demographic group who use condoms with any regularity hovers below twenty.[50] The percentage of gay men who use them is higher, which is fortunate given that it is gays who are at a real risk; but this religion is quite catholic: its prescriptions, like its grace, apply equivalently to all the devout.

Two related points need to be drawn out to see where the officially positivistic reasoning of leftist AIDS discourse breaks down. Overtly, leftist safe-sexers have no more than a purely objective concern with public-health. However, those whom we—as academics, the same does not necessarily apply outside the academy—most forcefully and frequently try to "educate" about AIDS, are precisely those at the smallest—and in fact quite minuscule—risk. Basically the message of "safe-sex" is one we preach to our undergraduate heterosexuals. It may have a magical power to proclaim that "everyone is at risk!"; but on the facts, not everyone is. The arguments in favor of AIDS catholicism, and arguments on the greater ease of convincing everyone than convincing those who matter,

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[50]Schüklenk, Mertz and Richters (1995). See p.29 for discussion of this. Also illustrative is De Vincenzi (1994), which suggests that even heterosexual who have a known HIV seropositive status use condoms from inconsistently to not at all with their longterm partners who are known to be seronegative.

are simply so many "Noble Lies." The second point in critiquing the official legitimization of our AIDS ideology is that the many risks which are greater than that of heterosexual AIDS are treated with absolutely none of the moralizing quality which is given to slogans on safe-sex. Neither is the insistence ever so great; nor the almost compulsive quality present.

Our False Catholicism about Who Is At-Risk

I have communicated with AIDS educators who have asserted that only 5% of all U.S. AIDS educational materials are directed at gay-men. I don't want to put too fine a point on that particular fraction, since it is very difficult to trace even the federal funding of AIDS, let alone all the local efforts. Further, not every safe-sex pamphlet and billboard not specifically targeting gay-men thereby automatically exclude them. But the overall pattern is clear: a sizable majority of safe-sex material is specifically targeted to young, white heterosexuals. Injecting drug use receives similarly short shrift in these materials. When, occasionally, the actual demographics of AIDS faintly tugs at the consciousness of safe-sex pamphleteers, gay-men and intravenous drug uses might receive a passing footnote for their specificity of risk. The tone here is generally one in which, in a pamphlet warning of the dangers of unsafe-sex, one might read a parenthetical allusion to the fact that gay-men are at particularly high risk, or that sharing-needles should also be avoided. These pamphlets never contain a frank acknowledgement that, depending on how many men are, in fact, having sex with men, the risks are different by powers somewhere between several hundred and *several thousand*—on par, for example, with the difference in risk that men and women face from breast cancer.

The attitudes which leftist academics bring to our pedagogy surrounding AIDS and sexuality also shapes intellectual and political climates. While it is both easy

and common to overestimate our influence here, our reactions to recent sexual ideologies are relevant to my analysis insofar as one might have hoped for resistance to repressive changes from us leftist academics. Were we leftist academics merely to tell our students that *insofar* as they are men having sex with men, and *insofar* as they share needles, they face relatively high risks of developing AIDS, I would have no ideological critique against such factual advice. Below is a bit of discussion about what I think is a false normativity often accompanying such statements; but this suggested statement, by itself at least, is quite fair.

In my experience, however, these prosaic accuracies are not what most of us leftist academics are telling our students. What we are doing is warning our predominantly heterosexual and non-needle-sharing undergraduate classes that they had, *sui generis*, all better be careful so as not to contract AIDS. Occasionally, we are getting scared young heterosexuals coming into our office-hours after having had their first one-night stands, terrified that they have now contracted AIDS. What most of us are telling them is exactly what gets us off the hook most easily: that they should go to the local health-clinic for HIV testing, and use condoms in every future sexual contact. The first part I think is rather bad advice inherently.[51] The second, however, while not harmful of itself, reflects a backing down from a radical stance, and a failure of leftist pedagogy. What we are doing in giving this "safe" advice is granting the legitimacy of our students' irrational fears because of their sexual contents.

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[51]The arguments which can be made against testing of low-risk populations—or generally against treating HIV testing as a *responsibility*, rather than a choice—are several, and beyond the scope of this paper. At the least, it can be observed that the rate of false-positives probably exceeds the number of true positives for testing in low-risk populations and, further, that no non-toxic or effective therapy exists for AIDS treatment regardless of the accuracy of an antibody test.

Thereby we fail to critique the systematic regulation of sexuality in the maintenance of a repressive social order. Even if the *content* of the regulation—at least of condoms, if not of abstinence or monogamy—is fairly uninteresting, our facile advice simply affirms the necessary primacy of *regulation* itself. We ourselves embody a sort of psychoanalytic Paternal Law, for which it matters not so much what is commanded as that *something*, at least, be so commanded. I think the failure is easily understood by analogy with places we, hopefully, do not fail. If a young woman student despairs, to us, of ever "finding a man," I hope we do not formulaicly assure her of her future marital bliss—but rather say a few (gentle) words on the dependent position women are cast into by patriarchy. And if a young Christian becomes convinced of his future damnation, I hope we do not tacitly mutter a few words about redemption of sin—but rather a few about how moral ideologies serve to blind individuals to their material realities.

Our Lack of Catholicism about Risky Activities

While the notion that "everyone is at risk" from AIDS is dogmatically prescribed by the Left, our concern for risks is oddly curtailed to those accompanying sex. If I tell them I am going rock-climbing, my leftist friends *might* say "be careful" or "use precautions" offhandedly; but they probably would not say anything besides "have fun." If, on the other hand, I say I am going to go fuck around heterosexually and promiscuously, without condoms, they will react angrily with accusations of my foolishness and *moral* irresponsibility. But in fact, the rock-climbing—even *with* ropes and such safety measures—poses significantly more actuarial danger (to myself, or also to my climbing partner). Of course, a lot more people have sex than rock-climb, so the totals are higher for heterosexual AIDS, despite the percentagewise greater mortality risk of rock-climbing. Part of the difference in reaction is

simply a misappraisal of the relative odds—but I think there is a much larger part which is symptomatic of an adoption of a normativity of sexual regulation.

Even clearer examples of differently preached risks come with other diseases. Heart disease is every bit as much behaviorally related as is AIDS, but recommendations for its prophylaxis are seldom stated so moralistically by the Left as are those for AIDS. For non-drug-injecting heterosexuals (or lesbians), dietary-linked deaths are a good bit more numerous both proportionally and absolutely than are sexually-linked ones. This is not the case for gay-male sex, nor is it for drug-injecting—but our proselytizing is not directed solely, or even primarily, at those activities. One might receive a word of friendly advise from a leftist about the health dangers associated with fatty foods, lack of exercise, or smoking. But if one persists in these activities, our good leftists will probably shrug to themselves over the foolishness of fat-eating, but recognize that such a risk is simply each individual's to take. Such magnanimity over the self-endangerment of others does not generally extend to sexually incurred risks.[52] Rather, leftists—here acting no differently than

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[52]In defense of moralizing over safe-sex, and sometimes of criminalizing "unsafe sex," the argument is often made that safe-sex advocates are concerned not about *harm-to-self*, but rather about *harm-to-others*. A general Millean distinction between these types of harm is assumed to be accepted on all sides; and I, in fact, endorse such a distinction myself. The question becomes one of whether engaging in unsafe sex presents a nose at which my right to swing my fist ends. I argue that there is something a bit absurd about thinking of unsafe sex in these terms of harm-to-others. One simply cannot engage in non-masturbatory sex alone, and hence any choice to engage in such acts—endangering or not—cannot be made without the involvement of another person. The moralizing safe-sex proponents seem categorically to remove sex thereby from the realm of personal autonomy. Further, given that universal awareness, or at least belief, of the danger of AIDS in sex (at least in the U.S. and other places where AIDS education has been widespread), it is implausible to maintain that by engaging in consensual unsafe sex I might expose another to a risk of which she is unaware or does not, in fact, deliberately choose. This mutual consent

most everyone else, the distinction being only that we *should* know better—cling to the supposition that those indulging in "risky" sex (however small the actual risk) must be doing so out of lack-of-information, self-deceit, or because of some sort of repressive imposition of the sexual acts upon them. While I do not wish to proclaim some high romanticist sentiment about untamed passions, it seems the Left has curiously overlooked the rather commonsense point that people generally have sex because they *want* to; and they want to even though, or sometimes even *because*, sex is not free of risks. Within feminism, much of this sanitized notion of sexuality harks back to some familiar refrains of cults-of-true-womanhood, and to the moral pureness of women. Perhaps now women maintain their purity through condoms rather than marriage, but either is ritualistic at best as far as the near-nonexistent risk of heterosexual AIDS is concerned.

Naturalistic Fallacies

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to mutual endangerment (which sex must be considered, quite regardless of any knowledge by one or both partners of serological status), is much like the choice one makes by engaging in a contact sport in which one chooses to risk a harm which, if inflicted, will come at the hands of another person (who has also chosen a similar risk). Ethicists and jurists have long recognized risks such as that of contact sports—absent conduct well outside the bounds normal to the activity—as covered by a civil-libertarian advocacy of rights to harm oneself, and legally as free of liability to the causal agent of one's harm. For much better elaboration of this discussion, see Schüklenk (1994); Mohr (1987); Illingworth (1990).

A frequent retort by safe-sex advocates to the claim of a right to sexual self-endangerment is an attempt to shift the discussion to one about non-consensual sex. I believe this fourth-term argument is a bit dissimulative. The recommendations of safe-sex proponents are inherently directed towards consensual acts, even if these proponents fail to recognize the moral autonomy of such choices. Safe-sex recommendations are **not** meant as helpful guidelines for rapists; neither are they hints to rape victims, who are, after all, by definition not choosing the manner of performance of the acts they are forced to undergo.

The unequal treatment of sexual and non-sexual risks leads to a philosophical observation. An ontological error, I think, has been committed by the Left in its derivation of a political ought from an alleged biological is. This naturalistic fallacy reasons that *since* AIDS is pandemic, there exists a *moral obligation* for each person to minimize her risk of AIDS. Failure to utilize prophylaxis is thus cast as an *ethical* failing. It happens that even the factual premise is rather weak for heterosexual contacts, but among gay-men AIDS is indeed fairly prevalent, albeit not actually epidemic since the incidence is decreasing.[53] It has been suggested to me that underlying the Left's naturalistic fallacy about safe-sex is an enthymematic moral principle according to which avoidance of disease is *good*. There may indeed be such a moral principle to which leftists subscribe—although more likely the valuation is mostly pragmatic—but the problem is that we simply have no *right* to impose this moral principle on the unwilling. Deep down we all value other's autonomy enough to recognize that we should not try to impose our moral valuation of health and risk on others; but most often that respect for autonomy is paved over with the specious rationalizing claim that all those others are merely ignorant of the risks they face. This claim is facile. Very few people, gay, straight or lesbian, drug-injecting or not, are really much unaware of the health risks of sex—how could they be after a century of constant barrage on this, and after 15 years of this barrage having the name 'AIDS'? Indeed, those who misevaluate risk almost universally believe their danger

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[53]See footnote 47. In particular, between the discussed intervals of July 1992-June 1993 and July 1993-June 1994, the decline in new AIDS cases among men who have sex with men was from 47,533 to 42,156. This includes those cases who have an additional injecting drug use risk, but the pattern is the same if they are excluded. As discussed in the mentioned footnote, this relatively small numeric decline represents a much larger numeric decline under a constant definition of AIDS, since the case-definition was greatly expanded during the latter interval.

greater than it is.

People, in full awareness of risks, *decide* to engage in "risky" sex. Both heterosexuals and lesbians whose risk is minuscule, and gays whose risk is much greater, choose the psychological, physical and *political* benefits of "risky" sex to be more important than the associated risks. It is easy enough to say that *had* the eventually afflicted amongst them known the result, they would have acted differently. That might well be true most of the time. Similarly, that subset of pedestrians who are struck by cars almost universally retroactively evaluate their injury as more serious than the purpose of their errand. This reasoning is quite a bad argument for avoiding walking (or for avoiding walking on unnecessary errands), and just as bad for avoiding unsafe sex. It is only by abandoning a possibility for the discursive construction of notions of liberation and freedom in sexuality that we have come to believe every virtue associated with non-risk-free sex to be outweighed by the potential for harm also accompanying it. In the end, this is a perfectly legitimate choice for each of us to make for ourselves, but it is not one we should try to impose on others, as we have so univocally done.

Syphilis and History.

It happens that AIDS is nothing like what is widely believed in its epidemiology or causality; but there was a disease, not so long ago, which fit almost to a 'T' the current misconceptions about AIDS: namely, syphilis. Progressive groups of the nineteen-teens, such as the American Social Hygiene Association, produced stunning estimates of syphilis affecting as much as 10% of the adult U.S. population.[54] While such estimates were, no

doubt, exaggerations used to support a political agenda—much as are most projections of AIDS cases today—it is nonetheless quite believable that several percent of U.S. residents had indeed contracted syphilis. Mortality and crippling morbidities were common in the disease. What I find most interesting in the history of syphilis is that virtually *every* argument made today about AIDS was made almost verbatim prior the 1930's about syphilis: the arguments of the public-health authorities, of today's feminists, of today's gay-press, of leftists and liberals, and the arguments of today's rightwing Christian fundamentalists. Alan Brandt's *Social History of Venereal Disease* [Brandt, 1985], is a remarkable description of these myriad confluent groups who united around venereal diseases.

Disappointingly, the Left suffered all the same failures in its ideological construction of syphilis as it has with AIDS. It was largely self-identified progressives, and especially self-identified feminists of the nineteen-teens who led the anti-prostitution and anti-vice campaigns which were some of the most widely orchestrated state-repressions of 20th century U.S. history. The victims of these repressive campaigns were, of course, poor women. Aside from a language of "female spirituality"—often invoked also by feminists nowadays—the chief argument for these police-state measures was syphilis. The very same derivation of moral laws—and thereby state actions—from epidemiological facts was the centerpiece of much progressivism and feminism of the early century, just as it is today. Then, as now, it was only a specifically sexually-related disease which convinced leftists of the need for police action. Other diseases, then as now, never seemed to carry such an imminent demand for the forfeit of freedoms.

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[54]Brandt (1985). See particularly, pp.12-17. The mentioned ten percent figure is by no means the highest estimate of syphilitic infection promoted in the early twentieth century, either. The assertion of Prince

A. Morrow in 1911 is perhaps typical of estimates of venereal disease among social progressives, "[The] morbidity of venereal disease exceeds that of all other diseases combined." Brandt, p.13.

An Hegelian remark on the history of venereal disease might serve to conclude these observations. Despite the analogies I suggest, there has also been a developmental process in the language of venereal disease. The dominant ideological construction of sexual disease had a religious framework in the teens. The language concerned moral failings and corruptions, and mentioned the essentially *ethical* dangers of unsafe-sex. By the 1940's, when treatments for syphilis had become much more effective, a much more medicalized language became dominant. A positivistic discourse of public-health and biology was the rhetorical strategy widely used in understanding sexual dangers. With the emergence of AIDS as a discursive phenomenon the positivism was not abandoned, rather the very language of science was recycled into the construction of a fully scientistic theology of disease. The language of science, remaining on the surface value-neutral, became the framework
for conceptualizing *moral necessity*!

Epilogue.

The essay of this section was written, in the main, back in 1994, as I mentioned in footnote 44, and as is implicit in certain now-dated remarks. It is worthwhile, in 1999, to consider what has happened in the five years since then. Numerically, it would be difficult to find a better empirical example of Farr's Law than that exhibited by U.S. AIDS cases, with the apex of cases probably falling in 1992-3. I suspect that even inflectional points on the curve would exhibit their projected symmetries, but I have not followed this closely enough to verify this. In short, I was factually right (and had been in published form a couple years previous to that), and mainstream AIDS discourse of the time was wrong.

This dissertation, however, is not about epidemiology, but rather about ideology. Therefore, what is of actual interest for us is what has happened to AIDS ideology in the last five years. I would like to say that it has been *forgotten* in that time—both in order to mutter 'good riddance' and in order to affirm my philosophical concept of forgetfulness in ideology. Of course, the actual course can not be characterized quite as simply as my wishes would have it.

AIDS ideology, in the main, *has* been forgotten in its specific discourses. The indignant and disbelieving reactions I described in my 1994 colleagues would be replaced by yawns and indifferent stares were I to announce delivering the same essay in 1999. Obviously, a certain set of background knowledge and belief about AIDS has been retained for the last five years, but the specific discursive practices—especially their associated urgency—has largely disappeared. The disappearance I indicate is perfectly flat-footed: people do not *bother* to say those things that they said five years ago. The reason for this disappearance is not mysterious. The disappearance has nothing to do with any stunning success of myself and a few other critical writers on AIDS ideology. AIDS discourse has disappeared because AIDS itself has disappeared—not entirely, of course, but by an order of magnitude decrease, which is practically the same thing.

Disappearances in ideology tend to be external in origin, as with the AIDS example. Inasmuch as causes of ideological disappearance can be traced—sometimes they cannot, at least not easily or better than contentiously—they mostly rest in unexpected brute realities. I think the disappearance of AIDS has this sort of externality to AIDS ideology, though this may sound paradoxical. Certainly the overt meanings of the phrases of AIDS discourses do, after all, refer to AIDS the disease. But I think I have already shown how poorly and approximately this reference ever attached. Most of the logic of AIDS ideology always was *ideological* logic, moreover—something hermetic, with its own internal

frame of reference, not the ostention of a disease. From this point of view, the disappearance of AIDS cases, the disappearance of deaths, was not within the potential purview of AIDS ideology, certainly not within the ideology considered as totalization.

There are a few clues I think we can discern after the disappearance. Of greatest significance is an official lack of acknowledgement of the disappearance of AIDS as disease. The last few years of CDC summaries of declining AIDS cases have nearly suffered a news blackout. A report, in mid-1998, that AIDS cases dropped an additional 33% between 1996 and 1997 (after similar drops for several years prior) generally earned only bottom-of-the-hour TV news coverage, and then without commentary, and for one day only (similar remarks apply to print or radio coverage, but TV seems best to illustrate the point). Compare this with the feverish flury of stories which accompanied reports of a symmetrical increase in 1989 or so. I realize that there are many factors which go into this asymmetry besides the mechanism of forgetfulness which occupies much of this dissertation: the media favoring bad news, for example. But even considering outside biases and motivations, it really should strike one as remarkable what a non-story the abovementioned CDC snippet was.

When social ideas become eclipsed, where those ideas do not have the totalizing tendency I describe in AIDS ideology, the outcome is markedly different. A public and social recognition of the causes of the eclipse is possible, and ideationally functional. When a war is won (or lost), the victory is officially acknowledged in congratulatory (or mournful) tones. A few occassional intonations of, "AIDS has been cured by AZT and polymerase inhibitors", were heard around 1996; and this would be consistent with the war example I

mention. But the victory meme just never had the grab to it necessary to catch on in the ideology—or more generally, in the mass media. It was tried, but it never much functioned. Most certainly, there was never an acknowledgement of refutation of the sort, "We admit projections of a pandemic were not born out"—of the sort as does sometimes happen in actual scientific investigations. AIDS discourses never had an acknowledged end, but rather they just sort of slinked away, without much anyone being quite conscious that anything has actually changed. We are left with an ideational blind-spot regarding our own recent discursivity and belief.

The general moral of forgetfulness I wish to draw is present in these last few post-AIDS years. But AIDS ideology nonetheless left a stain on our collective unconscious.[55] Even without the survival of most of the specific tropes of AIDS, a general sullying of sexuality, a permissiveness toward a medicalized State, and even some nostalgic effectivities of homophobia[56] have been retained in a half-memory of AIDS ideology. Even a general piousness towards safe-sex strictures is fairly widespread, even if we cannot quite remember what specific Commandment we obey by our observance. The ideology is long forgotten, but not quite gone.

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[55]Do not read any Jungian theoretical system into my slightly fanciful phrase. It just reads well to my eye; but I clearly do not endorse the literal idealism of a 'collective unconscious'.

[56]The aspect of homophobia which was a parcel at a certain end of AIDS ideology is not something I would now—nor would ever have—accuse the leftists addressed by this essay of. But clearly, outside the left, a certain repulsion towards "the gay disease" was a large part of the social effectivity of representations of AIDS.

B. Day-Care Devil Worshipers

It Is When Something Terrible Happens That One Realizes How Much People Are Asleep.

Terrible People Wake up When Something Happens.

When People Wake up Something Terrible Happens.

When Something Terrible Happens People Eat Lunch.

When Something Terrible Happens People Try to Sleep.

When Something Terrible Happens People Wake up.

When Something Terrible Happens Plaintive Wails Occur.

When Something Terrible Happens Some People Wake up.

[Jenny Holzer, http://www.adaweb.com/project/holzer/cgi/pcb.cgi]

Lest we forget some events in a recent decade, it is worthwhile reminding ourselves of the furor of articles, arrests, prosecutions, classroom discussion, etc. about 'Satanic Ritual Abuse' (and a few allied concepts) which occurred between, approximately, 1980 and 1993. During this time, hundreds of people were convicted based on evidence that seems laughably absurd from the "outside" of the transient ideology of ritual abuse, thousands more were accused and hounded, and dozens of the convicted remain imprisoned on sentences ranging from tens to hundred of years. America's newspapers-of-record reported—and advocated—these goings on pretty much without demur until the early 1990s. Journals which should have known better[57] engaged in obsessions of taint and impurity. Hundreds of millions of dollars were spent on fantastic police and prosecutorial investigations (mostly at local or county levels in a few places), and hundreds of millions more were spent on institutes, conferences, training materials, and the other academic trappings of

legitimation (mostly at a federal level). Although the scale of this particular hysteria cannot compare to the vaster scope of our drug-war state, it certainly exceeds the scope of other famous American witch-hunts: those in Salem and by HUAC.

It is not my goal in this section to provide anything original in terms of empirical description of what I will call 'ritual abuse ideology'[58]. The cat has been let out of the bag by a number of writers more familiar with the historical details than I am. What I hope to do instead is show how the ritual abuse ideology of our recent past illustrates some of my concepts of totalization, hegemony, and the non-refutational demise of ideologies. As far as that empirical description which I

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[57]I think particularly of the shameful participation of *Ms.* in the witch hunt. During its "academic", ad-free, incarnation, no less!

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[58]For my purposes herein, let us allow the inclusion of several related concepts/ideologies within the general term. The notions of 'rape trauma syndrome', 'repressed memory syndrome', 'sadistic abuse' and some other pseudo-clinical terms are markers of a few slight variations on the themes of ritual abuse ideology. The history and functioning of the several notions is close enough that they may easily be considered under a common term for my general purpose of determing their mode of ideological functioning.

shall find relevant, I shall rely on the quite excellent text, *Satan's Silence* [Nathan and Snedeker, 1995], which although written from a journalistic and legal perspective, well illustrates many of the philosophical concepts I want to implement. Other recent books and articles have covered similar ground, although none probably quite as thoroughly.

Forgetting Everything

The very first paragraphs of Nathan and Snedeker's book point towards both of the complements which I have tried to articulate in this dissertation: the necessary and the impossible. More narrowly, the complements (at least complementary in a diachronic sense) are totalization and *amnesic non-refutation*[59]. Both elements in the histories of hegemonies serve to remove the "ideas" which make up these ideologies from the discursive dialectic of a Habermasian or Millean "contest of ideas." Let us look at Nathan and Snedeker's remarks, which are proffered without any particular philosophical intent:

> Writing this book has been hard for us. There was a time when publicly expressing skepticism about small children being ceremonially raped and tortured by organized groups was, as one journalist put it, practically an indictable stance. We can testify to this: in the late 1980s, one of us had the police at her door, on a maliciously false report of child maltreatment, after publishing an article suggesting the innocence of a day-care teacher convicted of ritual abuse.
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> Several years later, the national mood has changed. Doubting is easy now and, for many of the people we know—especially lawyers and journalists—even fashionable. Both of us have been lauded for our early skepticism, praised for helping free innocent prisoners, and asked how we were able to remain clearheaded when so many others didn't.
>
> For people not caught up in a hysteria, it is easy to demonstrate its absurdity. What is hard is to appreciate its sense, to recognize how a social panic "works" for people—people who may not be very different from the skeptics who deride them. [Nathan and Snedeker, 1995, p.ix]

I fear that in certain cases I participate in a sin of my discipline by expressing ordinary ideas "theoretically." Here is a chance for a partial remedy. Totalization and amnesic non-refutation, for all their neologistic sound, are quite ordinary phenomena of everyday lives. Nathan and Snedeker stand innocent of my theoreticist sin.

Totalization, in the end, is just a name for the historical sequences by which certain things become "unsayable"—or at least, not sayable within the bound of "normal" discourse. Saying certain things—things which were quite ordinary a few years before, and which become quite ordinary a few years later—becomes met with a number of mechanisms of social eschewal. Such eschewal can take a number of forms. We can say things only ever to be met with blank stares; or we can say things only to have a "principle of generosity"[60] kick in according to which every time we say 'X' it is quickly interpreted as 'Y', since only the latter "makes sense;" or we can encounter insistent, but empty, refutations of "you certainly cannot mean *that*!"; or, where necessary, we can be arrested, lynched, or run out of town when we say eschewed things.

One key to deciphering totalization is in its transience. Or more precisely, it is totalizing ideologies' amnesic non-refutation. If it were the case that an idea held

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[59]See the discussion below, at page 88, about this slightly specialized term I advance.

[60]A certain amount of discussion of Davidson's concept occurs beginning on page 95. I believe enough is apparent from immediate context.

sway for a time, based on a bunch of evidence supporting it, but was given up by agreement after dispassionate discussion, I would not want to call the old ideas totalizing. Even ideas which somewhat less than entirely met this picture, but had a lot of tendencies it that direction, would hardly be totalizing ideologies. The picture I briefly sketch is a common lay-positivist one of scientific progress. One could mention Popper here, but the picture is nothing so specific as that. But in the same approximate way that non-totalizing ideas can be described as Popperian, totalizing ones can be described as Kuhnian (or maybe Feyerabendian). The step of positivistic refutation just never happens to totalizing ideologies. Rather, the old totalizing ideas just get old, and the constellations of forces which made the ideas non-refutable (by all the social eschewals mentioned above), just do not operate any longer. I do not have a *theory* of why this happens in just the same way that Feyerabend [Feyerabend, 1975] does not have a theory of scientific change. Things change for a chaotic assortment of reasons which operate at all levels of description, and all levels of social agency; one does not have a *unified theory* of anarchic regularities.

Let me note here that we have a luxury with ritual abuse ideology, with AIDS, with the terrorist imago, even with the war-on-drugs frenzy, that we—or I—do not have with other ideologies I argue are totalizing throughout this dissertation (or social forms, for that matter, that I have to argue are *ideological* at all). Some ideologies are short enough temporally that I and my readers can live through both sides of them. Others we might see only the start or end of—hopefully the end—which might still give us the comparative viewpoint to understand what we could not from *within* the totalizing ideology. Of still others, we might get glimpses of the outside from old writing by long-dead writers (or painters, builders, etc.). But of still others, no reasonable outside exists which is substantially or

concretely available to us. The outsides of sex, or of causality, are thousands of years gone, or in some indefinite distant future. It would be nice to "critique" sex (or causality) sometime after its amnesic non-refutation, but that is not an available position from which I can identify sex as a totalizing ideology.

The luxury provided by ritual abuse ideology is the luxury of homology. All my case studies are just that. I can track these histories of a few totalizing ideologies, show how they operated, start to finish, then bring those modes of operations to ideologies with larger horizons. I cannot see from the outside of some larger closures, but at least I can see that the view from the inside looks an awful lot like the view from the inside of those totalizing ideologies whose horizons we have transcended (by historical accident, not by force of will). The conclusion of this examination of homology is the following: if big hegemonies are ever transcended, it will be in the mode of amnesic non-refutation, not in that of refutation. If we get past sex or causation or subjectivity, it will not have been by critique. Just like it was not by critique that we got past the little ideology of ritual abuse.

Motives, Right and Left

Like anything which can function in a totalizing manner nowadays, ritual abuse ideology has its special appeal to both the Right and the Left; and every political slant (which can be multiplied by more than one split, of course) feels its participation in the ideology as an intrinsic and organic outgrowth of what it *really always believed* all along.

Ritual abuse ideology grew out of some ideological movements which did not function in a totalizing manner, but which also had a parallel appeal to both Left and Right wing thinking—in particular, both feminists and anti-feminists had an interest in proto-

ritual-abuse ideas.[61] A unified appeal to opposite groups for opposite reasons seems to be a necessary, but not a sufficient, property of ideologies which totalize. The crucial proto-ideology leading up to ritual abuse ideology is that of father-daughter incest.[62] Feminists of the 1970s focussed much of their critical analysis on the functioning of patriarchy within family structures, on domestic violence, on heterosexuality as a control mechanism. An attention to father-daughter incest is a short step from these concerns. But incest ideas would not have done as well had they been relatively univocal in arising from feminist concerns. Instead, they simultaneously arose from distinctly anti-feminist sentiments.

It was not just patriarchy that was to blame for father-

daughter incest—so say some of its ideologues—but also the women's movement.

> [They] saw this domestic Lolita as a reincarnation of the good traditional wife. While her mother engaged in neurotic job and community pursuits, the daughter greeted her father fondly when he returned after a miserable day at work… Under the circumstances, the poor father could hardly help being aroused, and there was no one around to save him from his lust. His wife, after all, acted "remarkably oblivious" to the developing incest since it promised to free her from her husband's unwanted demands. For [the anti-feminist incest ideologues], the foundation of a good domestic system was a husband and a wife who got along well. If they did, incest was unlikely… Part of the repair work involved getting the mother to apologize to her daughter. [Nathan and Snedeker, p.21]

As with the following ritual abuse ideology, these apparently opposite approaches to conceiving incest had more than just a coincidental confluence.

> [F]eminists did not back the […] pro-family program simply as a compromise with moral conservatism. On the contrary, many women's advocates found much to like about the […] approach to incest intervention… Feminists […] were also excited by […] efforts to control men's private behavior and, in so doing, to make them "more submissive and nurturant" towards their wives and children. [Nathan and Snedeker, p.22]

In this strange alliance—in what seems to be an identificatory mechanism with an unfolding ideology—we start to see the glimpses of totalization which comes to fruition in ritual abuse ideology.

Another predecessor ideology which contributed to ritual abuse ideology was the kiddie porn crusades. Kiddie porn was a godsend for anti-porn feminists. Totalitarians like Dworkin and MacKinnon never carried much sentiments for civil liberties, but,

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[61]As is obvious, 'Right' and 'Left' cut up a number of axis which are not identical. There is a Right and a Left on welfare-policy, on individualism/communalism, on corporate vs. government autonomy, on "social issues" like sexual choices, on regulation of speech, on income distribution, and so on. Although opinions on such ideas cluster, all kinds of permutations occur. Saying feminist vs. anti-feminist is actually not just one such axis, but several. And even these several axes do not exhaust the dualities in the appeal of ritual abuse ideology and its predecessors. However, in a broad sense, ritual abuse ideology can be understood as growing out of strong pro- and con- reactions to the women's movement of the early 1970s. The ideology is not reducible to that movement, but it cannot be understood without a strong sense of the connection to the women's movement (and to the movement's enemies).

[62]I hope it will be obvious to readers of the rest of this document that by describing father-daughter incest as an ideology, I am not dismissing a legitimate concern about the crime. But the discourse of father-daughter incest in the late-1970's was not generically a "legitimate concern." Discourses—ideologies—have their own ways of conceptualizing their object, of legitimizing their inquiry, of propounding their viewpoint, which are not crudely reducible to an unreflective "legitimate concern." Actually, such a reduction to "common sense"—to a claimed purely non-ideological status—is always a good marker for the ideological function of an idea (but not, I think, evidence of totalizing function). In this, father-daughter incest was very clearly an ideological formation.

[M]any feminists, who found pornography distasteful, were torn by their belief in the First Amendment right to produce and view it. On the other hand, sexual depictions of children seemed incontrovertibly wrong… But now, as the congressional witnesses paraded their dire statistics and pictures of nude children, [feminist columnist Ellen] Goodman felt "a sense of relief." Now, she wrote, Americans could register their disapproval of pornography in a "refreshingly uncomplicated" way. [Nathan and Snedeker, p.42]

From the other side, an anti-feminist "family-values" ideology found kiddie porn a similar godsend. Kiddie porn, to them, had a similar moral disambiguity in proving all that was wrong with "deviant" sexual practices—homosexuality, exhibitionism, promiscuity, etc.—which to them were all of a piece with kiddie porn. Kiddie porn was probably the start of the totalizing function in this cluster, and certainly provided the necessary ideological tools with which to build ritual abuse ideology. Although,

> At its height, kiddie porn grossed far less than $1 million per year (compared with billions of dollars for the adult industry)… [T]his information was publicly available by 1980, but during the next few years, officials and much of the media continued to claim that commercial child pornography involved millions of children and a vast underground network of pedophiles engaged in a multibillion-dollar business. [Nathan and Snedeker, p.42]

With the intellectual and epistemic pieces in place, a totalizing ideology came together.

Flashpoints

Ritual abuse ideology congealed in a couple places, fairly rapidly. In some ways, the "outbreaks"[63] were triggered by quite accidental particularities. But given the elements which came together in the above discussed kiddie porn and incest ideologies, I think the occurrence of ritual abuse ideology—in its manifest form of prosecutions—was bound to occur somewhere. Prosecutions of persons for ritual abuse of children have clustered in a few places, although in those few places as many as dozens of child-sex abuse rings have been "uncovered." That is the manifest form of the ideology; the latent form was certainly much more widespread, and the ideology was generally believed in a more passive way pretty much throughout the USA.

As the motive cause of the first two waves of ritual abuse prosecutions were the delusional fantasies of two Southern California women suffering from severe mental disorders. In 1982, Mary Ann Barbour, in Kern County, began making accusations of molestation against a wide range of people whom her daughters had been in contact with, mostly extended family. Over the course of the following year or two, these accusations spread to include many more "abusers", and through a network of social-services and police agencies, many more "victims" as well. In 1983, Judy Johnson, of Manhattan Beach, began a similar range of accusations, although this time specifically against day-care providers. Again,

as police, prosecutors and social-workers were recruited into the cause, dozens or hundreds of additional victims were recruited into the prosecution of the infamous McMartin Preschool case. Testimony of children—children more and more peripheral to the original accusations—was evinced over time using some of the techniques and "expert knowledge" described below; as more testimony was evinced, grander and grander conspiracies of Satanist sex rings was revealed (or rather, imagined).

It is not particularly remarkable that a couple women with histories of delusional mental illness could imagine scenarios in which their children had been sexually abused. To Barbour and Johnson, these frightful events (made ever more fantastic with the later invention of child-abuse "professionals") must have seemed terrifyingly real, as are many delusions of schizophrenics. What is shocking in retrospect is the manner in which a variety of centers of professional, official knowledge were put into the service of legitimating and enforcing these delusions. The police initially treated reverentially the none-too-subtle and semi-coherent rantings of accusers. Psychologists and social-workers stepped into to "interview" children with the effective result of producing imaginary stories wilder than any original delusions of Barbour or Johnson. Children who invented stories about the original accused, in the same coercive situations invented further stories about unrelated additional perpetrators; and these secondary accusations in turn led to new waves of investigations, new groups of children recruited to "testify," new "sex-rings" being uncovered,

> The social hysteria that McMartin incited upped ritual-abuse cases to another level. While at first they were products of delusional individuals, by 1984 whole social systems had been set up to justify and develop accusations and prosecutions. What happened in Kern County is an example. There, local officials assembled a remarkable apparatus for

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[63]Even though the disease metaphors of 'outbreak', 'spread', 'infection' and so on have some connotations I do not want to make, overall the imagery fits the pattern of ritual abuse ideology too closely to disallow the metaphor. I do not think the ideology affects only 'infected' communities in a broad sense, nor that it is as self-contained as a virus or germ which really is in a distinct geographic location. But still, the pervasiveness, and the concrete effects (i.e. prosecutions), have the uneven distribution of an infectious disease, and much the same pattern of spread. The preconditions are global, but the outbreaks still have their identifiable "Typhoid Mary's."

generating massive investigations and trials. It included sheriff's deputies, social workers, prosecutors, and [doctors]. [Nathan and Snedeker, p.93]

The irreality of the construction of "official knowledge" in the ritual abuse communities quickly encompassed the judiciary also,

> [Kern County Defendants'] sentences ranged from 273 to 405 years in prison; the women's time shattered previous state records. When a newspaper reporter asked Friedman [the judge in the case] why he had meted out such draconian punishments, he answered that it was because he had seen pictures of the defendants molesting the children and committing "every perversion imaginable." Yet no such evidence had been presented to the jury, nor was there any found by the sheriff's office after countless searches… The judge's phantasms were shared by all of Kern County; indeed, it seemed that the whole community had plunged into a collective nightmare. By the beginning of 1985, four sex-ring trials clogged the Kern County courthouse, and a total of eight had been uncovered in an area containing about 130,000 people. [Nathan and Snedeker, p.98]

The ideological preconditions must have existed in many places. But in a few places where initial accusations were developed, they spread quickly to encompass many additional prosecutions. The same phenomena which occurred in Kern and Manhattan Beach in 1983-5 occurred again over the next few years in Wenatchee, Washington; in Lowell, Massachusetts; under the inspired fanaticism of eventual Attorney General Janet Reno, in Dade Country, Florida; and in a handful of other places. The image of a forest in a drought springs to mind. Anywhere throughout the forest could burst into wildfire at any time, but that crucial spark only happens to occur in a subset of the places. Such was the USA in 1984.

Obtaining Outsidelessness

The ideology of ritual abuse is more sophisticated in its internal structure than a simple dismissal as 'hysteria' or a 'witch hunt' might lead one to think.[64] The ideologues of ritual abuse rely on many true and cogent observations. They carry through deductive reasonings. They integrate other areas of thought and knowledge. For example, one common premise of ritual abuse ideology almost seems to be a Freudian truism,

> The daughter's lie, cautioned Summit, "carries more credibility than the most explicit claims of incestuous entrapment. It confirms adult expectations that children cannot be trusted. It restores the precarious equilibrium of the family. Children learn not to complain. Adults learn not to listen. The authorities learn not to believe. [Nathan and Snedeker, p.222, quoting Roland C. Summit, "The Child Sexual Abuse Accommodation Syndrome," *Child Abuse and Neglect,* 7(1983)]

Psychic repression, at some level, is an undeniable property of human thinking. When used by the ritual abuse ideologists, like Summit, it forms the linchpin of a mechanism of justification. It is an argument to *trump* all non-totalizing ones which might be counterposed to it, and in that creates precisely the kind of *outsidelessness* which I discuss in this dissertation.

The totalizing quality of ritual abuse ideology's repression explanation lies in its ability preemptively to

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[64]Of course, other social 'hysterias', and other witch hunts (literal and figurative), have often had their own associated ontologies and deductive systems. It is not the case, for example, that European witch hunts over decades or centuries were simple unstructured fears which overcame otherwise sensible people. That movement also had its own internal logic, its own "philosophers" and ideologues, its metaphysical reasonings, and so on. People believed in witches, and in satanic possession and the like, for reasons that played into a variety of social reasonings, and fit moderately systematically with other belief schemes. I take no position, just for lack of sufficient study, on whether, or in what respect, older witch-hunts participate in the trends of totalization and amnesic non-refutation which are my concerns in this particular discussion.

coopt the very argument which most immediately refute its claims. The "abused child" is firstly granted a privileged epistemic status, in an echo of Hegel's master/slave dialectic or of much feminist standpoint theory, which grants special knowledge to the oppressed. But then a special hermeneutic is introduced to truly understand the meaning of the "abused child's" testimony—and this interpretive principle performs the foreclosure. Another prominent ritual abuse ideologist describes the "unfolding" of truth in children's testimony,

> In May 1984, Kee MacFarlane told Congress: "What we capture on videotape on the first interview is an incredible kind of spontaneity, this eye-opening reality that comes from children's first descriptions of abuse." [Nathan and Snedeker, 1996, p.224, quoting Kee MacFarlane, "Child Sexual Victims in the Courts," *Hearings Before the Subcommittee on Juvenile Justice of the Committee on the Judiciary of the United States Senate*, May 2,22, 1984, p.88]

Of course, MacFarlane's "spontaneity" is still one mediated by the enclosing principle of an outsideless ideology since,

> [I]nstead of revealing heartfelt narratives by children, the recording starred the interviewers [such as MacFarlane] themselves, and showed them working strenuously to lead children from denials to "yes" answers. The same tapes were instrumental in producing jury verdicts favorable to [defendants]. [Nathan and Snedeker, p.224, notes added]

As mentioned, an outsideless ideology is not merely spontaneous, as the term 'mass hysteria' might be read. Totalization cannot function without a certain sort of spontaneity, inasmuch as a large number of people must be in some way predisposed to participate in an enclosing reasoning. I have discussed some such motives. But at the same time, spontaneity also requires a lot of leg-work for the ideologists.

Much of the work in establishing the right interpretive framework, the hermeneutics, of ritual abuse ideology,

is getting the right social system of official expertise in place (as with most ideologies). In this, the ideologists quickly realized that videotape could not be relied on to provide an adequate hermeneutic, and interpretation must be left to experts best able to understand the meaning of children's *spontaneous* testimony (which generally takes the form of denial of the events proposed by prosecutorial staff, even after moderate coercion). By 1985,

> [A]ttendees learned at the FBI's 1985 ritual-abuse conference, abandoning their tape recorders and notepads "worked" for prosecutors. [Nathan and Snedeker, p.226].

Such a hermeneutic was given even more explicit imprimatur within a few more years,

> Child-protection authorities institutionalized their phobias about interview records in 1987, when the National Center for the Prosecution of Child Abuse (NCPCA) published a voluminous manual instructing district attorneys on how to handle child abuse cases. Titled *Investigation and Prosecution of Child Abuse*...[it] contains reams of advice on how to gather pro-prosecution expert witnesses...perhaps most important—on not videotaping interview with children, since doing so may help the defense. [Nathan and Snedeker, p.226]

Once the ideological leg-work is done, most people are pretty inclined to believe what "all the experts" say about a matter, especially if not to believe is to be cast in the same boat with child-molesters and the like. And even more especially if the right internal mechanisms exist to incorporate apparent refutation into the conceptual scheme of ritual abuse ideology.

Remembrance of Ideologies Past

What happens when totalization is a thing of the past? The actual positivistic step of *refuting* the old ideas is the rarest of beasts. But for almost everyone who

remembers an old ideology, it is *de rigueur* to experience a homologue of refutation. I believe that it is in the nature of life within ideology (not to say there is another kind, of course), to *require* the *structure* of belief which positivism endorses in a general way. Perhaps not the whole progressivist structure we have experienced for a few hundred years of *rigorous* science and Capitalism, but at the very least a structure of experiencing the past in terms of *overcoming*; Benjamin's undoubtably more accurate Angel of History, who sees only the accumulation of horrors while being blown backwards, is not the Angel of Ideology. Nathan and Snedeker give an illustration,

> The older reporters always passionately recount how, while everyone else at their newspaper or TV station ten years ago thought Kelly Michaels or the McMartin teachers were guilty, they saw the whole thing as a witch hunt (even though they filed no stories to that effect and did not argue the point with their colleagues). [Nathan and Snedeker, 1996, p. 245]

The truth is, I do not know what happened to ritual abuse ideology. It seems to be gone now, and I think probably no more waves of mass prosecutions of supposed Satanists will occur in the next few years. In some manner, the preconditions which congealed by 1983 have dissipated by 1995. The eventual acquittals of a some defendants has (mostly on appeal, therefore outside the immediate communities) probably had a certain effect. Kiddie porn and incest have faded from media focus—although those fadings are no more obvious causally. But far more than these "refutational" aspects come into play, an ideological forgetfulness has come over us. The ideological alliances which shaped ritual abuse ideology have moved into new formations (for example, anti-welfare ideology grabs a similar range of elements). Attentions have shifted to new fantasies and new anxieties. Totalities follow fashions, hems rise or fall, a new band or movie is all-the-rage, and it is

hard to imagine the appeal of what we recently believed with what was in us more than we were in ourselves.[65]

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[65]For some general discussion of the notion of "more than we are in ourselves", see page 58, and the notion of "Subject-Supposed-to-Know.

C. Tsars and Jihads

> [A]longside the 'war machine', there has always existed an ocular (and later optical and electro-optical) 'watching machine' capable of providing soldiers, and particularly commanders, with a visual perspective on the military action under way. [Virilio, 1989, p.3]

The drug wars have been long time fixtures of American political life since the Harrison Narcotics Act of 1914 (and even a bit before). The purpose and function of these wars has quite consistently been the production of "criminals" in the place of ablated "undesirable" social subjects—most especially of subjects that are so undesirable in racialized terms. The drug wars enact a dialectics of visibility and hiddenness; of speech and silence; of literal presence and absence. "Unruly" subjects are removed from visibility, vocality and physical presence while their simulacra—criminals—are instituted in their place; or rather they are restored to a place in the media, so that their inverted image replaces their prior actuality.

Two Disappearances

There are actually two ideological closures associated with the drug wars. The first is the matter that I had originally intended to address in this section. The discourse of the drug wars has long been an official ideology of the U.S. The imprimature of this official ideology has not merely promoted specific answers, but has simultaneously submersed deeper questions by posing superficial substitutes. The question one must officially answer is, "how do we deal with drug-criminals?" This question subverts and undermines more basic questioning of the underlying assumption that something about drugs (use, sale, possession, transport) can define a class of people as criminal, deviant or diseased. The kind of occlusion that operates between the asked and unasked questions of the drug wars looks a lot like occlusions I have discussed elsewhere: we normatively must ask "How can we best inform people

about (heterosexually transmitted) AIDS dangers?" rather than "Is such 'information' merely a covert puritanism?"; "What defines the boundaries of *the races*?" rather than "What is this absurdity called race?"; "What precisely in gender differences is nature versus nurture?"; rather than "What is the origin of the ideological edifice called gender?" In all these kinds of cases, a specific question, with broad presuppositions provides an unspoken answer to an ontological question that has never actually been answered by ideology (nor by ideologues).

Those issues that can make it into official discourse—legislative bodies, schools, the broadcast and wide-circulation print media, courts, academia, "think-tanks"—are the comparative superficialities of how draconian criminal sentences are to be; what funding (if any) is given to treatment/rehabilitation programs, and what approach these will take; the relative role of federal and state police agencies; just how far to suspend and override traditional due-process protections in the name of fighting the drug wars; and so on. The prohibition of questioning of the "official dogma" of the drug wars has been pretty overwhelmingly effective in official discourse. Opponents of even broad aspects of the drug wars have still generally been forced into the false ontology of merely selecting more civil-liberatarian than statist and punitive answers to the above "superficial" questions. I would certainly never claim that the answers given politically to the "superficial" questions listed does not make a huge difference in the lives and liberties of everyone in the U.S. (and correspondingly elsewhere in the world, where similar ideologies

operate). The superficial questions are important questions; but they nonetheless serve to forclose on their own oppositional stance, no matter how "radical" are the answers given within the inherently reactionary ontological framework they presuppose.

Criminal Phantoms

A more fundamental closure operates alongside the "official ideology" mechanisms of the drug wars. In this, the drug wars have a supplementary ideological mode that is not represented in most of the other examples I give. The removal of subjects from the space of the social under the aegis of the drug wars is deadeningly real, as well as a merely symbolic dis-conferral of subjective validity. Even before the Harrison Act, the 1909 Opium Exclusion Act closely paralleled its contemporary Chinese Exclusion Act, the two nearly identical in both purpose and effects. The two acts enacted a physical removal of "racially undesirable" Chinese from the physical geographic territory of the U.S. Each physically absent Chinese subject, however, was simultaneously mirrored in a socially imagined opium-crazed Chinese immigrant. The two Exclusion Acts functioned to replace each flesh-and-blood Chinese immigrant to the U.S. with his deviant[66]—but thereby fundamentally unthreatening—criminal double.

Since the Harrison Act, and accelerating with each draconian twist of drug legislation and "policy," the primary mode of removal of undesirables has been from neighborhoods, schools and workplaces, to prisons, and in the ultimate case to execution chambers. Overwhelmingly, the removed and invertedly mirrored subjects have been racialized black men. As a

secondary mode of removal, criminals—which now predominately means "drug criminals"—are removed from voting rolls, jobs, geographic locations (e.g. restrictions on travel from parole and probation terms), and other social and physical modalities of visibility. It is not merely in the content of their discourses, but in their actual physical persons, that drug-criminals are blocked from participation in official ideological discourse.

In relation to the removals mentioned, it is worth pointing out something obvious: prosecution and sentencing in the drug wars is always highly selective. Use and possession of drugs is close enough to ubiquitous in the U.S.—and specifically in those communities that are the underlying targets of the drug wars—that the actual criminal enforcement functions mostly in the mode of pretext. This pretext is not so much the matter of police carrying out vendettas against specific individuals (although such is hardly uncommon) as it is the general justificatory mechanism for the operation of a juridico-police state. The laws themselves are adjusted as need be to serve this pretextual function: early on in a distinction between criminal "Chinese" opium and benign "White" morphine; recently in the distinction between White cocaine and Black crack; and along the way in the addition of various synthetic compounds to controlled lists, and in revisions of control schedules.

The disappeared persons of the drug wars, however, return instantly as simulacra. This return, I think, is something overlooked by most critics of the prison-state, and reveals something about the mode of drug war ideology. There is more to the drug wars than just the raw exercise of state sanctioned violence against undesirable communities. Drug criminals may be the "dark underside" of society—dark literally in complexion, imagistically in terms of taint and threat—but the fascination of drug war ideology is in creating hyper-visible simulacra of the drug criminals. Their roles are

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[66]I believe I show with some success in my section *Hysterical Movies* the manner in which *deviance* is fundamentally a mode of social control. Deviance is the official ideological form of what might otherwise be a non-interpellatable *transgression*.

enacted with great fanfare as the stars of TV cop shows (see, also, my Bey section), as the protagonists of political rhetoric about every manner of social issue, as international celebrities (for both the left and right: both Contra drug runners and Columbian drug lords), and even in counter-culture myths of rebelliousness (rock-and-roll stars, Beat writers, etc.). Hardly any ordinary conversation or media event can occur without a ghoulish crowd of drug criminals standing in its discursive corners. Quite opposite the mode of those discursive positions I discuss which remain "unsayable" within hegemonic ideologies, the ideological mode of the drug criminals is to say everything always, or at least to have ideology constantly chatter for them.

VI. THE MEANING OF IDEOLOGY

A. Refutation and Forgetful Affirmation

Dominant ideas are not overcome… they are merely occassionally forgotten.

The mode of hegemony and its aspirants—the "little" ideologies discussed in Chapter V, for example—is not the mode of science and philosophy. At least not as science and philosophy are idealized as Popperian discourses. Ideology is not refuted[67] in social histories. Moreover, it is more rare than not that ideologies suffer a dialectic fate of sublation and overcoming. Yes, on occassion bigger, better and ever more hegemonic ideologies come along in a manner as to encompass—and overturn by their embrace—previous ideologies. But sublation is a footnote. The dominant mode of ideological change is forgetfulness.

Amnesic non-refutation

Nietzsche took some pains to observe just what an active psychic process forgetting is. He was right, of course; and this philosophical observation might well be called the 'Central Dogma of Psychoanalysis' in a useful analogy with another famous central dogma. It is far less than clear what the agency of ideology is though, so the activity or passivity of forgetfulness is correspondingly unclear. Certainly, as subjects who are not merely vacuously interpellated, but simultaneously carry all the psychic traces of interpellations past, we each individually must be rather aggressive in our forgetfulnesses. Those little ideologies of my Chapter V that have actually gone away in our lifetimes—or others like them in this regard—must have been associated with active repressional processes for their current vacuity to have been accomplished. Regardless how much forgotten work must have gone into our personal acts of forgetfulness, forgetfulness at a social level seems almost to have a hidden hand behind it. Perhaps this hidden hand is the hand of God, or of some Cartesian demon. Perhaps it is a Smithean hand of unintended consequences. Perhaps something else. But there always seems to be an eery coordination in spontaneous repression, millions or billions of subjects arriving at the same blockage of subjectivation at more or less the same time.

In the end, for so very many reasons, this cannot be a *theoretical* dissertation—to be theoretical would just be another totalization; not something I wish to suffer from. Nonetheless, I would like to introduce the rather theoretical sounding term 'amnesic non-refutation' to

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[67]It might be noted here—with reluctance by me—that the word 'refute' has suffered some terrible ordeals in years of late. Like many other distinctions elegantly expressed by the English lexicon, the seemingly obvious difference between the verb-of-attempt 'rebut' and the verb-of-completion 'refute' has been thoroughly ignored in most media and business uses. We now encounter painful jumbles of words from newscasters stating, for example, "The President's statement refuted critics' claims that his budget will diminish military preparedness." Naturally, when I write of refutation herein, I mean what the word means.

indicate the social agency of forgetfulness. Even though we each individually forget what needs to be forgotten—for example, our own individual guilt in propogating those ideologies of yore—a social Subject Supposed to Know (or Subject Supposed to Believe) also forgets for us. Once an ideology ceases to be an official ideology, an ethereal imprimature commands us *not* to believe. In this regard I cannot agree with Althusser's characterization of history as a "process without a subject." Ideological history—which may, nonetheless, not be quite the same matter as the history of ideologies—is principally a history of the amnesic non-refutations of the Subject Supposed to Know. This subject is fictive, no doubt; but that hardly differentiates him from any other subject.

Outsidelessness

The tendency of an ideology towards totalization can best be understood in relation to the outsides of an ideology. Once totalization functions fully, ideologies become *outsideless*. There is no other idea with which one might contrast a specific totalized ideology.

Some protestations here are obvious: if an idea has no contrary or contrast, maybe that just means that it expresses something about the nature of thought, the nature of the world, the nature of human beings, or some such nature, *sui generis*. Believing in the unity of apperception, for example, is *surely* not to be trapped by an ideology, but rather just the essense of what it means to be a thinking being. Seeing 'this-here-now' is no ideological construct, but rather the most basic primitive of understanding sense perception. It is difficult to argue against these types of self-evident propositions, especially to mount an ideology-critique against them, precisely because there is no *position*

from which to critique.[68]

The paradox of transcendental truth is that a lot of systems of belief that were once self-evident are so no longer, and a lot of systems of belief that did not used to be self-evident are now. Comparatively little ideologies—those with time frames of mere years or mere millennia, like those I discuss throughout this dissertation—*look* from the inside much like transcendental universals of consciousness, or of being (human), do. I urge and argue for two procedures here. The first is to remain wholly neutral and descriptive in naming a set of beliefs an 'ideology.' It is not enough to observe that "anything else is inconceivable" to differentiate a *mere* ideology from an analytic or transcendental *a priori*. Maybe there really are such differences in the last instance, but we have been trapped on the insides of outsideless transient ideologies enough times to remain wary.

The second procedure epistemically matches the practical wariness of the first. I would urge an understanding of belief systems in terms of their sets of coherencies instead of their correspondences to reality. Such an urging is a surprisingly ordinary position within philosophies of science and epistemology; none of my post-whatever excesses are really necessary for this.

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[68]Notice, of course, that the most obvious way to speak of the lack of a position from which to critique is to speak of, well… a *position* from which to critique. The language of self-evidence of knowledge is already structured by a metaphorical frame of spatialization. Even for the most basic of totalizations of (as I would characterize) our self-evident knowledge, there is no way to avoid speaking metaphorically. To me at least, this suggests a temporal limit in the creation of categories such as 'thought', 'mind', 'subject', which were preceded, presumably, in some pre-history by earlier notions. Nietzsche, and Heidegger also (despite my reluctance to mention it), make remarks in this direction. But the most expansive and enlightening discussion of metaphor is in the works of Lakoff and Johnson. [Lakoff and Johnson, 1999; Johnson, 1990; Lakoff, 1987; Lackoff and Johnson, 1983]

Even without being able to find any contrary or contrast to a given way of understanding, we can still discover a system of coherence in our total belief systems that are nonetheless homologous with ideologies that are partial and/or transient. Totalization has only an inside, but that interior still *looks* quite familiar in its family resemblence to exteriorizable ideologies. The proscription I make here is to reverse our common-sense and philosophically traditional understanding of truth and self-evidence. Rather than thinking that those things that we *must* believe are right in any extra-ideological sense, those very *self-evident facts should be regarded with a heightened suspicion.* Suspicion of this sort can have no object—by definition—but I do not think that even totalization fully circumvents simple (agnostic) refusal of belief. I try to explain this notion of non-theoretical refusal of belief around the concepts of *abandonment of valuation* (in the discussion preceeding footnote 97) and that of *revolutionary ennui* (discussing Butler, from page 125).

B. Why Ideology is Not Ideational

> Language is made not to be believed but to be obeyed, and to compel obedience… Words are not tools, but we give children language, pens, and notebooks as we give workers shovels and pickaxes. A rule of grammar is a power marker before it is a syntactic marker.
> [Deleuze and Guattari, 1987]

A common conceit in understanding Ideology is to suppose that it is a matter of beliefs or of attitudes. We imagine, with a great many famous Marxist philosophers, that an ideology is a system of beliefs—a distorted one, perhaps—which lend credence to certain modes of action and ways of being. As the story goes, inasmuch as we hold to the truth of certain ideological stories of nature, God, society and politics (et cetera), we achieve our own subjectivation at a particular location within this, essentially epistemic, Symbolic Order. I argue it is not so. There are two basic aspects to my argument: (1) In important ways, ideology just cannot be understood as residing in the heads of its subjects as opposed to making up an underlying *social* reality; (2) Inasmuch as ideas do make up ideology, their modality is not firstly one of *belief*, but ones of *identification* and *desire.*

There is a slogan presented by Zizek which I believe it is important to understand. In the frame of laws and social structures mandating racial segregation, a bench might contain the sign "Whites Only." Zizek asks of this sign "wherein lies the ideology?" Common responses in analyses of ideology might locate the ideology of segregation in the beliefs of the creators or benefactors of racial systems, or in the attitudes, fears, or indeed beliefs of the victims of this racism. Other analyses might de-subjectify racial ideology by locating it in legal systems, class structures, or corporate policies. However, Zizek proposes a somewhat different solution by proclaiming that *the ideology is in the bench itself!* I think there is something profoundly correct in the approach of this slogan, so I wish to try to make a

certain sense of it.

Zizek characterizes a common Marxist explanation of ideology, which might be described as the *Engels/Gramsci approach* as follows:

> [I]deological illusion … is a matter of a discordance between what people are effectively doing and what they think they are doing—ideology consists in the very fact that they have a false representation of the social reality to which they belong. [Zizek, 1989, p.30-31]

He continues with a common presentation of the Marxist concept of "money fetishism" or "reification" in which,

> [M]oney is in reality just an embodiment, a condensation, a materialization of a network of social relations… But to the individuals themselves, this function of money—to be the embodiment of wealth—appears as an immediate, natural property of a thing called 'money', as if money is already in itself, in its immediate material reality, the embodiment of wealth. [Zizek, 1989, p.31]

However, this analysis of money fetishism is inadequate as an understanding of ideology. Rather,

> When individuals use money, they know very well that there is nothing magical about it—that money, in its materiality, is simply an expression of social relations… The problem is that in their social activity itself, in what they are *doing*, they are *acting* as if money, in its material reality, is the immediate embodiment of wealth as such. [Zizek, 1989, p.31]

Here we come close to understanding the sense in

which the ideology of money, its reification or fetishism, lies not in the beliefs of its exchangers, but rather in the *materiality of money itself*. That is, money may not embody wealth itself directly, but money *does* embody ideology!

Ideology in Opaque Contexts.

Our own Dr. Gettier's famous problem provides an insight into the nature of ideological statements. The Gettier Problem could be seen as pointing to a number of different morals; but let me take as cannonical the negative assertion that 'True beliefs whose justification rests on errors do not constitute knowledge.' The insight into ideology comes out of the specific mode of failure the Gettier Problem—as least the Problem in the cannonical form I give—encounters relative to a class of *ideological* truths.

To understand the ideological mode of failure in the Gettier Problem it is worthwhile to consider a somewhat homologous failure in linguistic reference. In a famous problem of analytic philosophy[69] it is commonly observed that reference is opaque in intentional contexts. In a counterexample to Leibniz' principle of identity as a commonality of attributes, these intentional contexts are noted. That is—in a worn example—the *evening star* must necessarily share mass, color, shape, position, etc. with the *morning star*, since they refer differently to the same planet, Venus; but nonetheless, what I *believe* of the evening star might well still differ from what I *believe* of the morning star. Phrased as an

attribute/proposition, we can construct something like, 'David Mertz believes that X is a planet.' It is well possible that we might obtain different truth values for different signifiers filled in as 'X'—even if these signifiers turn out to *designate* the self-same thing.

Intentionality corrupts designation, in a way. The world of *things* pure in their possession of attributes becomes clouded once *minds* enter the picture. Outside of this very special sort of thing that is a mind, Leibniz' axiom gives us simple equivalences. Minds ruin the equivalences, and create failures of designation in what should by all rights be identicals. What Gettier helps me observe here is a sort of dialectic: Ideology in turn corrupts intentionality, and creates successes for designation where mere intentionality warrants failures. Or at least this is one specific mode in which ideology functions.

The Gettier Problem points out a specific type of referential opacity. If our beliefs could just pass straight through to the actual things, then our confusion of wine with water substituted for wine is of no consequence. If reference could only be transparent, our bewildering array of misconceptions, misrecognitions and misapprehensions would be of no significance. Knowledge could just be that collection of beliefs that happen to be true. Motives would not matter, and that stickling matter not even just of justification, but of the *right sort* of justification, could be forgotten. Unfortunately, it is not so, and intentions matter. Except in ideology!

In ideology, the light of truth shines through the clouds of intention. Misrecognition is the very modality of ideology; and it is this act of conscientious misrecognition that exposes truth in its sickening materiality. Let me give two examples, two examples of ideological knowledges *par excellence*. The first of "race," the second of (homo)sexuality. I have discussed

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[69]A pantheon of analytic philosophers have written interestingly about the opacity of reference, with a variety of clarifications and additions to the problem. Of particular note are Frege and Kripke. But contributions by Quine, Davidson, and Putnam are certainly noteworthy also. I do not wish to provide detailed citation of this discussion, since the internal issues here are simply too far from the observation I wish to make herein.

the first sort of truth at some length in this dissertation. I might refer readers to some outside writing of mine in relation to the second [Mertz, 1991; Mertz, 1992], but I believe the nature of this ideological truth will be clear on its own.

I am inspired as to the first example by Jacobson's discussion [Jacobson, 1998] of several literary representations of the construction of racial categories, most especially in Arthur Miller's *Focus*. Miller's 1945 novel [see Jacobson, 1998, pp.187-199] details the recognition and misrecognition of Jewish identity. Miller's story, specifically, is one of an anti-semite who becomes *(mis)recognized* as Jewish (via his facial characteristics, firstly), and ultimately becomes (and embraces being) what he is marked as ideologically.[70] This example is interesting, but let me use a similar personal experience instead as my primary illustration of the ideological transparency of truth (or perhaps, 'the epistemic transparency of ideology').

Although the patronym, 'Mertz' is not, as these things go, a "Jewish" name, my maternal relatives (as many as I know about) were people who identified themselves, and were identified by those around them, as Jews (having various patronyms other than 'Mertz'). To a fairly large number of people I have met, the name 'Mertz' marks me as Jewish. At an epistemic level their *justification* is flawed: most likely they specifically associate the consonent cluster and letters 'tz' at the end of the patronym with the occurrence of the same cluster in many Yiddish names, and misrecognize the

fact that this cluster can occur in German also (and perhaps in other Germanic languages). In fact, orthographically the 't' is somewhat anomolous, and one would generally expect the German based name to be spelled as 'Merz.' Epistemically, the knowledge that these acquaintances possess of me should suffer staightforwardly from the Gettier Problem. But ideologically, the "truth" speaks louder than the whisper of misrecognition. These acquaintances' ideological knowledge—their racial knowledge—is irrefutable.

In a broad sense, the name-based claim of Mertz' Jewishness is irrefutable according to the dominant *principle of interpretation*, as this term is defined in a portion of my discussion of Mocnik, beginning at page 97. Roughly, the claim already presupposes an ideological frame of either affirmation or denial of the specific individualized assertion. Mertz either is or is not Jewish. Either affirmation or denial, moreover, has already bought into the ideology of racial identity (specifically, Jewish racial identity). However, the broad matter of ideological presuppositions is not the main point I wish to make right here (although I do elsewhere in this document). Rather, I want to look at how even as a specific assertion about an individual, the assertion "Mertz is Jewish, his name shows it" operates ideologically, i.e. in a truth-preserving manner.

An ideological belief—or specifically, attribution—is not neutrally epistemic; rather it functions as a type of accusation.[71] In believing Mertz Jewish, the believer does not merely make a judgment of evidence, but

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[70]The mode of becoming that Miller postulates is interesting. The character Newman does not become 'Jewish' in the manner of converting to Judaism religiously. 'Jew,' as Miller understands it, functions as a racial category more than a religious one. In becoming Jewish, Newman becomes *racially* a Jew. But for Miller—and in this he is certainly insightful—racial identity is a matter of ideological stigmitization, not a matter of some pre-existing biological marker or taint.

[71]The accusation may be valuated in various manners. It might be condemnation by an anti-semite, or the grant of special legal privilege by a Zionist state. 'Accusation' as a word does not precisely capture the ideological act in the sense that the word is normally used to characterize something as merely *bad* in some regard. But whether an accusation marks something as bad or as good, there is always as much of a deonotological as an epistemic element in the assertion.

rather assigns a whole set of obligations to both Mertz and herself. Depending on the political inclination of the knower in this act of racial belief, Mertz incurs an obligation either to share sympathies as a "co-religionist" or to act according to a set of experiences foreign to the knower; Mertz becomes normatively avaricious; or Mertz becomes normatively spiritualized; the knower incurs either an affection or a repugnance towards Mertz; and so on. It is certainly not specifically ideological that one judgement leads a knower to a set of associated judgements. The knowledge, or false-knowledge, that a person is holding a glass of wine, might easily draw to mind a set of associated beliefs: we believe she paid a certain amount for the drink at the bar, we believe the spilled drops will or will not stain the rug, or whatever. These beliefs, right or wrong, and whether based on right or wrong prior belief (is it water or wine?), do not entail any specific obligations upon the parties.

But once the *accusation* of Jewishness is laid before me for having the name Mertz, the "truth" itself becomes the judge of my incurred obligations. I could *deny* the accuracy of the deduction, of course (for it is, after all, a false justification); but to do so is simultaneously to state as *truth* that I am *not* Jewish. The questioning of an accuser's justificatory reasoning cannot stand, in an ideological context, on its own. The question itself immediately resolves to the truth claim of whether I *really am* Jewish. I must think to myself, "Well what then? Am I or am I not?" Or not even this, but rather, "Am I so judged (by the Other), or am I not so judged?" This imposed judgement for me personally becomes absurd—although I am not thereby freed of the obligation—since I think so little of the very categories of most ideological terms. But even were I not quite so

deconstructive of terms, biographically, I would be faced with a whole series of obligatory judgements: Do these relatives count more than those others? Do I share some religious connection despite a lack of religious practice? Should I, morally, feel sympathy with ancestral victims of anti-semitism? Do I *really* have those characteristic facial features? Those intellectual habits? Finally, at the end of judging each of my constitutive essenses, I must finally either affirm or deny that I am truly Jewish. As the most minor of sublated footnotes I might be allowed to add—whether spoken to my interogator, or merely thought to myself—that 'Mertz' is, nonetheless, a German name.[72]

A better example than that of my own name, 'Mertz', occurs with knowledges of people's sexual identities, specifically, their homosexuality. The difference falls chiefly out of the more significant valuation given by a larger number of people (hereabouts, nowadays) to the mark 'homosexual' than to the mark 'Jewish.' Spotting homosexuals is a perversely familiar habit of both homophobes and self-identified gays—and probably of a fair number of folks who are neither. Aside from the obvious difference in valuation granted by the various gay-spotters, the act performs precisely the same *accusation* that is described in the previous case (not

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[72]The name, as it happens, of an *adoptive* paternal grandfather, who has no genetic connection to me. So assuming my grandfather was *really* German, am I? Or am I, rather, truly English, as marked by the biological patronym Smith? Obviously, there are other names that occur in other ancestral lines than a straight patriarchal one. I am sure readers are justifiably bored by my biographical cladistics. The only point I would make is that behind each "truth," one encounters the same justificatory demands. In our particular late-20th century American ontology of race, however, the notion of a "Jewish Race" has been retained to a greater extent than the notion of a "German Race" (versus, say, an "English Race"). So my example more-or-less works. Probably folks who are accused relative to being "black" or "latino" have a clearer example in current American racial ideologies. See, particularly, Jacobson [Jacobson, 1998], and to a lesser extent my own discussion of him herein.

the same in content, of course; but the same in ideological form). Once spotted, an *identified* homosexual has imposed on her a burden not merely to affirm or deny the observational and justificatory process, but to affirm or deny the identity.

There are any number of popular literary enactments of the homosexual *accusation* I describe; in movies, books, TV, wherever. Let me present just one specific commonplace hypothetical. I think the lines of clumsy dialogue I give show just how badly the Gettier Problem fails if applied to such ideological *knowledges*:

> **Knower:** I can tell you are gay, because I saw you with your boyfriend.

> **Accused**: He is not my boyfriend and we have never had sex; and furthermore, he is not even gay.

What happens to the knowledge of Knower in this ordinary—albeit stilted—dialogue? Quite contrary to dismatling the knowledge of Knower, Accused has simply confirmed (if not quite *affirmed*) the knowledge. In pragmatic terms, it is not ideologically possible in this context to even speak to the "context of justification." Every conversation is about the truth of the assertion. Even substituting more authentic sounding dialogue, every statment—and every silence also—of Accused is, if not explicitly a denial of his homosexuality, its assertion.

Sloterdijk on Enlightened False Consciousness.

There are a great many things in Sloterdijk's *Critique of Cynical Reason* [Sloterdijk, 1987] that support and expand on the themes I address in this dissertation. Unfortunately, for banal reasons of length, time and research focus, I shall only present a few remarks relating to Sloterdijk's important concept of *enlightened false consciousness*. The first remarks of Sloterdijk's main text set the stage,

> The discontent in our culture has assumed a new quality: It appears as a universal, diffuse cynicism. The traditional critique of ideology stands at a loss before this cynicism. It does not know what button to push in this cynically keen consciousness to get enlightenment going. [Sloterdijk, 1987, p.3]

The puzzle faced by ideology critique is explained,

> Cynicism is *enlightened false consciousness*. It is that modernized, unhappy consciousness, on which enlightenment has labored both successfully and in vain. It has learned its lessons in enlightenment, but it has not, and probably is not able to, put them into practice. Well-off and miserable at the same time, this consciousness no longer feels affected by any critique of ideology; its falseness is already reflexively buffered. [Sloterdijk, 1987, p.5]

Sloterdijk's concept is an epistemic match to Marcuse's liminal *repressive desublimation*, as I see it (but a similar limitation exists proscribing any sustained discussion of Marcuse). Where ideology critique and enlightenment—from Marx to its most developed form in Adorno—had always supposed that lifting the blinders and shackles of a repressive society would lead to liberation, the paradoxes pointed to by Sloterdijk and Marcuse show it otherwise. Liberation has simply become the form of repression.

In Sloterdijk's cynical modern subject, ideology critique is a *fait accompli*; but the result is no revolutionary subject, but simply one in whom detachment and resignation has become her operative mode of being. As Zizek characterizes this subject, "they know very well what they are doing, but still, they are doing it" [Zizek,

1989, p.29]. The cynical subject needs not misrecognize the nature of social reality to comply with it. She recognizes it in its full horror, its full unreality, and its permeating falsity, then *believe* the proclamations of official knowledge. Knowledge becomes indifferent with respect to belief.[73]

Rastko Mocnik and Enlightened False Ideology.

In a mirror analysis to that provided by Sloterdijk of enlightened false consciousness, Mocnik points the way to the "objective" correlate of this false consciousness in *enlightened false ideology*. This phrase is not used by Mocnik, but his analysis in "Ideology and Fantasy" [Mocnik, 1993] is a touchstone for my proposal of the concept. The basic notion I would like to suggest is as follows: Where with an enlightened false consciousness, people act against their own interests and desires, despite full knowledge and comprehension of their interests and desires, under an enlightened false ideology people act according to the dictates of a social mandate they fully know to be false, without even the illusion that any one else believes it true.

A traditional Marxist schematic of consciousness and ideology in their true and false forms will be familiar to readers. In the analysis of the early Marx (and of many later Marxists), *ideology* is not firstly a pejorative notion, but rather the name for a system of ideas which directs understanding and schematizes the world. In this schematic, consciousness occurs *through* ideology, and ideology is realized in the cognitive acts of individuals who comprehend the world within a particular ideological framework. This particular Marx is practically Kuhnian! To this neutral schematic of ideology and

consciousness, a Marxist critic will add the possibility of *false* ideologies and correspondingly *false* consciousness. A false ideology acts not as a lens, but as a blinder. As a means of controlling the working classes, the dominant classes create hegemonic false ideologies in order to produce in workers false consciousnesses with which the latter cannot formulate critiques of capitalism, nor act to resist their oppression. This picture is well-known.

A good hint toward the notion of *enlightened false ideology* is provided already in Zizek's discussion of money fetishism which I discuss on page 90. That is, it is perfectly well possible that an ideology make not even the pretense of epistemic veracity, and yet function with a perfect efficacy. The materiality of money commands a compliance with a money-ideology without needing to resort to any criticizable truth claims. Money simply, baldly, embodies social relations, without fooling anyone, nor even requiring the formal structure of a truth claim.

Mocnik gives another example of a sort of "cunning of reason," which proves deeper than its merely game-theoretic overt face.

> If, in an appropriately unstable social situation, the rumor starts that "the oil (or sugar. . .) is going to run out," this rumor may not be true at the moment of its launching (the stocks of oil being sufficient for the normal trend of its consumption); but when people start acting upon this (originally "false") rumor, it may well become true. How do people act upon such a rumor? Suppose I am enlightened enough not to believe the rumor. I may even positively know it to be false. But notwithstanding my rationality and/or knowledge, I will reason this way: "I know the rumor to be false; but other people may beleive [sic] it; acting upon their (false) belief, they will rush out and pile up private stocks; and the oil is likely to run out. So I better rush to the store myself and get some oil." [Mocnik, 1993, p.142]

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[73]A joke expressing this formula is frequently mentioned in various of Zizek's books, "I *know* [clams] are edible, but still I do not *believe* it."

He continues in generalizing the possibility of enlightenment, but also by bringing the scenario to a crucial concept.

> Even under the supposition that *everybody* in the population reasons this way, the implicit consensus as to the falsity of the prediction will not prevent its finally coming true; the general recognition that *it is possible* to believe the rumor, i.e. the identification of every member of the population with the subject supposed to believe, will do the trick. [Mocnik, 1993, p.142]

Under a simple reading of Mocnik's scenario, all we have is a moderately expanded example of a Prisoners' Dilemma. No one can individually act in a manner which would produce optimal results for every individual (normal consumption level) because an individual failing to act in a moderately personally suboptimal manner (hoarding) risks incurring dramatically suboptimal results (non-availability). But then again, should not Mocnik's example apply to every (necessary) commodity at every time in every market economy?! Clearly, markets do not generally function in this manner; and when they do so function there is a specific ideological effect at issue. To wit: whether or not one believes particular falsities is largely irrelevant. Those false beliefs which one is *supposed to believe* have concrete social effectivity, while all the beliefs carrying no particular ideological imprimatur can be weighed on *merely epistemic* terms.

The interpellative "principle of generosity"

Donald Davidson unknowingly characterizes what is, for Mocnik, the basic modality of ideology in his term "principle of generosity."[74] In our interpretive

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[74]Mocnik himself does not explicitly mention Davidson's principle either. However, Mocnik, like Davidson, relies to a large degree on the analyses of Grice. Davidson would be likely to acknowledge that his "principle of generosity" is in many ways simply a formalization of the

predisposition toward assuming that most of what most people say makes sense if we grant it the proper unstated background beliefs and context, we submit our selves to the formal structure of ideological interpellation. Mocnik writes,

> [I]f an utterance is meaningful, then there must be a way to understand it, and this particular utterance is meaningful, since its speaker has offered it as such, so let us try and find the way to understand it. [Mocnik, 1993, p.141]

But this principle of generosity in interpretation catches us in a trap.

> An interpreter may figure out the meaning of an utterance if (s)he is able to produce a suitable definition of the intersubjective situation in which it has been uttered. But since this situation is structured by the utterance itself, and its only available indication is its cause, i.e. the utterance under interpretation (falling back on the notion of the "context" would not help, for it simply means more utterances), the interpreter seems to be trapped in a vicious circle: the key to the meaning of an utterance is the definition of the intersubjective structure, and this structure is defined by the meaning of the utterance. [Mocnik, 1993, p.141]

The resolution of this trap is something like that of the Lacanian trap of subjectivation: there is no means by which either meaning or subjectivity can be secured, but through a *covering fantasy* the failures of either become disguised. Mocnik's explanation rests on the forced *solidarity of beliefs* between speaker and listener (or reader and writer). In order to participate in the communicative acts, a speaker must "identify her/himself with a structural position (the subject supposed to believe) from which a meaningful, i.e.

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earlier work done by Grice. In any event, I believe mention of Davidson's principle is illustrative of the gesture made by Mocnik.

interpellative, utterance *might be* pronounced [Mocnik, 1993, p.145]." The interpreter, in turn, "*identifies* her/himself with *the same instance* which, from her/his side, operates as the position from which it *may be believed* that the utterance 'makes sense' [Mocnik, 1993, p.145]." "The mutual 'recognition' of the two parties is thus mediated by a third instance with whom they both actively identify [Mocnik, 1993, p.145]." To wit: the *subject supposed to believe.*

The "subject supposed to believe" acts as a covering fantasy by its creation of a structural position from which ideological beliefs may be believed, even beliefs which everyone *knows* to be false. Let us return to our racist park bench from page 90. As with Mocnik's example of rumors leading to hoarding, it might be that no one in a society actually "believes" the incoherent ontology of human racial divisions (and it certainly *is* the case that no one *understands* the entirely fictive basis of the categories). Neither the "whites" allowed, nor the "blacks" prohibited, to sit, can possibly make a rational sense of irrational racial categories. Yet the **sign** proclaims "Whites Only!" To treat the sign as *meaningful* is to suppose, with a principle of generosity, that there could be a set of presuppositions and contexts within which the sign, and its requisite ontological baggage, is meaningful. But once subjects are interpellated through identification with the position from which the park bench can be understood, they have already granted the *meaningfulness* of the bench's categories; and for the bench to exercise a social effectivity, once its *meaning* functions, questions of its *truth* vanish into irrelevance. It is enough to believe that there *could be* racial categories to make the question of whether there *are* such categories seem perverse and semantic.

I would argue here that the position of identification for subjects understanding the racist park bench sign is with the park bench itself. The *subject supposed to*

believe is a purely formal ideological position, but this position is *embodied* in the quite material bench. The ideology is *in the bench*! This particular object condenses, and supports in both a symbolic and a physical "opposes gravity" sort of way, a series of otherwise ungrounded racial social relations (not ungrounded in that there is only this one bench, but ungrounded in that there are no non-fictive enunciative position from which the "truth" of race could be spoken). In this structure, the bench works as a Lacanian *objet petite a*, but as a *petite a* not for a subjectivity, but rather for an *ideology*!

The question of belief comes back here. We might wonder in just what sense those racial subjects gazing upon the park bench do or do not "believe" what it says. Obviously, it is a false simplification for me to propose that no one in a racial society epistemically "believes" in the false ontology of race. In a similar light, Zizek's critique of traditional Marxist discussions of money fetishism falsely simplifies somewhat. Some (but not all) members of a racial or a monied society consciously endorse the false ontological statements presupposed by the communicative frame of paper money or segregated park benches. But *everyone*, whatever their epistemic attitude towards race or money, *acts* as if they believe the ideological ontologies. An ideological statement is one from which we can not escape as easily as by mere factual analysis.

What could our options be in relation to a racist park bench? Suppose we are one of those folks sufficiently "enlightened" as not consciously to endorse any sort of racial ontology (as there certainly have been plenty of, even in such deeply racial societies as the recently segregated USA or SA); how could we bring our "practical beliefs"—those beliefs concretely and actively enacted—into line with our "theoretical beliefs." Whatever we might say, how can we not perpetuate the ideology of the bench?! There seem to be two

bifurcations in our possible positions. The first bifurcation is one given by the bench's ideology, and after we follow either path, the second bifurcation is irrelevant to our concrete endorsement of racial ideology. This first bifurcation is just simply the question of whether we *are* white or not. The second bifurcation concerns our actions towards the bench: we can sit on it, or not sit on it. If we "are" white and we sit, we directly obey the strictures of the bench. If we "are not" white and we do not sit, we similarly obey. Disobedience, however, does little better to act out a less racial practical belief. In "resisting", either as a "white" conspicuously not sitting, or as a "black" disobediently sitting (as did many American civil rights heros of disobedience who hazarded all sorts of violences for such simple actions as sitting), we nonetheless do not succeed in not *endorsing* the racial ontology of the bench. If blacks should be *allowed* to sit on the bench—and our disobedience is a protest and advocacy of this right—we believe practically (if not "theoretically") that it is still *blacks* who should be allowed to sit. The racial ideology is refuted only in its superficial strictures, not its deep ontology. The bench itself, with two words written upon it, not only acts as an ideological agent, but as a totalizing ideology which closes its outside the moment it is *understood*. At greater length in my chapter "The Poverty of Causality", particularly in the section "Hysterical Movies," I discuss this problem of *totalizing* ideology. Here the question is less that of totalization than of *location* of ideology.

There may be a solution to the problematic of the bench, but it certainly cannot lay in the bifurcations allowed above. Rather, since this solution is the underlying subject of this dissertation, it would be unladylike to reiterate it here.

Identification with the Subject Supposed to Believe

For Mocnik, as we have seen,

> The identification with the "subject supposed to believe" is a forced move in the communicational game. . . [I]f asked for the reasons why (s)he interprets an utterance in a certain way. . . this justification must be a proposition that *refers both to the utterance and to the intersubjective situation*. We will call this minimal description of the intersubjective structure and of the utterance in it *the principle of interpretation* (PI). [Mocnik, 1993, p.142]

Let us examine an utterance by LBJ which Mocnik gives in example,

> 5) I won't be the first President to lose a war. [Mocnik, 1993, p.146]

For this utterance, Mocnik provides two possible PI's:

> 5a) 5) & L.B.J. has a specific interpretation of U.S. history.

> 5b) 5) & the U.S. has never lost a war. [Mocnik, 1993, p.146]

The ideological force of LBJ's statement lies in the dominance of 5b) over 5a).

> According to our definition of PI, 5a) should have a much better chance to impose itself, for it may be justified by a proposition that refers both to the utterance and (via the mention of the speaker) to the inter-subjective communicative situation. Still, intuition tells us and history teaches us that 5b) is much "stronger," although its PI is evidently deficient. It is precisely this "deficiency" that makes for the strength of 5b); on a closer look, we see that 5a) already implicityly [sic] refers to 5b) as to a "universally accepted truth" that can only be challenged by a specific justification. [Mocnik, 1993, p.146]

The strength, Mocnik argues, of 5b) over 5a) lies precisely in its failure as a specific PI. By evading a specific contextualization and analysis of the communicative situation of 5), 5b) acts as an ideological

"covering fantasy" which allows us to suspend the vicious circle of interpretation. If our PI can refer, not to the actual specifics of communicative context, which can ungroundedly only be defined vis-a-vis the speech act itself, but to an assumed background of common belief—to an identification with the subject supposed to believe—we can feel more subjectively "satisfied" with our interpretive act. Rather than risk the hypothesis that a speech act we attempt to understand is simply meaningless, we fill in the blanks with the position of the dominant ideology, the position from which a subject is *supposed to believe.*

Mocnik characterizes this identification with dominant ideology,

> The relation between 5b) and 5a) is the relation betwen the dominant ideology and a non-hegemonic ideology, where the dominant ideology defines the field of the argument, while the burden of justification falls on the subordinated ideology. . . . stereotypes of this kind can only be accepted *in the modality of sheer belief.* To the interpreter, they pose a radical dilemma: is this nonsense, or is it to be believed? This is precisely the basic dilemma an interpreter faces with every utterance (s)he wants to "understand," because every utterance fundamentally involves this problem. [Mocnik, 1993, p.146]

In a not particularly subtle fashion, I made a verbal affront against my reader(s) on page 97. What possibly could it mean for me to claim that an explicit evocation of a chant like "Burn, baby. Burn!" was "unladylike?" Even with my lack of subtlety, my reader will have been drawn into creating a PI for my utterance (as probably witnessed by scribbled marginal notes). This is an effect also noticed, for example, by the Dadaists and Surrealists in a political sense, and by cognitive psychologists in a scientistic way. After the fashion of Mocnik, I would suggest a few PI's for
DQM) "It would be unladylike to reiterate
it [the solution] here."

In the first case, the epistemically best PI is probably,
PI-1) DQM) & Mertz put words together without literal meaning.

PI-1) is pretty much doomed to fail. The ideological force of our *proper* belief that people (even Mertz) write words meaningfully and with communicative intent is too strong to allow PI-1). A compromise PI between an epistemically meritorious one and an ideologically effective one is,
PI-2) DQM) & Mertz is trying to show off, and/or refer to his allegedly ungrounded gender position, and/or refer to his internet *nom-de-guerre* 'Lulu'.

PI-2) has a greater initial plausibility than PI-1) did. It shows a sort of resistance to the ideological force of DQM) by psychologizing the utterance, and by attempting to narrowly contextualize the utterance. In other words, PI-2) functions a lot like 5a); or again, a lot like the effort to *disobey* the racist bench's command. But PI-2) catches us too closely in the vicious hermeneutic circle discussed to provide an interpellative ground for DQM). The ideological *identification* just does not seem to latch on to PI-2).

The ideological PI for DQM) seems to be something like,
PI-3) DQM) & The 'fittingness' and *femininity* of providing "the explicit solution" is questionable.

There are several ideological effects wrapped up in PI-3). On the one hand, if this PI is used, we are brought to supposing the meaningfulness of the question of propriety of making a particular statement (without even knowing quite what that statement might be). A marginal comment to the effect of "Please discuss the solution here" already falls into this ideological trap. It

puts one in the position of *asking* the otherwise absurd question in PI-3), even if it is to answer the question in a manner contrary to the answer apparently given by DQM). The even more invidious ideological effect of PI-3) is its promotion of an equation between *fittingness* and *femininity*. This effect reinforces a dominant ideology proclaiming that women should be normally taciturn. The trap here is with an unreflective "resistance" to PI-3). An immediate resistance to PI-3)

takes the form of "Mertz is not in the proper (gender, etc.) position to question the 'ladylike'ness of his writing." But this resistence takes precisely the form of the deeper ideology: Mertz may not be in the right position to identify with propriety/femininity, but *somebody could be.* The "resistance" gives up the game!

C. The Irrelevance of Critique

> In the huge cathedral of electricity, […] in a specially built chamber shrine, Tesla acheived his apotheosis. Transformed by fire that did not burn, he was filled with electricity's near supernatural power. Not only were the sheets of "cold fire" that coursed over his body harmless, but, he believed, actually therapeutic. [...] Engulfed in electric fire, he rose—in his view—to the next step in human evolution.

> In Sing Sing, Dannemora, Auburn, prisoners waited in cages to be strapped into a chair, killed, and quickly forgotten. But Tesla stood before awed crowds, a tall gaunt man who played with the basic constituents of nature, like a shaman or priest. Celebrated as the greatest electrical genius of his century, he was transformed by the same "godlike power," which, in secret basement chambers cooked prisoners to death, nameless sacrificial animals.
>
> [Metzger, 1996, p.182]

I would like to do something in this section that I do not do elsewhere in the dissertation: explain my epigraph. The wonderful, rather Foucauldian, book by Thom Metzger, *Blood and Volts* [Metzger, 1996], could well have served as an illustration of "little ideologies" in much the same style as do my discussions of AIDS, satanic abuse, drug-wars, maybe race in certain aspects, and other matters. I did not use Metzger's book back in Chapters IV-V, and there is no need to use it now in quite that same mode of analysis. What I would like to do instead is a bit of forshadowing of some themes in Chapter VII—specifically, the causal/historical connections by which ideologies sometimes glom on to one another. I forshadow, in turn, in relation to the subject of this section, to propose an *adhesive theory of ideological change* in juxtoposition to critical theory's notion of ideology critique.

The subject of Metzger's book is two ideologies that obtained a curious alignment around the beginning of the twentieth century—one of the ideologies pretty well forgotten nowadays, the other fairly current in somewhat different forms. The curious pair consists of ideas about electrification and about human execution (in the U.S.A.). On the face of things, the technical

issues surrounding distribution of electricity across power grids and popular attitudes towards capital punishment seem like wholly unrelated areas of belief and knowledge. But between 1885 and 1905, these two ideologies became deeply intertwined. The notion of progress is shaped by and refers to technical marvels that science creates, certainly; but simultaneously, justificatory mechanisms for criminal punishment—perhaps especially the most final of punishments—must be supported in the same schematism of progress. Metzger notes,

> All the changes in the methods of execution reflect changes in the way a society sees itself. Talk of humaneness in execution is an act of self-delusion to hide a deep discomfort. As will be seen shortly, various alternatives to the gallows were proposed. And all but the electric chair were rejected—supposedly because they were inhumane. More accurately though, they were unacceptable because they said someting about late-nineteenth-century America that it did not want to hear. What New York (the Empire State, the most prosperous, populous, and powerful state in the union) wanted was a way to enhance its prestige. Its goal in doing away with the gallows was to further its image as being progressive, reformist, and at the forefront of cultural evolution. [Metzger, 1996, p.28]

The connection established between electrification and execution was much more specific than simply that both related to a background ideology of progress. A technical conflict arose in the late 19th century over the relative merits of AC and DC currents; this conflict was partially narrowly technical, but in broader scope it drew in the popular reputations and patent/property interests of celebrity-scientists, Tesla and Edison. Edison favored a DC infrastructure, Tesla, AC. Tesla was right on the technical grounds (as well as holding broad related patents, and the sponsorship of George Westinghouse), but Edison was far more influential, being a semi-mythic figure of his own time.

Onto the scene, in 1888, came a third-rate scientist named Harold Brown, who, for whatever reason, was vehement in his claim that AC current was a "grave threat to public safety." Brown came to have the sponsorship of Edison in his alarmist project, and the two together took a gruesome, carnivalesque show on the road, electrocuting hundreds of animals with AC current on a tour of the country. Brown and Edison made various challenges and taunts directed at Westinghouse and Tesla in a media flurry over the "war of the currents" and performed increasingly gruesome and cruel "experiments" on a variety of animals. At the same time he was basically stumping for one technical approach to electrification—for the benefit of one set of commercial interests over another—Brown developed both the mechanical techniques and the cool, clinical, progressivist language that allowed the electric chair to serve as the solution to the problem of the barbarity of capital punishment. By surrounding the technologies of electrocution with objective, at the time futuristic sounding, descriptions suggesting scientific precision and clinical exactness, human execution—if performed by electrocution— became a technical problem of application; the humanistic issues of morality and social justice became thereby eclipsed, and superficially "answered."

It would be far too pat (and idly utopian) to claim that capital punishment would have ended in the U.S. if not for Edison's patent interests. Obviously, other histories and other political motives would have entered debates over capital punishment in the absence of the electrification issues. But it is at least less likely that the electric chair would have become the means and the symbol of ultimate juridical violence in the absence of these patents. Perhaps a broader political effect would have arisen from a hypothetical absence of the electric chair as a specific technical deontological symbol, but perhaps not; speculation on such counterfactuals might make for good novels, but nothing can really be positively asserted. What is nonetheless fascinating is the way in which some broad ideological conceptions of juridical violence and the human body *did* in the concrete get shaped by a far narrower technological, commercial, and only peripherally ideological issue. Something big can sometimes ride piggyback on something far smaller.

I presented this digression on electrification and electrocution because I believe it illustrates the fundamental modality of ideological change. Agglomeration—or 'adhesion', as I write above—rather than critique is the real instrument by which ideologies can be overcome… or undercut. Critical interiority persistently fails to defeat totalizing ideologies; and yet comparative trifles that operate in non-critical ways can have large counter-hegemonic effects. I wish, of course, that I could give some formula or advice: "Just do so-and-so to attach your transient belief system to grand ideologies." I suppose this would be rather like Vaneigem's "Guide for Young Persons Recently Established in the World."[75] Unfortunely, I am not so sanguine as to give such advice. I believe I have

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[75]*Traité de savoir-faire à l'usage des jeunes générations*, more popularly titled in English as *The Revolution of Everyday Life*. [Vaneigem, 1994]

illustrated numerous ideological adhesions in this dissertation (most of them for the worse), but can provide neither a procedure for their creation nor a solvent for their dissolution.

D. Ideology and ideologies

Every normal person in the world, past infancy in years, can and does talk. By virtue of that fact, every person—civilized or uncivilized—carries through life certain naïve but deeply rooted ideas about talking and its relation to thinking. Because of their firm connection with speech habits that have become unconscious and automatic, these notions tend to be rather intolerant of opposition. [Whorf, 1956, p.207]

I would like to give some not entirely unfamiliar senses to a few words. In particular, there is a particular structure of relation between *Ideology* (writ large, or *The Symbolic Order*), *ideology* (writ small) or *ideological formations*, and *hegemony*, which seems most natural to me. With a capital, *Ideology*—or in more Lacanian terms, *The Symbolic Order*—is the totalizing abstraction which simply denotes that the social existence of human beings is one of symbolization. Human *being* is a relation between signifiers. There is no outside to Ideology in the quite ordinary sense that anything we might say or understand about human beings and their social and natural reality is something we *say* or *understand*: to wit, it is a relating of signifiers.

Ideological formations (or *ideologies* with a small letter) are much "smaller" things, practically no more than "beliefs," or perhaps "belief systems." It is this ideology, small letter, which is contained in Marx's earliest use; for example, in the title *The German Ideology*. It is also in this smaller sense that Althusser identifies the ideological formations of the Church, or of the schools. A system of beliefs, likely somewhat in internal contradiction in a narrowly logical sense, arises out of a social milieu, and assumes a certain specificity of social effectivity (thereby demanding at least a bit more than a mere "belief system," which might be more idiosyncratic or accidental). An ideology is not a logical system in anything like a mathematical sense, but it nonetheless maintains a certain degree of consistency in its

concepts and elaboration—some made explicit, some remaining hidden to a degree. 'Ideology critique'—especially of the immanent sort—is generally an exercise in making explicit beliefs or assumptions which must be present implicitly for an ideology to work, but whose explicit revelation in some respect undermines the ideology. The first thing I would like to notice about ideologies in this sense is that they have (potentially) perfectly clear outsides, thereby lending themselves, for example, just as well to exogenous as immanent critique. For example, the ideology of the churches can be perfectly well criticized by standing within the ideological formation of the universities—from which latter perspective the beliefs and practices of the churches seem arcane, irrational, archaic and reactionary. Such were, for example, Marx's early critiques of Feuerbach, Stirner, Baeur and Hegel.

Hegemony we can say is an (mere) ideological formation, which has managed to evade an outside. But hegemonies do not evade an outside in the tautologous and definitional way that Ideology lacks an outside, but rather in a purely contingent and historical sense. At certain times, in certain places, for certain people ideologies function in a totalizing manner, such that no contrary site of social effectivity, no other ideology formation, is able to exogenously address a hegemonic ideology.

E. Spectacular Ideology

The most beautiful thing in Tokyo is McDonald's.

The most beautiful thing in Stockholm is McDonald's.

The most beautiful thing in Florence is McDonald's.

Peking and Moscow don't have anything beautiful yet.

America is really The Beautiful. But it would be more beautiful if everybody had enough money to live.

Beautiful jails for Beautiful People. [Warhol, 1975, p.71]

Trying to write about Situationism brings to mind insistent images of rhizomes, at least in my head. Things shoot up where you do not expect them; and in truth, have a tendency to strangle other ideas. The rhizomes are several—or more probably just one, but operating in a rhizomatic manner: the Situationists in a century-scale history of ideas grow at just the moment to let us spot some submerged continuities between early Marx and post-modernism; within this document, this section is an outgrowth of some submerged contiguities between my introductory provocations, and my last section on Hakim Bey, with some odd shooters mingling with most of the rest.

It is not simple to write systematically about the Situationists. For one thing, they were some of the first anti-systematic thinkers,[76] preceding and forshadowing "post-modernism" by a decade or two. For another, there were actually quite a few Situationists or near-Situationists, whose unity tended to be mostly of a negative sort. All the thinkers close to the Situationist

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[76]Dada preceded Situationism, of course, as did Surrealism. Assuming the needed caveats are expressed as to the multiple members of those loose affiliations ('groups' seems like too much), I think we could say this: The former, Dada, certainly intended to be anti-systematic; but I do not think it intended to be *theoretically* anti-systematic in the way post-modernism is. Dada was more of a gut-level disgust with systematicity than a theoretical movement. Surrealism, at least inasmuch as Breton was a fair spokesperson, had its own kind of systematicity of non-hegemonic states of consciousness. Surrealism was not without elements in common with its near-term 'successor' Situationism, but the anti-systematic move was not so central.

Of course, one can find anti-systematic precursors going back quite a ways, if one is willing to be a bit loose in analogizing. Heraklitus can be read in some of these ways. So can elements of Taoism or Buddhism be read in an anti-systematic light. A bit more recently, the Ranters, Levelers and Diggers have a certain antinomian anti-systematicity. All of these are very interesting in their own right. But in terms of standing as responses to modernist totalizing gestures, as Situationism and post-modernism do, their significance is only by analogy.

International made efforts to critique radically 'alienation at the locus of representation,'[77] but that does not quite make up a unity of positive theorization. For this section, I'll follow the normal conceit of simply allowing Debord to stand as a fair representative of Situationist ideas. If the reader wishes to impose a greater honesty on the section, she may simply read Debord's name where most general mentions of Situationism are made. That is not to say that certain snatches of Vaneigem, Baudrillard, Lefort, and others do not cloud my reading of Debord; but the occlusion remains slightly below (above?) the level of reflective consciousness.

Repetitions

In many ways Situationist analysis of spectacular society is simply a repetition of the early Marx's critiques of alienation in the *1844 Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts* and the *Theses on Feuerbach.* The same sort of split of consciousness between a utopian genuine consciousness[78] and an imposed false consciousness characterizes both critiques. What changed in the one-hundred twenty years between Marx's early writings and the Situationists was not so much the form of the critical analysis as the form of the society itself. In terms of objective conditions, the central locus of alienation has moved from production to consumption. Or maybe a better characterization would be to write that the locus of alienation moved from commodity-alienation to the alienation of desire.

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[77]This is an imperfect attempt to characterize in a few words just what it is being critiqued by Situationists. I think it does pretty good, for a short phrase.

[78]Marx, of course, took pains (mostly a few years later than 1844) to distinguish himself from utopian socialism. I am not trying to refute Marx's self-characterization of his middle writing. Instead, the word 'utopian' which I use is the rehabilitated sense which has been available since Adorno's reclamation.

The changes in the locus of alienation have occurred by bits and pieces, of course.[79] Unionization and a welfare state were instituted or achieved in a series of small changes. The net effect was a large reduction in work hours, a corresponding increase in "leisure" time, and (at least for major sectors of the proletariat) the achievement of a large degree of material comfort. These economic aspects have gotten generally worse most places since 1967, but the intense physical labor conditions of the industrial proletariat of 1844 is still fairly rare in the "industrialized" world. During these changes, alienation has not faded away, but rather the mechanisms of ideology and power have reworked themselves to perpetuate new forms of alienation. Separation itself has acted almost as an agency of history.

At a first most literal level alienation continues as a universal feature of shop-floor Capitalism—an assembled widget passes out of the hands of a worker, at which point she loses all control of that individual widget. But at a second level, a worker who is not absolutely impoverished in direct relation to the extent of her productive activity, is no longer alienated in this modality, at this level of abstraction. The socialized, unionized worker can now purchase with her wage nearly the same bulk of commodities she produces through her labor. As alienation has decreased on the shop-floor—and correspondingly as Fordist workers have had money to spend—Capitalism has had the impetus and the necessity to create the *consumers* who would *desire* to spend this cash on produced commodities.

In their physicality of existence, workers/consumers do not *need* to buy anything beyond bread and rags, which they already bought in the darkest days of 19th century Capitalism. Beyond that, spending enters a different economy of *differential preference.*[80] As a matter of degrees, but also in a transformation of the quantitative steps into a new quality, spectacular alienation is the alienation of produced preferences. It is tempting to see spectacular alienation as an abstraction or generalization of the creation of consumption preferences. From product advertising to the creation of a complete spectacular modality of being—we are a type of person who votes a certain way, uses certain slang, dresses in a certain fashion, has certain types of affective relations, likes certain forms of art, all as an internalization of external cultural media.

The 30 years between 1968 and 1998 seem to have revealed even this abstraction of the Spectacle as transitory. Now it is *nothing but* product advertising, no abstraction, no generalization. Slang is a series of product nicknames; clothing style is used for nothing more than to mark the prominently emblazoned fact that you bought a certain brand; your style of relating to "friends" simply identifies the brand of beer you drink together; art is a just collectibles; and preaching freedom is a way of saying you drive an SUV. If anything, elections, which are bought by corporations,

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[79]Curiously, the reductive Hegelianism of *Anti-Düring* and *Dialectics of Nature*, in which Engels lays out the "rules of the dialectic" seem fitting here. Transformations of labor conditions by slow quantitative steps, and equally slow changes in disposible income, over a century come to create a qualitatively new character of alienation. Quantity transforms into quality. The "negation of the negation" rears its head in the cycle of, first, the relative liberation of labor in liberal Capitalism, then second, the recapitulation of alienation as a mechanism of control. The twice negated alienation obtained in spectacular society is of a different character than the original alienations. As always, it remains more difficult to do much with the "interpenetration of opposites."

[80]It is not, of course, the case that before "consumer spending" (either before in chronology or in bookeeping senses) there was nothing differential about spending. Marx has a famous remark about the differential necessity of beer for the English proletariat and wine for the French proletariat. But the type of differentiation clearly moves from a *cultural* to a *consumer* preference.

are the last exception to the rule of Spectacular Capitalism in that the electorate is still bribed and cajoled, rather than paying up-front and out-of-pocket (or at least on credit-card) for their own subjegation.

Ideas in Heads[81]

A very interesting gesture is made by what is probably the best known Situationist slogan, "Our ideas are in everyone's head." Of course, at one level the slogan is evocative of the rhizomes and cerebral overgrowths making up some imagery of this section. Revolutionary ideas pop up all over the place, showing they rely not on a single origin, an authority, but rather on a distribution, a field, a potentiality which is diffuse. As a utopian hope, a hope of revolutionary potential, the slogan is compelling, and *optimistic*.

There is a deeper level at which the slogan can be read as a subtle ironic reversal of the *reality* of the Spectacle. Despite the immanentist aspect of the slogan, the claim of the Situationists is not that revolutionary sentiment is indifferently and uniformly diffused over all the members of of spectacular society. It *is*, after all, *our* ideas which are in everyone's head! Who are we, here? Obviously, there is no one clear answer; I do not think the intention was ever to limit *us* to, say, the member of the SI editorial board. But there is at least an outward radiance of *ortho*-doxy or orthopraxis.[82] Situationist critiques have a central

intellectual locus with cultural revolutionaries, and a secondary diffusion to the working class—or the consuming class—in general.

This analysis starts to sound a bit like the corruption of another slogan—"All power to the Soviets!"—which managed to move from a radically democratic slogan for shop-floor democracy to a State-Socialist slogan for totalitarianism between the years 1917 and 1922. It is superfically easy to read an authoritarian core into the Situationists radical-democratic slogan. But such a reading is not what I intend here. Instead, I think one can more generously take a Luxemburgian attitude and read the radial structure of the Situationist slogan in terms of the essential prematurity of every revolutionary action. As is familiar enough, for Luxemburg the objective conditions for revolution can only be brought about by revolutionary action which comes before these conditions exist, or before they exist more than *in pontentia* [see, for example, Zizek, 1989, p.59]. So with this generosity—in this case fairly commonsensical—we can read the Situationists simply as claiming that their critique of spectacular society is already implicit, if not quite realized, in the minds of 'everyone'. It will take Situationist disruptions to realize the implicit potential for revolution though.

Fair enough. The observation *I* wish to make is a bit different. What interests me is that the structure of outward radiance in the slogan, "Our ideas are in everyone's head," is precisely the opposite form as that of ideological interpellation. Interpellation by ideology is an inward radiance wherein the "ideas" of a common Symbolic (or spectacular) order flow into our heads to create a *subject* there within (all in a manner of speaking). Perhaps I can clarify most easily by

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[81]If this topic name reminds the reader of the rhetorically insightful, but ultimately dangerously misguided, slogan of ACT-UP, "drugs in bodies," so much the better. A great deal of my argument parallels both in trope and in topic what one might do well to say about "drugs in bodies."

[82]Perhaps for this context, neologisms *sinistrodoxy* and *sinistropraxis* would better express our conventions of political left and right. In any event, the *orthodoxy* in question is certainly not meant to describe ideas which are conventional or dominant, but those that are

correct.

discussing the voices in my head.[83] They say the most noxious things. Sometimes they carry on with awful racist and sexist invectives, for example. Other times they relate experiential objects to the advertising jingles adhesed to them. Or the cliches of CNN's talking heads and newspaper editorials urge a framing of observation in the terms of the ideology *du jour*. Among the din of all these echos of externality, I try to discern the voice which is "mine"—and perhaps I generally succeed. But "my voice" is simply a possible voice which could stand in a discursive position beside these other voices. That is what it means for me to be a subject, after all.[84]

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[83]It seems almost like I should somehow verbally eschew having voices in my head. Perhaps the phrase could be cast in some metaphorical, or literary light. Obviously, there is the negative connotation associated with paranoia and madness. But ideas are essentially verbal in form, and presumably cognition is not immediately identical with insanity (maybe not). I would be somewhat surprised to find folks whose subjective experience was *not* of hearing voices within their head (both that of the Other, and their own). The distinction here between 'normality' and paranoia seems to be a question of misrecognition of the location of the voices. On the one hand, the overtly paranoid seem to misrecognize this location as literally external. A greater pathology probably lies in misrecognizing these voices as being *one's own* thoughts. This latter pathology is what we might call 'subjective integrity'.

[84]I find it interesting in this context to contemplate the ideological position and mechanism of Tourette's syndrome—specifically, those Touretteurs who issue utterances as a type of tic (somewhere around 20% of those with the syndrome, but in this note, allow the generic mention to refer to this subset). I have no doubt of the neurological basis of the syndrome, and certainly have no desire to return to crude Freudian equation of Tourette's with hysterias. But neurological generalities play out through human particularities. It is not as if Touretteurs issue words of *random* languages, nor even words of some Chomskian universal grammar; Touretteurs inevitably eject words and phrases of their own native language (or at least of language familiar to them), and very often these words and phrases are invectives or other taboo words. Clearly there is *something* more than neurology going on in word choice.

A somewhat provocative characterization would be to read Tourette's as a type of ideology critique. Touretteurs eject words as one might vomit after swallowing a poison. In a sense, the externalities of

Let me rephrase the last paragraph. The *reality* of the Spectacle is that "everyone's ideas are in our head!" The Spectacle operates by an inward radiance of obscenely repeated externalities (TV, ads, art, jingles, logos, political truisms) into the thereby permeated internality of subjectivity. Both *objectively* and and *subjectively* the slogan "our ideas are in everyone's head" is exactly wrong. The force, therefore, of the slogan operates at a level which is neither objective nor subjective but which is instead *material* and *terroristic*. The Situationist slogan—and other Situationist actions—is an example of the materialist verbal efficacy which makes up the title and subject matter of this dissertation. The mode of efficacy of Situationist

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Symbolic discursivity (Spectacle/ideology) which are internalized by all subjects are re-externalized by Touretteurs without the intervention of interpellation (at least for some few utterances). Everyone re-externalizes stuff they have heard once they start *believing* it; and a lot of us say stuff we do not believe at various times. These "normal" types of repetitions are perceived as *subjective acts*, even in those cases where the words themselves might be dissimulative or insincere. In Touretteurs' verbal tics, the content re-externalized is distinctly *not* perceived by the speaker (nor by listeners "in the know") as a subjective act. There are not too many other situations where verbal re-externalization occurs without a subjective presumption (acting, maybe; recitation; imitative speech, such as a child playing word games; maybe a couple others). A utopian appropriation might imagine Touretteurs to say "you need not be subjectivized by your speech."

What would be interesting to know would be more about how Touretteurs subjectively perceive the things they utter as tics. Clearly there is no direct doxastic connection in the sense of a tic being an assertion. But there could be associational beliefs involved, in the manner of Freudian dreamwork transference. Or there might be an actual relation between eschewal and tic utterances. The commonness of invectives supports this inasmuch as most people think there is something wrong with saying invectives (even those who say them at certain times). Under this hypothesis, it would be important to understand the level of the eschewal—there is a difference between things that people simply disagree with and those they feel guilty about believing. On the other hand, the actual hearing of certain phrases frequently may have its own (re-)subjectivizing effects. There are simply a lot of details I do not have in forming a judgement on the matter of this footnote.

words/actions is precisely in their *irreality* and *untruth.* The enunciative physicality of an utterance persists even apart, and in eschewal of, an interpellative integration of the utterance. Or at least, so I hope. One gesture, in any event, of the Situationists, is to separate enunciation from subjectivation, since the latter is inherently corrupted in spectacular society.[85]

Separation and Representation

At this point, it is probably worthwhile to connect the Situationists' analyses with my own. The central terms of Situationist theory are 'separation' and 'spectacle'. The former is, in meaning and use, a close proxy for the early-Marx's term 'alienation'. Within *Society of the Spectacle*, 'alienation' and 'separation' are used somewhat interchangeably. There may be a significance to the preference for the word 'separation' rather than the available Marxist alternative 'alienation'[86] in Situationist writing, but for my purposes I will treat the two as equivalent synonyms. 'Spectacle', in turn, is a proxy for an older theoretically-infused term, 'ideology'. Synonymy will here be assumed also. As an informal, guess, I would speculate that the use of "ordinary" words from outside of Marxist theoretical traditions was something of an effort to "start afresh" for Situationist theory, despite the clear recapitulation of so much of Marxian and Hegelian theory. Let us leave that matter for a different document beyond this much.

The Spectacle creates subjects who are separated from their own desire. Desire is actual only through mediation, and mediation becomes the actuality of desire. In spectacular society, ideology does not simply *represent* desire, rather desire becomes a representation of ideology. The consequence is that representation at its core in spectacular society is a form of falsity, and no *truth* remains in representation. For Debord,[87]

> §29. The spectacle originates in the loss of the unity of the world, and the gigantic expansion of the modern spectacle expresses the totality of this loss: the abstraction of all specific labor and the general abstraction of the entirety of production are perfectly rendered in the spectacle, whose *mode of being concrete* is precisely abstraction. In the spectacle, one part of the world *represents itself* to the world and is superior to it. The specatcle is nothing more than the common language of this separation. What binds the spectators together in no more than an irreversible relation at the very center which maintains their isolation. The spectacle reunites the separate, but reunites it *as separate.* [Debord, 1983]

As a consequence, the Situationist project must be much like my metaphysical terrorism of this document. Political *representation* is already tainted by the totalizing reach of spectacularization.

> For the situationists, the prospect of either revolutionary organisation or theory representing the working class was quite unthinkable. Since such representation is precisely the ground of alienation against which the revolution is effected, 'the revolutionary organization must learn that it can no longer *combat alienation by means of alienated forms of struggle*'. It cannot 'represent the revolutionary class', but must 'simply recognize itself as radically separated from *the world of separation*'. [Plant,

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[85]The previous footnote 84 discusses a wholly different sort of non-interpellated utterance. The comparison and contrast between Situationist utopianism and Tourette's Syndrome is worth contemplating, methinks. The results of the comparison are not obvious.

[86]The two words at issue seem to have basically the same meaning and connotation in French as in English, as far as my very limited understanding of French goes.

[87]A citational note is in order here. In this and all other quotations from Debord's *Society of the Spectacle*, page number will not be indicated, but rather aphorism number. As well as matching the spirit of the book, this convention reflects the fact that the Black & Red edition I utilize does not provide printed pagination.

1992, quoting Debord, 1983][88]

If Situationism can act in revolutionary fashions, it must do so apart from the mode of separation, and therefore quite apart from the mechanism of *representation*.

Ideology as Base

I made a remark in my introduction (at page 10) which equated ideology with the base of the base/superstructure pair. Such a remark must have seemed topsy-turvy to familiar Marxist divisions. The same reversal motivates Situationist conceptions. Debord writes, for example,

> §4 The spectacle is not a collection of images, but a social relation among people, mediated by images. [Debord, 1983]

Or in a somewhat less aphoristic tone,

> §6 The spectacle, grasped in its totality, is both the result and the project of the existing mode of production. It is not a supplement to the real world, an additional decoration. It is the heart of the

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[88]Plant works, in part, from a somewhat different translation of Debord than referenced in my bibliography. In the Black & Red edition I utilize, §122 is rendered as,

> When constantly growing capitalist alienation at all levels makes it increasingly difficult for workers to recognize and name their own misery, forcing them to face the alternative of rejecting the *totality of their misery or nothing*, the revolutionary organization has to learn that is can no longer *combat alienation with alienated forms*.

§119 is translated as,

> A revolutionary organization existing before the power of the Councils (it will find its own form through stuggle), for all these historical resons, already knows that it *does not represent* the working class. It must recognize itself as no more than a radical separation from *the world of separation*.

The translations are not dramatically different, but it is useful, in any event, to provide a bit more context from Debord's aphorisms.

unrealism of the real society. In all its specific forms, as information or propoganda, as advertisement or direct entertainment consumption, the spectacle is the present *model* of socially dominant life. It is the omnipresent affirmation of the choice *already made* in production and its corollary consumption. The spectacle's form and content are identically the total justification of the existing system's conditions and goals. The spectacle is also the *permanent presence* of this justification, since it occupies the main part of the time lived outside of modern production. [Debord, 1983]

Within a Situationist analysis—and I generally endorse such a conclusion myself—the material organization of society is, nowadays, organized around consumption. The previously "natural" order of Capitalist society, in which commodities were manufactured in order to meet an inevitable and natural—or at least extrinsic—set of needs, has been reversed to a spectacular order in which needs and desires are manufactured to service the inevitable course of production. The revolutionary overturning of previous productive methods which was at the core of 19th century Capitalism has shaded into one in which it is instead primarily desires which are perpetually overturned through *revolutions* of subjectivation (i.e. advertising).

Baudrillard, for a certain period, made some profound observations along these lines. Between 1972 and 1973—that is, between *For a Critique of the Political Economy of the Sign* and *The Mirror of Production*—he seems to have turned an insight into the economic function of consumption in modern society into a parodic rejection of economic function. It is too bad, really; and his later books generally continue this trend (although not without interesting observations and analysis). In any event, the following is helpful,

> One can generalize this conclusion by saying that needs—such as they are—can no longer be defined adequately in terms of the naturalist-idealist

thesis—as innate, instinctive power, spontaneous craving, anthropological potentiality. Rather, they are better defined as a *function* induced (in the individual) by the internal logic of the system: more precisely, *not as a consummative force liberated* by the affluent society, but *as a productive force* required by the functioning of the system itself, by its process of reproduction and survival. In other words, there are only needs because the system needs them.

And the needs invested by the individual consumer today are just as essential to the order of production as the capital invested by the capitalist entrepeneur and the labor power invested by the wage laborer. It is *all* capital. [Baudrillard, 1981, p.82]

The point I would make would not be some crude dialectic gesture in which the old *production* is suddenly cast as superstructural, with spectacular ideology now playing the role of base. That has a formulaic neatness, but too much so. Both the shop-floor and the TV sitcom remain as *techniques* in the function of capital, and as the material quiddity of the relations among people. Rather, I believe in the distinction between base and superstructure precisely insofar as the *base* of an all-encompassing Capitalism has swallowed everything into its obscene physicality. There is a base and a superstructure, but everything existing is base. In this light, my metaphysical terrorism, Bey's later discussed Poetic Terrorism and Temporary Autonomous Zones, and Situationism's gestures of artistic refusal, are all utopian calls for the return of the superstructure. They make this call by operating, not at the phantasm of superstructure which the Capitalist totality casts as a simulacrum of itself, but at the base itself, counter to production and (productive) ideology.

VII. THE POVERTY OF CAUSALITY

A. The Ideology of Causation

Time, as Hegel showed, is the *necessary* alienation, the environment where the subject realizes himself by losing himself, where he becomes other in order to become truly himself. Precisely the opposite is true in the dominant alienation, which is undergone by the producer of an *alien present*. In this *spatial alienation*, the society that radically separates the subject from the activity it takes from him, separates him first of all from his own time. It is this surmountable social alienation that has prohibited and petrified the possibility and risks of the *living* alienation of time. [Debord, 1983, §161]

What I would like to accomplish in this chapter is to show some manners in which some very deep ideologies can become, almost accidentally, tied very closely to some much shallower ideologies. As I have discussed in greater detail in the previous chapter, almost everything is an "ideology" in the sense I use it. Everything which can serve as a locus for social formations, and everything which can be described as a relative coherent collection of beliefs (both logically and pragmatically), is a sort of ideology. But such ideologies—or perhaps more neutrally, ideas—have a lot of different levels of significance. Some have structured our most basic conceptions of the world for hundreds, or maybe thousands, of years, while others are tabloid sensations for a few months. At an entirely different and orthogonal level to longstandingness of ideologies, ideologies differ quite a lot in relation to the tendency towards and success at becoming hegemonic, i.e. encompassing and coopting their outsides.

Ideologies sometimes become *pinned down* with other ideologies. And sometimes, the fate of one ideology comes to ride with that of one either much more transient, or one much more archaic. Ordinary ideologies sometimes get pinned to hegemonies, or the reverse. Several examples of such pinnings down, or pinnings together, have been discussed in my case studies. One fascinating and utopian—or at least sometimes counter-hegemonic—possibility contained in certain conjunctions is that we can often "get" much more out of an ideology critique, or out of a *forgetfulness*, than one might expect. Perhaps in an act bringing an end to a minor ideology, a deep and hegemonic ideology is carried to the same end—despite the all encompassing nature of the latter which would otherwise resist both critique and forgetting. On the other hand, it may happen a minor target gains a surprising lease on life by riding the wake of a larger ideology.

Our Kantian/Cartesian notions of causality, and its temporality—pre-dating those figures I use to name it by some hundreds of years—is certainly one of our deepest, most longstanding, and most hegemonic ideologies. In some ways I will attempt to name, I believe that causality's fate might follow those of some more recent and less hegemonic phenomenological gestalts. Some ideologies of love, of gender, and of personal attachment, while hardly fleetingly transient themselves, seem rather less deep than our apparently unconnected belief in causality. But it just might happen—and at the least it can be discerned as a present Utopian moment—that these shallower ideologies are being forgotten or critiqued, and that with them causality is being forgotten.

Phenomenological Saturation

Certain moments, it seems, are filled with a rich significance exceeding the penury of the ideologically reconstructed causal interconnectedness of this phenomenal world. Kant, for example, thought that there was one such moment (call it "the present," if you like) when the noumenal self constructs the entire causal sequence of all events in time. Most of us—followers of Walter Benjamin that we are—believe that there are more than one such moments. Certain moments in our lives, overcoded by collections of photographs, documents, and such paraphernalia, which mark onto-symbolic changes in the course of our lives—birth, marriage, graduation, certification, death, etc.—claim such a rich significance; though generally they do so fraudulently. The saturation of significance at these events is fraudulent because their possibility, if not their inevitability, is already explicable in advance. However, it is these conventional, explicable "saturated" moments which point the way to an uneasy comprehension of the "authentic" saturated moments from within the ideological realm of explicability in which we live.

The distinction between "authentic" and "inauthentic" *saturation* uneasily drawn above will be illustrated herein by gesture to several recent films in which several scenarios of feminine transgression/deviance are played through. This new distinction between *transgression* and mere *deviance* recodes that between *authenticity* and *inauthenticity* at a "higher" level; though the dis-ease we must feel at all of these is little assuaged by the variation in nomenclature. Words simply fail us. Nonetheless, let me try to sketch what I believe to be signified, however ephemerally, by this quadrangle of words: authentic, inauthentic, transgressive, deviant; arrangeable in a grid[89]

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[89]This grid could also be arranged according to the *Greimasian "semiotic square"* which Zizek juxtaposes to the Hegelian triad [Zizek, 1991a]. That is, we could arrange the terms as:

Inauthentic ⟷ Authentic

Deviant ⟷ Transgressive
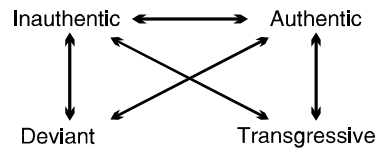
Zizek presents us with the following two other such semiotic squares, which I will present here for comparison and explication:

Necessary ⟷ Impossible

Possible ⟷ Contingent

and,

Prescribed ⟷ Prohibited

Permitted ⟷ X
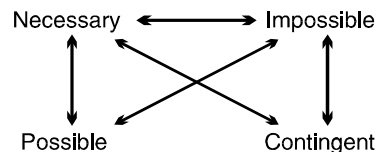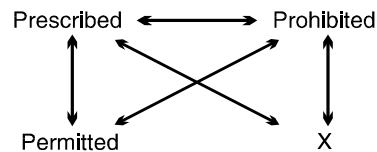
These squares may be read as charting a series of dialectical reversals, starting from the top left, moving rightward, then returning to the bottom left along the diagonal. Each of these moves may be read as a process of negation, giving us the famous Hegelian logic of the "negation of the negation" according to which we do not arrive where

as,

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we started. What is absent within the restricted Hegelian triad is a moment of pure negativity, represented in the bottom right of the square, which conditions the first two moments through its negative relation to them, but which is simply incommensurable with the synthetic moment represented at bottom left. But it is this "fourth moment" which is nonetheless always necessary for the dialectic to proceed.

Zizek illustrates this point well vis-a-vis the second two graphs presented, so I will comment herein only on the first graph—containing the terms of discussion within this essay. A brief reflection upon this will show that the remaining graphs follow the same structure.

Within the use of the terms as sketched throughout this essay, an *inauthentic* moment of saturated subjectivity is a moment in the imaginary construction of the subject whose phenomenological character is *ineffable*, but whose occurrence is nonetheless *predictable*. With the move to those spontaneous *authentic* moments, the ineffability of the phenomenological experience is accompanied by non-predictability. Such authentic moments *might not have happened*. In the transition from authenticity to deviance, two things happen. In the first place, effability is constituted, and predictability remains absent. A deviant act is by definition one which breaks with regulative normativity, and hence might not have happened. But within the category of deviance, a *subject* is nonetheless constituted by categories of *explanatory* normativity, even at the very moment she violates *regulative* norms. Deviance is always effable within the terms of explanation of a *pathological subjectivity*, though it's occurrence is always contingent. The second facet of this "negation of a negation" is a transfer of "levels." With *deviance* we move from a phenomenological constitution of subjectivity to a sociological one.

The triadic motion through Inauthenticity 6 Authenticity 6 Deviance seems to complete a dialectics of subjectivity, even one in which predictability functions as a *vanishing mediator* on the path from ineffability to effability. However, there remains a fourth term unaccounted for in this dialectics. That term, *transgression*, marks the point in the dialectics of subjectivity held by the very *impossibility* of subjectivity. It represents, hence, the dissolution of the dialectic movement; the underlying purpose of the whole dialectic is to mask this position in order that a fantasy of subjectivity may be dialectically played through. But it is only in relation to the *actual* unreality of subjectivity that the fantastic play of the dialectic of subjectivity functions; and therefore it is this fourth moment—entirely outside of the dialectic of subjectivity—which forms the very basis of the dialectic and of subjectivity.

	"Rational"	*Real*
Imaginary	Inauthentic	Authentic
Symbolic	Deviant	Transgressive

Table of Discontinuities

The Imaginary

At the first level, that of the Lacanian *Imaginary*, certain moments are marked as more-than-temporal in their functional construction of an *ideal ego* [Zizek, 1989, p.105]. That is, a few particular instants play a pivotal significance in our image of self. They function precisely as the condensed terms in which all other actions of self become meaningful: as Lacanian *quilting points*. To cite just one example, our auto-ontological status as a married person is "pinned" to that moment of Austinian illocution when we uttered the otherwise plain words, "I do" [Austin, 1962]. Following this pivotal moment, many later moments—days, years, or even a lifetime worth of moments: an infinite number, in any event—are "grounded" by this singular moment so saturated in ontological significance.[90]

The inauthenticity of the saturated moments already mentioned lies precisely in the fact that they are *illocutionary*. Their significance is repeatable, predictable, and, moreover, generally quite banal. Such is precisely the fact of the *conventional* character of illocutions. To be precise, inauthentic saturated moments are not necessarily themselves speech-acts; but even when their character is otherwise, they are almost always immediately cotemporal with an illocutionary speech-act. A birth, for example, is not a

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[90]Consider, as an example of saturation, the moment when we "fall in love", discussed in some greater detail in the below section, *Whither Romantic Love?*

speech-act, but it *is* generally marked by a particular illocution (i.e. "It's a girl!").

A moment which is *authentically* saturated must be purely *perlocutionary*, rather than merely illocutionary [Austin, 1962]. Authentically saturated moments must be, in some way, individual, particular and non-cat-egorizable. In their non-categorizability, such moments represent a break with any sociological or phenomenological rationality. These moments are pure, non-assimilatable *exceptions* to rationality within the imaginary act of *identification*. As *exceptions*, these authentic saturated moments occupy the impossible place of the Lacanian *Real*. Return to the example given of an inauthentic saturated moment: that of a marriage vow. Whatever the subjective centrality and saturation of this moment, in relation to which we live an infinite number of homogeneous moments as a "married person," we nonetheless always already knew prior to the illocution that a "married person" was a *possible* thing to be—and that our vow was a possible one. The character of an authentic moment is just the opposite: it must *never* in advance have been known possible, nor after must it constitute a *possible* way-of-being. Examples fail, since such moments are, by definition, unnameable; but one may point to the status of mystical experiences whose entire significance is to leave one *exactly* what one was without the experience, but fundamentally to change the meaning of this entire way-of-being. I shall also point to filmic "representations" of such moments below.

The imaginary distinction of saturation, as was hinted at above, is just Walter Benjamin's distinction between "homogeneous linear" from "messianic" time, writ small [Benjamin, 1968]. Within the distinction of saturation, messianic moments are reflected into a subjective perspective, rather than projected into "the reality itself" as they are with those cultural/religious moments understood to mark epochal changes. Whereas

Benjamin made his distinction to refer to differing, more-or-less univocal, cultural conceptions of the structure of time, I find these two structures to be themselves structurally related within the imaginary construction of subjectivity.

To understand this system of imaginary structuration of subjectivity we may observe the following: When we point to authentic and fraudulent saturated moments, we point only to a distinction in the ease with which messianic moments are retroactively reincorporated into the homogeneous linear time—into the *causal sequence*—of the Symbolic Order.[91] A marriage, to continue with my example, however saturated/messianic it appears subjectively, represents no break from the point-of-view of a collective Symbolic Order. That is, whatever *evaluation* my marital status is assigned by representatives of a Symbolic Order (other persons), it represents no *discontinuity* in the *system of valuation*. It is here we move to the second row of my grid.

The Symbolic

Discontinuities within the Symbolic Order have a

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[91]To use a somewhat Deleuze/Guattarian figure [Deleuze, 1987b], we may say that striated time becomes smooth with its incorporation into the Symbolic Order of speech/thought. In pursuing the Deleuze/Guattarian trope we will notice that this same incorporation produces the opposite effect upon bodies/spaces. With its stratification into the Symbolic order a smooth body becomes striated. The crucial essay within Deleuze and Guattari's book, in regard to this, is "How Do You Make Yourself a Body Without Organs," though this manner of thinking permeates *Thousand Plateaus*. So paradoxically, we have a total situation wherein striated bodies within striated spaces move through smooth (homogeneous linear) time, while only smooth (unstriated or striated to saturation) bodies exist in striated (messianic) time. Of course, if we observe any of this, we talk about it only from the side of the Symbolic. Insofar as we must discuss it in language, the below discussed *Thelma and Louise* provides a fertile ground from which to elaborate these effects.

different character than the phenomenological saturation by which I characterized discontinuities in the Imaginary Order. These "higher" discontinuities mark breaks, not in temporo-causal order, but rather in *valuation*; and breaks exist not relative to an *ideal ego*, but rather to an *ego-ideal* [Zizek, 1989, p.105]. That is to say, what is in question within the Symbolic Order is not the construction of an image of self, relative to which we are subjectivated, but rather the construction of the position from which our image of self is seen: the position of the Other. We enter the Symbolic Order "by assuming a certain `mandate', by occupying a certain place in the intersubjective symbolic network" [Zizek, 1989, p.110].

To return once again to my standard example, we exist as a "married person" within the Symbolic Order, not insofar as this status is ontologically grounded by a saturated illocutionary moment, but rather insofar as this status is embedded in a system of *deontological* valuations. A married person *must* have certain sorts of relations to each person within the system of social relations simply by virtue of this de/ontological status. This is not a description, but a command. The illocutionary "I do" subject(ivate)s to a whole series of imperatives which are both necessary and impossible to obey; just as does the proclaimitive "It's a girl!" One *must* be nothing but a purely formal position within an homogeneous system of signs, and yet one must occupy this position *as* a subject who recognizes one's moment of entry into this vacant position as ontologically saturated. Put yet another way, one *must* function as a Saussurian sign, standing only in negative relation to other signs; and yet, to function in such a manner is only imaginarily *possible* in relation to saturated moments of pure positivity.

We can see how those moments of saturation which are discontinuities within the imaginary construction of temporality are mere homogeneous continuities within

the Symbolic Order. I have commented already about inauthenticity being a result of *possibility*—any event which was always already possible represents no real break with temporality. On the other hand, however, for this moment to become so saturated, it must have also possibly not occurred. No such question of possibility arises in the Symbolic Order. The structural position of "marriage," for example, is simply necessary. It makes no difference which position we actually occupy (married/unmarried, male/female, etc.), the imperative is simply that we occupy a position. Our possible change in category between sides of these binaries no more affects the structure of the oppositions than does a phoneme run through a synthesizer to become a different phoneme affect the structure of phonemic oppositions. Categorization in some position or another is the inevitability.

The Symbolic, however, has it's own discontinuities, grounding its own homogeneity. Some actions of categorized beings cannot be valuated within the normative constraints of the category. It may happen that we encounter a *trompe l'oeil* in normativity; in which we *misrecognize* the system of valuation applicable to a person's position. Retroactively, after recognition, we may *re*-valuate the meanings of previous acts and fit them cleanly into a structure of valuation; but during the very moment of recognition there exist an equivocal *ungroundedness* to the whole symbolic edifice. However, despite the implicit threat to normativity within such re-valuations, re-valuation is a necessary prop of the Symbolic Order. It is the means by which the infinity of accidents of empirical beings can be confined within the rigid binarisms of symbolic normativity: "If this person was not what we thought she was, nonetheless, she is *something*."

My standard examples apply here. We see someone wearing "a wedding band," and thus immediately overlay every one of her actions with a system of

valuation in accordance with the de/ontological categories of marriage. Upon recognition that she was not *actually* married, after discounting by condemnation her "subterfuge," we are able to re-valuate her past actions and reinsert her into a hermetic Symbolic Order. Such a description applies still more to such a "deception" as wearing the clothes not matching our "actual" gender/sex—and to many other forms of "passing." For a subject not to match in her empirical being her symbolic category—but rather to match a *different* category—is what I name "deviance." Deviance is, however, still listed under the column of the "Rational," however, since whatever discontinuities in insertion arise with deviant behavior, a deviant's insertion is ambiguous only between *possible* categorical positions.

With *transgression*, it is possibility which is violated. Transgression is a play of ambiguity between impossible, unoccupiable positions. Just as impossibility marked the place of the Real within imaginary saturations, so it does amongst symbolic discontinuities. Transgression is the contingency of pure *exception* within the Symbolic Order; it is the absolute excess of symbolization which exceeds even the deviant success of signification manifested in the hysterical symptom.[92]

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[92]What is at issue here, under a different name, is the distinction between an ordinary *symptom* and its Lacanian near-homonym, *sinthome* [Zizek, 1989, p.71]. An ordinary hysterical symptom—say a bodily paralysis of a particular organ—is precisely a device of symbolic coding. It is a kind of deviance, and as such is quite easily interpret-able, in principle. Moreover, retroactively, a symptom becomes recoded as an almost trivial consequence of one's particular insertion into the Symbolic Order. On the face of it we believe that there is no reason why "a woman" should experience this peculiar paralysis, for example, but the end result of analysis is to show how such a symptom was a mere reflection of her position of insertion. Such is the classical Freudian course of treatment.

The Lacanian sinthome is quite different; and is quite outside relation to "the talking cure." The sinthome is what persists after every fantasy has been worked through, after every dream and joke fully decoded. It

Let us turn now to deviance and transgression in some films, as promised.

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is a pure excess of the Real which grounds subjectivity outside the participation of either the Symbolic or the Imaginary. Such is also the place of feminine *jouissance*, quite unencodeable into a phallic Symbolic Order.

B. Hysterical Movies

B: Is that a female impersonator?

A: Of what? [Warhol, 1975, p.41]

One frequently used tool in the institution and maintenance of the compulsively heterosexual form of the bourgeois nuclear family has been the hyster-icization of women. Hysteria has been cast as the result of a failure of "normal" womanly sexuality; and its threat used ideologically as a bogey to women straying from a normative marital heterosexuality. This much is well known by now, if not already banal.

Several cases of this bogey appear in recent films—though with traditional hysteria being replaced by more aggressively violent forms of derangement. Examples of such films include *Fatal Attraction*, *The Hand That Rocks the Cradle*, and *Single White Female*; the list is probably extensible. In each of these films, a main female character is in some way deprived of the bliss of bourgeois nuclear heterosexual monogamy. Such deprivation, however, represents an interesting departure from older devices for the maintenance of "family values" in which the threat was of more-or-less subjectively decided refusal of these values by women (and the result, hysteria).[93] In these recent films we see characters who have fully attempted to internalize normative heterosexuality, but whose attempt has been blocked by external events such as the death of a husband. The consequence, as I have mentioned, of such an external deprivation, is the lapse into a homicidal violence. Such violence is presented as the

more-or-less expected result of an unfulfilled heterosexuality, and simultaneously of an excess of sexuality in general. The moral seems to be that with a loss of the possibility of marital heterosexual normality comes a loss of all constraining values whatsoever.

Another recent and popular film, however, presents the same "objective" narrative but with a meaning, perhaps, exactly reversed. In *Thelma and Louise* we are shown just the same external deprivation of normative heterosexuality, followed both by a "deviant" expression of an excess of sexuality, and by an abandonment of constraining values. The expression of such an abandonment is again in violence. Obviously, however, the moral of *Thelma and Louise* is different than that of the others: their deprivation of "normality" and resultant abandonment of value constraints is *transgressive* rather than merely *deviant*. And insofar as a film can represent the phenomenological interiority of its characters, the saturations in *Thelma and Louise* are authentic; while they remain inauthentic in the other films.

Thelma and Louise was a more-or-less conscious response to the "deviance" films discussed herein; it has in turn been consciously imitated by other rather interesting later films. Both *Boys on the Side* and *Leaving Normal* are pretty explicitly imitations of *Thelma and Louise*.[94] However, while these two films each offer

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[93]The classic examples here are the *femme fatales* of Film Noir. Women who choose an independence uncharacteristic especially of that typical of 1940's gender roles—or really more atypical of roles in the 1930's which these 1940's movies implicitly venerated—bring about their own downfalls through their own morbid obsessions (sex, drugs, music, and so on).

[94]To be accurate, given production schedules, Edward Zwick's 1992 *Leaving Normal* was probably written, and possibly filmed, prior to the release of *Thelma and Louise*. Regardless of the actual empirical answer to the biographical relation of Zwick, or writer Ed Solomon, to *Thelma and Louise*, *Leaving Normal* was generally *received* as a response to *Thelma and Louise*; and I will find it illustrative to consider

important feminist gestures, they fail to capture the trangressive moment of *Thelma and Louise* precisely insofar as they, instead, offer utopian possibilities. The section which examines these latter films explores briefly the the non-reduceability of transgression to utopian vision. In a sense, nonetheless, these utopian films are only possible in the wake of *Thelma and Louise*. While a feminist mainstream film still had to respond to the construction of unsuccessful (or non-) heterosexuality as a kind of deviance or madness, after *Thelma and Louise* made that response, it created a break in filmic traditions which allowed the creation of new positive valuations in films such as the two mentioned.

I do not mean to overplay the analogies amongst these several films, nor to reduce them to the univocal narrative I sketch above. Each of these films is, of course, the play of many themes beyond the single one I mention. However, the similarities in the narratives of the above films, combined with their sharply different valuations of these narratives, allow us to attempt to distinguish between transgressive acts and simply deviant acts, although both types must be seen as identical from within the perspective of a fully coded Symbolic Order. That is, from the perspective of normativity, either transgression or deviance are indifferently on the outside of the Law. It is only from within a not-yet-fully-coded subjective position that such a difference is "intelligible;" and even this intelligibility becomes retroactively erased with its symbolic apprehension.

We also should not make the error of assuming that *Thelma and Louise* succeeds in transgressiveness and

authenticity simply because it is a *better* film than the others I mention. While it would be difficult for films as wooden (and, indeed, just as plain *bad*) as *The Hand That Rocks the Cradle* or *Single White Female* to present authentic saturation or transgressive discontinuities, the same dismissal cannot be made of *Fatal Attraction*. This latter is certainly a finely crafted film which is quite conscious in its selective play and violation of normative categories of heterosexuality. If deviance, rather than transgression, is presented in *Fatal Attraction* that is because director Adrian Lynne intended to make a film about such a matter (though I do not imagine, in any event, that he conceived his film even remotely in the terms I use in discussing it). Even if the same can not be said of *The Hand That Rocks the Cradle* or *Single White Female*, their presentation is nonetheless important in understanding cultural scripts of symbolic deviance.

The common script played in each of the "deviant" films I mention all concern *single women* who are initially misrecognized as being resigned to their *failure* of heterosexual monogamy. But eventually, each of these women is *recognized* as displaying an hysterical inability to situate herself within this status, and as having a pathological jealousy of another woman achieving such a normative status. The "symptoms" of such hysteria are, in each woman's case, attempts to murder both the man with whom they are sexually obsessed and the *other woman* whose heterosexuality is properly fulfilled by relation to this man. The misrecognition which occurs with each hysteric woman concerns her successful internalization of her sexual status; each is misrecognized as *sane*. The more-or-less constant equation made by these films is, therefore, of non-heterosexuality/monogamy with insanity.

In each of the three deviant films there are several crucial moments of recognition at which the pathological character of the hysterical woman's sexuality is

it as part of a developmental series following *Thelma and Louise*. Herbert Ross' 1994 *Boys on the Side* makes quite a few explicit references to *Thelma and Louise*, so I think little question exists that it was created, at least partially, as a reaction to the latter.

revealed through a failure to "pass." These slips are of the classically Freudian sort: slips of the tongue, and loss of composure at apparently insignificant moments. As is generally the convention in "thriller" type films, the audience is always given a clue to the true nature of the events in the film prior to realization by the protagonists, but never immediately or all at once. Let us briefly trace this pattern in each of the films; we'll go in chronological order, following the direction of influence.

In *Fatal Attraction*, Glen Close plays Alex Forest, an apparently successful, sexually-attractive and well-balanced single woman in her thirties, who shortly into the film has a "casual" affair with a married associate Dan Gallagher (Mike Douglas). The audience first sees a fissure in the face of her normalization of her sexual status when she rather insistently asks Dan to spend a second day with her after their initial night together; but this is a very minor matter, showing Alex only ever-so-slightly less sexually confident than we had initially believed. Step by step following this, however, Alex more and more desperately pursues a continuation of this sexual relation with Dan (later partially because of her pregnancy, which resulted from their affair), clearly expressing a fantasy of becoming re-normalized in a heterosexually monogamous relationship (to him). As this status is blocked by the existence of Dan's wife, Beth, Alex makes increasingly violent and pathological attacks against Dan and Beth.

The crucial thing to observe about *Fatal Attraction*, for the purposes of this essay, is that both Alex's "true" categorization and her "apparent" one—i.e. both an hysterical/compulsive relation to an ego-ideal, and a fully normalized such relation—fall easily within the categories of a post-Freudian Symbolic Order. Although Alex's "true" identity as a deranged killer, and *failed woman*, are certainly negatively valuated, they are nonetheless well within the *system* of valuation.

Something valued negatively—even negatively in the extreme—is still *valued*; and hence Alex's pathology in itself is not even deviant. Normativity values normality and its opposites with equal facility. Where Alex's deviance arises is with her ruse to normality, her effort to "pass," and with the misrecognition such a ruse creates in the audience and characters.

The several moments of saturated transition in *Fatal Attraction*, insofar as they can be considered relative to Alex's imaginary construction of an ideal ego, are perfectly inauthentic. We can safely identify two or three moments satured in Alex's subjectivity. These include the first sexual contacts with Dan; the moment when she discovers she is pregnant; and possibly when Dan firmly refuses acknowledgement of responsibility for her pregnancy. These three moments give the meaning to those infinity of moments in between each, and mark ontological transitions in Alex's way of being: first from non-intimacy to intimacy with Dan; second from sterility to natality; third from presuming a relation with Dan to being a *scorned woman*. None of these categories, of course, are ones which I would apply personally, but such are roughly the ideological terms within which the film is set.

What we must notice about the several moments of ontological transformation in *Fatal Attraction* is that all are *possible*—all are, in fact, broadly stereotypical, and rather banal. The three moments are all illocutionary insofar as their outcomes are quite conventional. In other words, although these moments are unquestionably *saturated* according to the meaning I have tried to give that term, they are also *inauthentic*. We shall see, however, when I discuss *Thelma and Louise*, the possibility of the presentation of a non-conventional saturation.

It should be possible here to mention the two other hysterical films only very briefly, since they follow the

pattern—from the point of view of my analysis—of *Fatal Attraction.* Differences exist in the details, naturally, but if anything, both *The Hand That Rocks the Cradle* and *Single White Female* play through conventionality and deviance still more clearly than does *Fatal Attraction.*

In *The Hand That Rocks the Cradle*, Rebecca DeMorney plays Payton Flanders. Near the beginning of the film, the compulsively heterosexual "good" protagonist, Claire Bartel, makes allegations of sexual impropriety against her doctor, whom we learn retroactively to be Payton's former husband.[95] This Dr. Mont then commits suicide under the burden of a likely criminal prosecution against him for sexual abuse.[96] Payton, when she first appears on-screen, applies for a nannie position with the Bartels; which she is offered since she appears the very epitome of normalized subjectivity. In every way she appears *haute* middle-class and heterosexual; and appears to have fully integrated the death of her husband. Naturally, this proves not to be so; and soon enough she is busy preparing various efforts to murder family members, steal the children, and seduce the husband, Michael. Such is the price of the single life. Almost needless to say, the discontinuities in Payton's symbolic

role are merely deviant; and her moments of saturation (chiefly her husband's suicide) are narrowly conventional.

Single White Female again repeats the pattern I have described twice. A single woman, seemingly almost excessively well integrated into her sexual status, turns out to have an hysterical inability to occupy this status. Jennifer Jason Leigh's character is slowly revealed to have a pathological jealousy of her roommate's heterosexual grounding, which is eventually expressed in various attempts to murder the various figures in the drama. In a slight variation on the previous themes, *Single White Female* is somewhat ambiguous as to what status Leigh's character holds as an ideal ego: whether lesbian or heterosexual. But the non-fulfillment of either one is shown more-or-less inevitably to result in a symptomatic violence. The play of misrecognition/recognition of insane murderous intent follows the same pattern of deviance I have discussed; and the moments saturated from the hysteric's perspective fall under the same conventionality.

Transgression and Utopia

Why is Ridley Scott's film, *Thelma and Louise*, different? It is the story of two "women" who, during several saturated moments invisible to the (male) Symbolic Order, flee ontologically from the overcoding of "womanhood." Such, anyway, is my utopian reading which is rejected by every character able to "live" until the end of the film; and rejected perhaps even more strongly by the audience, who anxiously try retroactively to make sense of the events in the film. According to this retroactive, anti-utopian Symbolic reading by the audience, whatever Thelma and Louise did, they did having already been, at the beginning of the film, women for whom these actions were possible—given only the correct antecedent events. Thelma (Gina Davis) and Louise (Susan Sarandon) are

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[95]Actually, this is not quite right. Although the fact that Payton was married to the Dr. Mont against whom Claire made allegations is not overtly spoken until near the end of the film, it would be extremely difficult for any intelligent viewer to miss this obvious "plot twist" for more than the first five minutes after Payton first appears on screen. But perhaps the retroactivity applies, nonetheless, to the knowledge of Claire or her husband Michael. To the viewer, the "twist" is given away by Payton's very early line, "My husband was the only one who understood me. He took care of me. He was murdered." In addition to revealing the remaining course of the film, this line also makes almost indisputable my hysteric reading of the film.

[96]The nature of Dr. Mont's crime is itself rather indicative of the compulsive and pathological nature of the normalized heterosexuality represented in the film. Dr. Mont is a gynecologist, and his crime is not committed through any act outside of his professional duties, but simply in *enjoying* the gynecological exams he performs.

two normatively heterosexual (in monogamous relationships) women who leave for a brief vacation without "their men." In the course of driving to their destination, there is an attempted rape of Thelma, which is prevented by Louise, who shoots to death the attempted-rapist. Fugitives from the law—juridical and Symbolic—for the remainder of the film, Thelma and Louise commit several more "criminal" acts, ranging from armed robbery, to arson, to assault on a police officer. Eventually, they decide to drive over a cliff rather than submit to apprehension by the police. The entire film is permeated by the homo-affective relationship between Thelma and Louise, though it never quite becomes openly sexual. In its overall form, the narrative closely matches the pattern of a large number of "criminal" narratives, dating at least from the many biographical portrayals of the famous "Bonnie and Clyde."

Outside of the familiar narrative of *Thelma and Louise* are several moments less easily integrated into symbolic categorization. Clearly, categories such as criminal, fugitive, or even—dare we say—lesbian fall easily within the systems of valuation fully available before the film begins. These terms are terms of condemnation, but are also symbolic categories which are quite *possible* to occupy. But while the change between "normal" heterosexuality and the "outlaw" status Thelma and Louise assume is deviant, it most certainly is not transgressive.

The several saturated moments during which they move into the new status of criminality are, similarly, inauthentic. For example, at one wonderful point in the film, Thelma threatens a police officer with a gun, in order to assure their escape; and the moment when she takes the decision to do so clearly represent a saturated moment in her definition of an ideal ego, relative to which the valuation of obedience to the juridical State is reversed, or at least modified. It is unquestionable that

this saturated moment is a moment of liberation; and a real change in de/ontological valuation and being occurs here. Nonetheless, the position from which Thelma is valuated, her ego-ideal, does not change at this moment. Simply to decide to disobey, rather than obey, the imperatives of the State does not modify the construction of the State as the subject relative to which obedience is defined. Moreover, the saturation of the moment when obedience changes to disobedience is pretty well conventional, given its frequent repetition in the mentioned "criminal" narratives, to whose genre this film belongs.

Authenticity and transgression occur only at the non-stereotypical moments of the film. A scene showing an a-conventional discontinuity in the subjectivity of Louise's character concerns, not the various transitions to criminality, but rather a kind of lapse of *femininity*. This lapse, however, is not a lapse which simply transforms Louise from femininity to some other identifiable category. It rather exists as a pure exception to symbolic coding. About midway through the film, after Thelma and Louise's fugitive status has already been established, Louise starts to use a car mirror to put on lipstick; looks over at a group of people in a diner window who are halfway looking back at her; then casually throws her lipstick away. What occurs at this moment is that Louise, seeing the position from which she is seen—her *ego-ideal*—simply abandons her relation to this position. In Lacanian analysis, such an abnegation is known as *psychosis*.

From the point of view of the Symbolic Order, during Louise's "psychotic" break *nothing whatsoever has happened*. This moment is not even deviant; it does not represent, for example, feminist critiques which have been made of the use of makeup—which might be deviant insofar as they attempt to reverse the valuation given to makeup. But Louise does not attempt to reverse valuation, she simply abandons it! She does not

critique a positive valuation of wearing lipstick, she refuses valuation itself. It is only such an abandonment of valuation that I describe as transgression.[97] Misrecognition and recognition do not make sense relative to an act of transgression, since one neither starts as, nor becomes, any *possible* thing to be correctly recognized or not. Louise is not first misrecognized under the label "feminine," then later correctly recognized under some other label ("non-feminine"). The category with which Louise breaks is simply meaningless as a result of the break. Though if insistently coded, she remains exactly what she was previous to it, since *nothing has happened.*

Consider, finally, the moment I have described from the imaginary side of saturation. Louise's sudden non-valuation of femininity provides an homogeneous grounding for the rest of the film. It is saturated in the sense I have defined the term. But there is nothing illocutionary about Louise's act: it was not *possible* in advance.

After Utopia

The films which follow *Thelma and Louise*—those two I want to discuss, anyway—start with an interesting reversal of the deviance "genre", and thereby the same reversal of our transgression film. Where the four films described already each had unexpected and unchosen events which served to push the characters out of a

normalized bourgeois heterosexuality, all the main characters in both *Leaving Normal* and *Boys on the Side* succeed in normalizing their own (utopian) subjectivities precisely where they eschew voluntary decision. Even more than the many cinematographic, plot, musical and citational references to *Thelma and Louise* in both films,[98] the theme of liberation resulting from a forclosure of choice seems borrowed from Scott's film. Of course, this is perhaps the wrong message to draw from *Thelma and Louise*, whose title characters, after all, drove off a cliff at the end. More important for the analysis in this chapter, is that *Leaving Normal* and *Boys on the Side* tell stories whose conclusions are the subjectivation of their characters into successful, possible and achieved feminist subjectivities, outside the bourgeois heterosexual matrix taken seriously by the deviance films or ruptured by the transgression film.

Where both *Leaving Normal* and *Boys on the Side* start is where *Thelma and Louise* started: with a preliminary setup which puts the main characters on the road, driving to somewhere they think they want to go. In all three, the sets of women never quite make it where they started out toward (in *Leaving Normal*, the geographic location which is reached turns out to have been based on a misrecognition, which amounts to the same thing). The failure to reach a destination in each case results from external events which stand in the

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[97]Of relevance also in this regard, is the notion I try to develop of *revolutionary ennui* in my discussions of Butler's hetero-normativity. See page 125.

[98]*Thelma and Louise*, *Leaving Normal*, and *Boys on the Side* are all "road movies" about women driving away from somewhere they can't stay. The last has a strikingly similar genre of music accompanying the road scenes to the first, and the Southwest geography assumes a plot and metaphorical significance in both. Christine Lahti, in *Leaving Normal* even *looks* strikingly like Susan Sarandon in *Thelma and Louise*. While one probably cannot attribute the entirety of the physical similarity of the actors to any intentional reference, the hair-style and clothing of the characters accentuate the connection, as does a rather similar relationship to cigarettes in the characters (both attitudinal and in the physiognomic acts of smoking). A number of other similarities could surely be cataloged, but need not here.

way of volition. Such an abandonment of choice is an explicit intention in *Leaving Normal*, and a moral explicitly drawn at the end. However, unlike in *Thelma and Louise*, the protagonists of *Leaving Normal* and *Boys on the Side* wind up *somewhere*; and that somewhere turns out to be where they be-longed—where they could accomplish a stable valuation of self—all along. The utopian and feminist message of these movies rests on the fact that these valuations are not defined in relation to marital heterosexuality (some of the characters are heterosexual, but in no case is dependence/relation to a man a main catergory of valuation by herself, or her millieu). Rather, the two sets of protagonists in *Leaving Normal* and *Boys on the Side* find primary affective bonds between themselves, as women, and form alternative familial and social structures around themselves.

In another sense, where *Leaving Normal* and *Boys on the Side* start is precisely where *Thelma and Louise* ended. None of the main characters in these two movies start in a state of heterosexual normality, as do those in the other four films herein discussed.[99] Rather,

where they all start is with an abandonment of this normality, precisely the abondonment within which Thelma and Louise died. The jokes, musings, and fantasies I have often heard suggesting a sequel to *Thelma and Louise* are answered in this way by *Leaving Normal* and *Boys on the Side*. These are the characters of Thelma and Louise, had they lived to make sequels (at least in their relationship to normative heterosexuality as discussed in this essay). Where the characters start is with an uncertain, not-quite-normalized subjectivity—they are not quite sure how they fit into a Symbolic Order, but they know it is not in the fantastic position postulated by the deviance films. Where the characters end is with a full normalization, but with a normalization into a primarily female-identified, and not mostly sexually defined, utopian subjective position. The moral of these films, read in the context I give, seems to be that once transgressed, there is no same heterosexual normality to go back to; and hence the (filmic) possibility of transgression is forclosed once again (at least vis. one particular normativity).

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[99]An objection could be made here relative to the character Holly (Drew Barrymore) in *Boys on the Side*. Holly is perfectly heterosexual, and never really fails to fit into this position. However, although Barrymore's performance is quite wonderful, I think it makes sense to think of Holly not so much as a character in herself, but as a precipitating event—a force of nature. The drama of the film is between Jane (Whoopi Goldberg) and Robin (Mary Louise Parker), and in each's development.

C. Whither Romantic Love?

Every revolution appears impossible before it occurs;

and inevitable afterwards. [Unknown attribution]

Richard White, in an APA conference paper I had the opportunity to comment on, discusses, "The Future of Romantic Love" [White, 1995]. White's point in this paper is that romantic love presents a false alternative to the normatively autonomous subject of our post-Kantian societies. Romantic love, White believes, quite contrary to its pretense of erasing the boundaries of subjects is actually one of the puzzle-pieces in the construction of this same post-Kantian subjectivity. This much seems true enough.

When one thinks a bit about just what romantic love does in support of an overtly contrary autonomous subject, I think one reaches a few points where White does not really specify an answer; at least not in the mentioned paper. In particular, at least two rather different paradigms for understanding the joint social function of overt contraries come to my mind. Readers will, not doubt, think of some more beyond these two.

One sort of support for autonomous subjectivity which romantic love might provide is as a sort of "release valve" for the excessive pressure in the demands of subjectivity. White makes several remarks which come close to this kind of metaphor for the relation of subjectivity and romantic love. Under this metaphor, and keeping in mind White's insistence on an historical conditioning, one might then place romantic love as another element within a parallel series of "disciplinary techniques" such as prisons and hospitals, which Foucault, for example, examines. One might here imagine that each twist and turn of historically and politically determined normative subjectivity produces both its inherent resistances and a set of techniques for controlling those resistances. Romantic love might then be one technique for the diffusion of anti-autonomous rebellion against bourgeois subjectivity.

The thing to notice in the above account is that it places both a temporal and causal priority on subjectivity over romantic love. Subjectivity is the hot political topic and the contested terrain, while romantic love is merely one ideological weapon used in the campaign. Another story one might tell, which seems equally hinted at by White, is a more structuralist tale in which romantic abandon becomes the very symbolic flip-side of subjective autonomy. In this story, subjectivity and romantic love are both coeval and co-causal. In one variation of the story, romantic love belongs to a Saussurian chain of oppositions for autonomous subjectivity, so that the meaning itself of subjectivity depends on its opposite marker, romantic love. This variation demands neither that there are not also other important defining opposites for romantic love, nor that either subjectivity or romantic love do not participate in social mechanisms beyond semantics. But the Saussurian version of the structuralist tale of romance and subjects certainly demands a rather closer linking of the two than one could allow in the Foucauldian description of romantic love as a disciplinary technique. In the Saussurian narrative, one cannot wrest either the monological centrality of subjectivity nor the loose teleology which the Foucauldian mechanism might allow.

There is, it seems to me, another possible variation on our structuralist tale. Rather than as an indifferent opposition, romantic love might function as a sort of

"dark side" or "necessary repression" for the emergence of a particular type of bourgeois subjectivity. Whether one finds convenient a metaphor of Jekyll and Hyde, or one of a Freudian Ego emergent from the conflict of Id with Superego, one could tell a certain structuralist story in which what made up bourgeois subjectivity was neither pure autonomy nor romantic abandon, but rather the overtly unworkable conjoining of the two.

I am not much committed to any of these stories in particular. No doubt it should be possible to give additional accounts of the way romantic love and autonomous subjectivity relate. I think my concern is that I cannot really become convinced of the necessary sublation, or forgetting, or overthrow, of romantic love until I have a bit more specific theory of how romantic love relates to bourgeois subjectivity in the first place than White has really given us. I quite heartily endorse his observation that the two really support each other. I agree that romantic notions of "abandonment of self in a beloved" are facile at best, and more likely a socially significant ruse. But more needs to be said here.

Several things raise my suspicion about White's account, and prompt me to ask for a more specific theorization. First, and perhaps foremost of these is the seemingly panglossian sentiment White espouses regarding romantic love's successor(s). Let us grant some not uncommon wisdom that modernist subjectivity is on the outs; and grant further that whither goes subjectivity thither romantic love. We are assured at several points that "the decline of romantic love must inevitably open up the space for new and more authentic forms of relationship" and the like. But why on earth should this be the case? Why not assume, quite the contrary, that with the dissolution of bourgeois ideologies of autonomy, yet more *inauthentic* forms of human relationship will replace or succeed romantic love? Perhaps White and I are merely temperamentally

differently inclined, but I have no trouble envisioning a world in which the primary basis for adult affective relations becomes an economic necessity for pooled-wages. As much of the infrastructural reality of (heterosexual) romantic love has rested on economic battles over a male family-wage earner (and female domesticity), much of it might rest, in the future, on the inadequacy of falling wages to support this model. Such (not so) hypothetical relations might certainly involve focussed affection and concern as White requires of love. I would certainly maintain that this new type of "love" would be different from a past romantic love, but it is not clear what might make it thereby "more authentic".

To be clear: I do not wish to suggest that a wage-driven model of "postmodern" love is the only possible one. There might well be others to replace romantic love which are genuinely more authentic, rewarding and liberatory. But even given the correctness of critiques of romantic love, a diagnosis of the downfall of one form of oppression hardly in itself clears the path to a liberated future. Bad sometimes goes to worse, and only sometimes to better.

Another suspicion: White seems at points really not to take his historicist and structuralist admonitions seriously. If romantic love's "conceptual analysis" really is "inseparable from [its] historical genealogy" then we really cannot hope to define romantic love in either phenomenological or psychological terms. Certainly, a strict historicism hardly prohibits phenomenological or psychological conjoins with romantic love as a social process. But it seems a bit off the mark to go on a definitional search for romantic love in epiphenomenal mental realms. At a sort of micro level, a passing remark by White seems well to illustrate this difference. He says, "[W]hen I say that I love my country or that I love my new car, it's not clear that my state of mind is directly analogous to the passion that I might feel for

another person." Perhaps not. But if not, this is a question just of psychological statistics. What if I *do* happen to feel identically towards my car as toward my lover? The pathological nature of such a feeling cannot, I think, be a question of its phenomenological quality. Rather, this is not "true" romantic love because of its failure of conformity with a normative socio-historical construction of romantic love. That's what an historicist perspective would tell us; and common-sense would

happen to concur on this. The point here is that if a social normativity can disqualify a phenomenologically genuine romantic love, than perhaps what makes romantic love is not mental, but social. White mostly agrees about this, but then does not quite pin down what romantic love really is in socio-historical terms.

I think White's early mention of Roland Barthes points in a helpful direction. For whatever critiques can and should be made of romantic love, my own feeling is that one is better off analyzing it more in terms of its internal semiotic system than by way of its function in covertly supporting bourgeois subjectivity. Lots of things support bourgeois subjectivity at various levels. Somehow that doesn't seem quite sufficient to really get at the quiddity of romantic love. What I would find preferable—no doubt *after* an acknowledgement of the ideological apparatus of romantic love—would be something more about the particular internal organization of romantic love. Certainly we all fall-in-love, and organize this experience, in remarkably similar ways, as White observes following Barthes. But just what is the logic and structure of these ways of falling-in-love? What does this semiotic resemble? For example, are the various oppositions and structures which stereotype romantic love more like a language, like etiquette conventions, or like traffic signals, to name but a few other semiotic systems?

One consequence, I think, of asking about romantic love as a semiotic system is a possible separation of its synchronic and diachronic dimensions, although White eschews this. A semiotic has a history, but it also has a distinct momentary structure. I must confess here, that I have a guilty reason for trying to bring in a separation of synchronic dimension of romantic love: I have my own take, partial though it is, on a phenomenological centrality of certain "special" moments in the constitution of subjectivity. Falling-in-love can be one such moment.

I have tried elsewhere to take a certain inspiration from Walter Benjamin's division of homogeneous linear from messianic time, but to miniaturize this distinction onto a phenomenological level. What I have in mind is the notion that certain "saturated" moments of experience present themselves as outside of the normal temporal course of our lives by marking ontological changes in our being. At certain moments we go from being one *type* of person to another *type*, and the experience of those moments is not groundable with a causal continuity of experience. Mind you, most such moments are perfectly *predictable*, banal, and in most cases probably openly reactionary. But they have these qualities only from the social framework outside the transformed subject.

Consider, as an example of saturation, the moment when we "fall-in-love"—with all those grand particular nothings which have adhered to that moment since the Renaissance. We remember the every appearance of our beloved at that moment, the exact hue of the lighting, the song playing, the very second of the time at which it happened; the love adheres to our beloved in his every idiosyncracy, his every particular feature becomes the very reason we love him. From the perspective of the symbolic/causal order, nothing in this moment is inexplicable or special: if the light was of just such a hue that is only because the sun was in that particular position behind the clouds, and anyway, had it been different that difference would have had the same personal significance; our true love has just these particular features, but most of these could have been predicted perhaps years previously from our own class, family, language, appearance, etc.—and those few not so predictable are ones for which we would have substituted others had they not been present. Still, none of its causal/symbolic predictability makes our moment of love any less personally saturated. Perhaps the light could have been different, but it wasn't! Perhaps our beloved could have been another, but he isn't! The saturation of that moment is visible only from within a perspective which includes the experience of that moment; the moment is invisible, or at least vacuous, from without.

My narrative, of course, sounds like a perfectly ordinary romantic eulogy to the splendors of love of the sort which concludes with love's liberatory grace. That's not at all the point I would like to make. These saturated moments so eulogized are reactionary at best, and trite at worst. But the very phenomenological specialness of these trite moments seems to have an importantly inevitable position in a bourgeois/Kantian subjectivity. My feeling is that rather than as the rather accidental "escape valve" of subjectivity, exceptional moments like those of falling-in-love are the rather necessary abscesses in the transcendental unity of aperception.

I am all with White in hoping for an end of romantic love, and in agreement that this end has something to do with an end of modernity. But I think that the change in subjectivity intertwined with these ends is greater than that White probably thinks. It is not just a matter of postmodern lovers valuating autonomy differently. It is likely a matter of the next subjects constituting the world in other than a Kantian causal order!

The Hegemony of Heterosexuality

For Judith Butler,

> What in Lacan would be called 'sexed positions,' and what some of us might more easily call 'gender,' appears to be secured through the depositing of non-heterosexual identifications in the domain of the culturally impossible. [Butler, 1990, p.111].

According to this logic, homosexuality is not fully repudiated, but is rather abjectly maintained in its necessity for maintaining the psychic structure of sexuation. Specifically, Butler utilizes the Lacanian

distinction between the Imaginary and the Symbolic to maintain that homosexual desire is inherently an Imaginary possibility, but is a possibility which must be performatively repudiated with assumption of a subjective position in the Symbolic register. This repudiation of homosexual desire is by no means a mere developmental step which is done once, then over with. Rather, this repudiation is repeatedly invoked with every act of speech from within a sexed position—since homosexual desire is, according to the dictates of the Symbolic Order truly "that love which cannot speak its name."

Contained in Butler's analysis of "sexuation through abjection of homosexuality" is a critique of feminist/queer theorists who have maintained that homosexuality is a way out of the trap of gender (they are not named, but implicitly Wittig and Irigaray are the targets). By allowing that the condition of homosexual desire is a retreat to a purely Imaginary register, exclusive of speech within the Symbolic, such theorists fail to challenge—and perhaps even strengthen—the dictates of a compulsorily heterosexual Symbolic Order. It is less than clear what the positive content of Butler's critique is, however. While she points to the "tacit cruelties that sustain coherent identity (p.115)," she nonetheless does not "suggest that identity is to be denied, overcome, erased (p.117)." What, then, are we to do with these *cruel identities*? Butler hints that if not merely suffered, options might be to parody or destabilize identities. The option not occurring, I think, to Butler in her systematizing binarism of totalizing identity or unachievable anti-identitarianism, is simply to *ignore* identity—what I would like to call a "strategic indifference" or "revolutionary ennui." Perhaps the dictates of cruel identities can simply be *suspended* (in the sense of a suspended musical chord as much as in that of a postponed event) without mounting an impossible challenge to a totalizing compulsory heterosexuality/sexuation.

D. The Immediate Imam

> In an airplane hijacking, the threat of a hijacker brandishing a revolver is obviously an action; so is the execution of the hostages, if it occurs. But the transformation of the passengers into hostages, and of the plane-body into a prison-body, is an instantaneous incorporeal transformation, a "mass media act" in the sense in which the English speak of "speech acts."
> [Deleuze and Guattari, 1987, p.81]

Many of the ideas that I have presented in this document—particularly those of an ontological, or onto-political, sort are also presented by the pseudonymous anarchist theorist Hakim Bey. I think it worthwhile to provide a few pages of discussion of Bey's work. A number of themes I have developed are argued by Bey, but from a somewhat different perspective. In terms of organization, I will simply discuss a few elements from each of his books, in the order of their publication.

The Temporary Autonomous Zone

The Temporary Autonomous Zone (TAZ) is a tactic of disappearance, a strategy of invisibility, within a totalized ideology of visibility and of the faux-presence of the Spectacle. Bey, in all his writings, uses highly spatial metaphors/metonyms of society, control, resistance and transgression (where my own imagery more often focuses on different types of *times*, and sometimes of DeleuzeGuattarian *flows*). Within Bey's imagic framework, a TAZ is an interstice of the possible. Totalization is spatially described as filling out to all possible boundaries—quite literally in certain aspects, as with the expansion of State territorial claim to every point of the globe by the start of the 20th Century—but totality, or the Spectacle, is not thereby necessarily *dense* (in a mathematical or solid-state physics sense). There is no *region* unaccounted for by totalization, but there are *spaces.*[100]

Within the essays of *TAZ*, Bey casts TAZ as the only strategy of free activity currently possible (this changes, however, somewhat, in Bey's later writing),

> Absolutely nothing but a futile martyrdom could possibly result now from a head-on collision with the terminal State…we're not touting the TAZ as an exclusive end in itself, replacing all other forms of organization, tactics, and goals. We recommend it because it can provide the quality of enhancement associated with the uprising without necessarily leading to violence and martyrdom. The TAZ is like an uprising which does not engage directly with the State, a guerilla operation which liberates an area (or land, of time, of imagination) and then dissolves itself to re-form elsewhere/elsewhen, *before* the State can crush it. Because the State is concerned primarily with Simulation rather than substance, the TAZ can "occupy" these areas clandestinely and carry on its festal purposes for quite a while in relative peace.…Babylon takes its abstractions for realities; precisely *within* this margin of error the TAZ can come into existence.…As soon as the TAZ is named (represeneted, mediated), it must vanish, it

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[100]One could easily model the spatial metaphor more precisely with fractal descriptions (which Bey toys with at points). A variety of images based on shapes such as the Cantor Set could bring in specifics of the relative density and measure of TAZ versus Spectacle within the social space; different historical situations could resemble different such distributions and densities. While this kind of imagery is in some ways rich, and the concepts it provides are worthwhile, it would be counterproductive to try to mathematize the spatial metaphor to the point of actually *measuring* properties of different historical times and places in comparisons with each other, beyond the broadest comparisons in the metaphor.

will vanish, leaving behind it an empty husk, only to spring up again somewhere else, once again invisible because undefinable in terms of the Spectacle. [Bey, 1991, p.100-101]

As I characterized, TAZ is concerned with a *disappearance*. This disappearance is a bit different than those written about by Baudrillard, Lyotard, Foucault and others. Rather than an idea disappearing as an

ablation within an ideology (particularly one in which the idea is a founding principle in some way), the disappearance of TAZ is tactical rather than global. The TAZ is concerned with little ways of not-being within the ideological edifice of the is.

One TAZ might be Bob Black's Zerowork concept [Black, 1993]. A simple removal of oneself from "the economy" makes one invisible to this totality. Certainly, the State has had its mechanisms to colonize and take over this realm of non-work: vagrancy laws, anti-welfare laws, property tax, etc. But there remain a variety of *interstices* within which many people have simply refused to play that game (squatters, communes, drop-out artists). While not opposing per se the resistances of strikes, organizing, sabotage, and other *workerist* resistances, Zerowork does present a "third way" in which, as much as it successfully *disappears*, the physical violence of State clampdown is avoided or transgressed.

Although Bey does not seem to have contemplated it, I think another TAZ might exist by "hiding in the light." The very success of totality at points seems to undermine its own coopting and oppressive mechanisms. I hardly want to claim some revolutionary insight or discursively transgressive radicalism to my recent mode-of-being. But there is something interesting I have observed of late. Over a variety of misgivings and rationalizations, and for all kinds of obvious reasons, recently I worked in the belly of the beast. I was not quite building bombs or smashing heads, but I *did* perform wage labor at a big and bad corporation. I worked in a right-wing state, in a right-wing nation, mostly with people who believe lunatic right-wing Christian ramblings. And yet, I am in no way "closeted," nor even taciturn, about such matters as being a Marxist (or athiest, vigorously anti-natalist, opposed to marriage and the family, pro-queer, and so on). Most remarkably, this non-hidden heterodoxy does not even

result in informal negative biases against me by the crazies who were my colleagues.

These facts are the results of several things. Obviously, all kinds of privilege are at play here: race, gender, education, and also (most strongly, I think) the fact that I have techno-instrumental skills in great demand. At a certain level, the fact that I speak frankly where most other folks otherwise similarly situated remain politic, is a precondition of the facts mentioned. But aside from the above preconditions, there is a curious phenomenon at play. Capitalist triumphalism has rendered my Marxist beliefs wholly non-integratible into the world-view of ordinary folks. Say what I like, my particular profession of opposition to the mechanisms of totality no longer appears as a threat and a taint. In fact, Marxism is capable of being correctly *understood* at an epistemic level by my colleagues[101] while remaining simply a gap within the liminal economy of their ideological schemes. I suspect that the "invisibility of the overt"—as a structural possibility—which I have encountered has been at play in a variety of times and places other than that I occupy.

Within a TAZ (to put it spatially), Bey's hope is for transgressions which satisfy more genuine human desires. He invokes the concept Poetic Terrorism (PT) to describe this,

> Weird dancing in all-night computer-banking lobbies. Unauthorized pyrotechnic displays. Land-art, earth-works as bizarre alien artifact strewn in State Parks.

[101]Obviously, their understanding is indicated in a fairly general sense. The folks I worked with know that Marxism has concepts such as the workers revolution, the opposition of labor to capital, base and superstructure, etc. The comparative arcana that I might write or read in Marxist academic journals would be lost to them. But then, that would be no less true of the not-specifically-Marxist articles I might read/write about, say, comparison of the ontological thought of Duns Scotus and Spinoza.

> Burglarize houses but instead of stealing, leave Poetic-Terrorist objects. Kidnap someone & make them happy....Bolt up brass commemorative plaques in places (public or private) where you have experienced a revelation or had a particularly fulfilling sexual experience, etc....Organize a strike in your school or workplace on the grounds that it does not satisfy your need for indolence & spiritual beauty....The audience reaction or aesthetic-shock produced by PT ought to be at least as strong as the emotion of terror—powerful disgust, sexual arousal, superstitious awe, sudden intuitive breakthrough, dada-esque angst—no matter whether the PT is aimed at one person or many, no matter whether it is "signed" or anonymous, if it does not change someone's life (aside from the artist) it fails. [Bey, 1991, p.4-5]

There are two aspects, to my thinking, in Poetic Terrorism. On the one hand, PT's are characterized by their non-commodification, and their non-subservience to instrumental rationality. There is nothing *useful* about PT, not even from the point-of-view of a libidinal economy of organs. That is, we might here borrow a DeluezeGuatarrian notion of *organs* as the points which regulate and coagulate *flows*. The Spectacle's libidinal economy, its Marcusian repressive desublimation [Marcuse, 1992], formulates desires in terms of their stoppages, not their flows. PT's are not about *having* i.e. art, but about performing it. PT stands on the side of potentialities, not of realizations/alienations. It is not, of course, that PT is simply ideal, simply in the conception, but that even the concretion of PT realizes further potentialities, rather than aims at its own completion.

The other aspect of PT I would draw attention to is its mode of effect. PT aims to *do* something to transform someone, its recipient—or in the State's language of terrorism, its victim. The mode in which PT does something is not epistemic, or even phroenetic, but mimetic. The effect does not represent, but continues, the act. The critical force of PT is not to critique the Spectacle, but to move someone to a place—a state of

mind, if you will—where the Spectacle, even if only for a moment, does not operate. The PT, as its name well indicates, operates not at the level of ideology, but at the level of terrorism. In a pithy characterization, Bey remarks, "Art tells gorgeous lies that come true. [Bey, 1991, p.40]"

Emphasizing the mode of effect of PT, Bey provides the symmetrical concept of Art Sabotage,

> Art Sabotage is the dark side of Poetic Terrorism—creation-through-destruction... A-S goes beyond paranoia, beyond deconstruction—the ultimate criticism—physical attack on offensive art—aesthetic jihad.... A-S seeks to damage institutions which use art to diminish consciousness & profit by delusion... Muzak is designed to hypnotize & control—its machinery can be smashed....Public book burnings—why should rednecks & Customs officials monopolize this weapon? Novels about children possessed by demons; the *New York Times* bestseller list; feminist tracts against pornography; schoolbooks (especially Social Studies, Civics, Health); piles of *New York Post*, *Village Voice* & other supermarket papers; choice gleanings of Xtian publishers; a few Harlequin Romances—a festive atmosphere, wine-bottles & joints passed around on a clear autumn afternoon. [Bey, 1991, p.12]

Within the overall scheme of TAZ's, an A-S is a bulldozer which clears a space in the Spectacle for a TAZ. PT is the infiltration of TAZ into totality, a rhizomatic shoot which might pop up again elsewhere when it has the opportunity. Spaces will not stay cleared for long after A-S, but they will momentarily. At least possibilities are opened before the Spectacle recuperates control. Maybe enough space for a TAZ.

An essay—or maybe a manifesto—within *TAZ* called "Resolution for the 1990's: Boycott Cop Culture!!!" is a nice illustration of Bey's style of cultural analysis. A number of TAZ themes are brought out.

If one fictional figure can be said to have dominated

the popcult of the eighties, it was the Cop....[T]he Cop Show has only three characters—victim, criminal, and policeperson—but the first two fail to be fully human—only the pig is *real*....Just as the murder-mystery is always an exercise in sadism, so the cop-fiction always involves the contemplation of *control*. The image of the inspector or detective measures the image of "our" lack of autonomous substance, our transparency before the gaze of authority. Our perversity, our helplessness. Whether we imagine them as "good" or "evil," our obsessive invocation of the eidolons of the Cops reveals the extent to which we have accepted the manicaean worldview they symbolize....We propose an esoteric hermeneutical exegesis of the Surrealist slogan "*Mort aux vaches!*" We take it to refer not to the death of individual cops ("cows" in the argot of the period)—mere leftist revenge fantasy—petty reverse sadism—but rather to the death of the *image* of the *flic*, the inner Control...In this sense, then, we call for a boycott of the image of the Cop, & a moratorium on its production in art. [Bey, 1991, p.90-93]

As I read Bey's description—and also as I read the shows themselves—the Cop Show acts as a colonization of independent thought. The Cop Show lures us into an identificatory mechanism with the cops. What this does is transpose our conception of the cops from the position of superego stand-in for the "reality" of State violence[102], to that of ego-ideal. We are not just regulated by the cops—even when regulation is an internalized psychic mechanism—our deepest identification and desire is to resemble the mechanism of regulation. We wish we could be more like the

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[102]Under a socialization of desire which is the regime of the Spectacle, our superego is no longer an "internalization" of law. The immediacy of the internal is the realized social order. And in the social, it is the monopoly use of legitimate force which enforces the paternal law. It is not that we have passed into a Hobbesian absolutism of violence. Obviously, force is not generally used in control; how could it be? But the flip side of repressive desublimation is that a socially desublimated desire operates at exactly the same level of external consciousness as does the cop. Our superego is no longer *like* a little cop in our head, now it *is* a little cop in our head.

mechanisms of our own psychic control.

Bey attacks particularly the fantasy fiction genre in which cops are overall well-meaning, only a little racist, and hardly ever torture suspects. *Hill Street Blues* is such a show from the recent past which Bey finds particularly noxious. He is right, certainly. The very "street-realism" of shows of that sort, which show the "dark underside" of police behavior, are a way of pretending this dark underside is only as minimally brutal as what is shown in the TV programs. Further, the "realism" clearly furthers the fantasy that the cops are "just folks like us"—which is surely the most noxious aspect. But what I find still more frightening is the documentary style of *Cops* or *America's Most Wanted*. In those, it is not just that a warm-and-fuzzy cop fantasy is realized, but that the sick-and-brutal cop reality is fantasized. These shows seem not even to hesitate in showing the most blatant abuses of human rights and flagrant disregard for due process—all, presumably, to be met by cheering fans watching the shows.[103] The live-footage documentary seems to cause

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[103]The television show which has probably had the greatest critical force, and at least a limited subversive potential, in the last few years was MTV's *Beavis and Butthead*. This is not to say that a lot of big caveats about the critical potential of *any* television should not be attached here. But certainly a good number of moments on *Beavis and Butthead* have provided analyses similar to those of Adorno or Debord. In particular, one episode addressed just the kind of flattening of fantasy and violence in the documentary cop shows which I discuss here. After committing some petty criminal vandalism, Beavis and Butthead return to their home to watch a documentary-style cop show. The focus of the cop-show episode is the search for Beavis and Butthead themselves. Beavis and Butthead, of course, fail to recognize themselves as represented on the show, despite photographs of them flashed on screen; and they voice sentiments about their hopes that the cops will beat the hell out of the suspects. During the course of watching the cop-show, the cops are pictured on the live-TV as breaking down Beavis and Butthead's door, which they then do both within the TV-show and at the meta-level of Beavis and Butthead's actual livingroom (yes, yes… they don't really have a livingroom, they're animated characters which I in turn watched of my TV). The cops bust in, and start beating on Beavis and Butthead with night-sticks. Beavis and

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a perverse suspension-of-disbelief precisely where there should be no disbelief to suspend.

Immediatism

Bey's book *Immediatism* (also sometimes titled, in part or whole, *Radio Sermonettes*) further develops two themes beyond where *TAZ* left off: ways of being in groups; and how mediation coopts. The concern of this book is a focus on the possibilities for art and creativity, although insofar as there is a focus it is not meant to separate "art" from something else, certainly not from "politics." The second first…

The title essay is arranged as a series of numbered aphorism, much in the style of Debord's book [Debord, 1983]. The first proposition Bey presents as background,

> I. All experience is mediated—by the mechanisms of sense perception, mentation, language, etc.—&certainly all art consists of some futher mediation of experience. [Bey, 1994, p.7]

But there is more specificity here,

> II. However, mediation takes place by degrees. Some experiences (smell, taste, sexual pleasure, etc.) Are less mediated than others (reading a book, looking through a telescope, listening to a record). Some media, especially "live" arts such as dance, theater, musical or bardic performances, are less mediated than others such as TV, CDs, Virtual Reality. Even among the media usually called "media," some are more & others are less mediated, according to the intensity of imaginative participation they demand. [Bey, 1994, p.7]

Butthead, despite the beating, strain to continue watching the cop-show on their TV, with great satisfaction that the TV suspects are now being beaten on live TV, as per their hopes.

The call of Immediatism is for the utilization of human creativity apart from the coopting demands of mediation. Immediatist art—or simply *activity*, since art is not a thing apart—is impermanent, direct, non-commodifiable, and, significantly, *hidden*. In another aphorism Bey writes,

> [W]e nevertheless declare without hesitation…the founding of a "movement," IMMEDIATISM. We feel free to do so because we intend to practice Immediatism *in secret*, in order to avoid any contamination of mediation. Publicly we'll continue our work in publishing, radio, printing, music, etc., but privately we will create *something else*, something to be shared freely but never consumed passively, something which can be discussed openly but never understood by the agents of alienation, something with no commercial potential yet valuable beyond price, something occult yet woven completely into the fabric of our everyday lives. [Bey, 1994, p.10]

These are utopian possibilities of a sort; possibilities which will have to be changed somewhat with *Millennium*, as we will see below. But the utopian moment here is the possibility of unmediated, or at least minimally mediated, action which is possible exactly insofar as it does not enter the inauthenticity of an ultimately-totalizing, and ultimately marked by commodification, mediation.

Bey's goal of invisibility is in some ways curiously easy,

> Nowadays anything which evades the idiot gaze of publicity is already *virtually* secret. Most modern people seem unable to believe in the reality of something they never see on television—therefore to escape being televisualized is already to be quasi-invisible. Moreover, that which is seen through the mediation of the media becomes somehow unreal, & loses its power (I won't bother to defend this thesis but simply refers the reader to a train of thought which leads from Nietzsche to Benjamin to Bataille to Barthes to Foucault to Baudrillard). By contrast, perhaps that which is *unseen* retains its reality, its rootedness in everday life & therefore in the

possibility of the marvelous. [Bey, 1994, p.15]

One can create a kind of authenticity of one's expression simply by avoiding mediation in transforming expression into representation. Those who do not want their "15 minutes of fame" are almost below the threshhold where the media bothers with cooptation. Then again, the temptation for recognition is a nagging presence in our media circuit of false authenticities. All those pathetic souls who perform rituals of stereotyped pettiness for daily talk-shows, for example, presumably believe the con of expressive genuineness falling out of the mediation by TV and "fame." Indeed, it seems that the content of their performances are generally of the dissatisfaction they feel with the stereotyped relations they then ape for the camera—in some kind of hope that the camera's extra level of mediation will transform mediated falseness into emergent expressiveness.

Even if we do not begin at the mediation of stereotype pantomimes in our relations to others, the coopting force of "making a living" draws us in that direction,

> Suddenly it will appear to you (as if a demon had whispered it in your ear) that the Immediatist art you've created is so good, so fresh, so original, so strong compared to all the crap on the "market"—so *pure*—that you could water it down & sell it, & *make a* living at it, so you could all knock off WORK, buy a farm in the country, & do art together for-ever after. And perhaps it's true. [Bey, 1994, p.22]

But eventually,

> [T]he dream of each succeeding yesterday became the parlor decor of every tomorrow—bought, chewed, reproduced, sold, consigned to museums, libraries, universities, & other mausolea, forgotten, lost, resurrected, turned into nostalgia-craze, reproduced, sold, etc., etc., *ad nauseam* [Bey, 1994, p.42]

Invisibility, and therefore a kind of resistive genuineness, seems easy at first blush—and indeed it is…for a

while—but overall movements, from Romanticism to Surrealism to Situationism have historically succumbed to the cooptive tendency of *recognition*, representation, and commodification.

Immediatism is a call to non-mediated expression, but also a call to groups of certain sorts also buried under mediated Capitalism.

> Immediatism means to enhance individuals by providing a matrix of friendship, not to bellitle them by sacrificing their "ownness" to group-think, leftist self-abnegation, or New Age clone-values. What must be overcome is not individuality per se, but rather the addiction to bitter loneliness which characterizes consciousness in the 20th century. [Bey, 1994, p.19]

Capitalism, for Bey,

> …only *supports* certain kinds of groups, the nuclear family for example, or "the people I know at my job," because such groups are already self-alienated & hooked into the Work/Consume/Die structure….We're not kidding or indulging in hyperbole when we insist that *meeting-face-to-face is already "the revolution."* [Bey, 1994, p.20-21]

The groups called for by Immediatism must, by definition, serve an *illegitimate*—and often therefore illegal—purpose from the point of view of Capitalist totality. They are not for work, not for consumption, and not even for the mediation and representation of the flow of capital (such as are "official" art). In their illegitimacy, such groups are in their nature *hidden*—both by conscious deception toward authority, and by simple invisibility.

A model Bey looks favorably on is the Tongs, which were organized around officially illegitimate purposes. Other historical secret societies, such as the Masons, provide a similar inspiration. Bey characterizes these societies,

> A Tong can perhaps be defined as a mutual benefit society for people with a common interest which is illegal or dangerously marginal—hence, the necessary *secrecy*.

In maintaining a self-conscious secrecy, an Immediatist group or affiliation does not merely avoid outright prosecution if its activity is considered threatening to the state, it avoids *representation* and cooptation where its activity is threatening to the Spectacle. Invisibility and secrecy are interstices of totalizing mediation.

Millennium

> Five years ago it still remained possible to occupy a third position in the world, a neither/nor of refusal or slyness, a realm outside the dialectic—even a space of withdrawal; — disappearance as will to power [Bey, 1996, p.29]

What happened in the intervening years, was 1989[104]—another ideology named by a date, as those discussed in footnote 3. With the fall of a second world,

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[104]The publication dates referenced here do not precisely match the dates of composition or original presentation of Bey's works. *TAZ* was, in major part, first written around 1986; the essays of *Immediatism* around 1992; and those of *Millennium* around 1994.

Capitalist triumphalism—its one-world—seeks to, and succeeds in, eliminating the interstices of TAZ. Strategies must change; jihad of presence is the only opposition to a Capitalism of sameness.

For the Bey of *Millennium*, the logic of triumphalist Capitalism is a logic of *sameness* and *separation*. Everything in consciousness, in desires, falls under the homogenous form of exchange of equivalence. Whether the question is "What is to be done?" or merely "What do you want?" the answer is already mediated by the equivalence of money to itself. The logic of sameness is the logic of this equivalence; this sameness is a removal, a separation, of desire from itself. Desires are stamped out in the one-world except as they fall under the insatiable mediation of monied exchange.

To Bey (though the analogy is mine, not his), triumphalist Capitalism returns in its fundamental principle to Marx's set of transitions, or equivalences, in Chapter 3, Volume I of *Capital* [Marx, 1967/1867]. C-M-C' or M-C-M' can be read as the equivalence posited by money, but 'C' in this case can be read not merely as 'commodity', but as 'consciousness' or desires themselves (or perhaps, 'consumption'). Money is identical to itself (except in quantity), but it also stands in each mediating chain with desire. On the one hand, in the cycle C-M-C', our desires are mediated by their possibility of "satisfaction" only within the logic of capitalist exchange. But as with Marx, the more fundamental equation is M-C-M'. It is not, at root, us that utilizes money to satisfy ends (desires leading, with mediation, to desires), but money that utilizes us to satisfy *its* ends. The one-world proclaims that we *must* desire, in order to promote the ghoulish parthenogenesis of money.

In Bey's characterization,

> Having long ago capitalized all material being, the

power of scarcity has had no choice but to commodify the image (and the imagination) as well—on the presumption that this is an ever-expanding market. Awareness must be privatized—thought must be appropriated, adulterated, alienated, packaged, labelled, advertized and sold back to consciousness. All creativity must be priced, and even the very process of resistance against this expropriation must be turned to profit ("Be a rebel—buy a Toyota!—or "Image is nothing, taste is everything" as a slogan for some crappy softdrink). [Bey, 1996, p.62]

Or also,

> The old Dualism has imploded into a totalized topology defined by the gnoseographic geosophy of money and its less-than-one dimensionality. The "mirror of production" has been superceded by a complete transparency, the vertigo of terror. Land, labor, nature, self itself, life itself, and even death can be re-invented as the basis of all exhange—everything is money. [Bey, 1996, p.39]

Bey follows with a clarification on the ideological nature of money's totalization. Perhaps in an effort to dodge certain accusations levelled against somewhat similar remarks by Baudrillard, Bey is clear that he is characterizing Capital's imperative self-characterization, not its empirical reality per se.

If, for Bey, there is "nothing of futurity left to the concept of utopia" what is the jihad, where are the possibilities of resistance? One sort of remark he makes is a call for a sacralization, a mystico-religious commitment, to resistance—in other words, of *presence* and *difference*. For Bey, mystical traditions, particularly in Islam, about which he has written extensively under another name, clearly provide inspiration for strategies of resistence. Hassan-i-Sabbah and his school, for example, if even only for purely historical reasons, rather than religious ones, is a worthwhile exemplar of radicalism. Still… aside from a fascinating example, what does religious mystical experience "get" an athiest

like myself?

I am quite happy to agree with Bey that epistemic standards (whether scientist or theological) hardly need be the appropriate ones by which to judge the "truth" of mystical experience ("fuck science and religion—we should demand a rationalism of the marvellous—an end to the violence of explanation." [Bey, 1996, p.60]). Truth is not such an interesting question as all that. Even so… where precisely is the resistance in these states of consciousness? Perhaps surprisingly, I think I can agree with Bey here also. The moments of *saturation* and the *unnameable ways-of-being* which I have discussed earlier in this chapter. The "truth" behind Islamic mysticism is not Islam (which despite its thread of resistance to the Capitalist one-world is still a pretty awful ideological system in its orthodox-fundamentalist form), but *mysticism*. Similarly positive descriptions might be given of the ultra-heterodox Gnostic Christian sects, the proto-Narodnik mysticism of Thomas Muntzer, Cabbalistic Judaism, the Hindu occultism of Ghandi, and other heterodoxies which have had (overtly) religious forms. Bey remarks,

> Every religion has called forth its own inner antithesis over & over again; every religion has considered the implications of moral opposition to power; every tradition contains a vocabulary of resistance as well as capitulation to oppression. Speaking broadly one might say that up until now this "counter-tradition"—which is both inside & outside religion—has comprised a "suppressed content."
> [Bey, 1996, p.73]

An interesting parallel to observe here is with the well-known mystic tendency in Benjamin's writings. This tendency is usually characterized by readers of Critical Theory as a sort of eccentricity, or even an outright shortfalling, of Benjamin, who is in this context thought to be overly influenced by Jewish theological traditions. I do not read it this way. I think Benjamin's mysticism is

quite secular and even the most radically *Marxist* element of his project. Benjamin was the first thinker to *thoroughly* recognize the totalizing tendency of representation-as- commodity[105] In recognizing this totalizing tendency, Benjamin recognized the ineffability of strategies of resistence, and their inability to function within the confines of instrumental rationality. The method of knowledge and understanding available at the limits, or in the interstices, of instrumental reason must appear, from the point-of-view of totalization, as mysticism or irrationalism.[106] But those are the right strategies. In fact, I have tried to show a certain *efficacy* of transgression within the *secularly mystic* events of saturation, discontinuity, and messianic time, which I discuss in the initial sections of this chapter.[107]

There is more to Bey's strategy for opposing the one-

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[105]In this thorough recognition he is followed, most significantly, by Debord, by Bey; and indeed, by Adorno. Whatever disagreements I may have insinuated regarding Adorno, I hope the tone of reverence in these critiques shows through.

[106]The "irrationalism" of Surrealism, and especially Dada, should also be understood in this context. Dada poetry and art often involved methods of autonomism which tried to break boundaries of the instrumentally rationalist creative process. The Dada concern with such altered states—induced with drugs, sleep-deprivation, forced physical repetitions, or meditation—parallels very closely mystical methods such as the Sufi "whirling dirvishes", the Assassin's use of hashish (which is named after them, after all), Native American spirit journeys (such as with peyote or yohimbe), Aboriginal "walkabout," or even the Oglala Sioux "sun dance" to produce altered states through various bodily puncturings and the like (and similarly, Indian swamis on beds of nails). Many of these ritual methods of obtaining mystical knowledge, arose, like Dada, as self-consciously resistive strategies.

[107]Or, as Bey writes,
  [T]he Revolution threw out the baby ("non-ordinary consciousness") along with the bathwater of the Inquisition or of puritan repression. Despite Sorel's insistence that the Revolution needed a "myth", it preferred to bank everthing on "pure reason" instead.
  [Bey, 1996, p.83]

world than its call for sacralization. In resistance to sameness and separation, Bey calls for a way-of-being lived through presence and difference. Bey's conception is not of a simple call for solidarity (as a kind of identity), but one of an identification which at its heart incorporates diversity and difference.

> Proudhonian federalism based on non-hegemonic particularities in a "nomadological" or rhizomatic mutuality of synergistic solidarities—this is our revolutionary structure…. Post-Enlightenment ideology will experience queasiness at the notion of the revolutionary implications of a religion or a way of life always already opposed to the monoculture of sameness & separation. Contemporary reaction will blanch at the idea of interpermeability, the porosity of solidarity, conviviality & presence as the complementarity & harmonious resonance of "revolutionary difference." [Bey, 1996, p.43]

One striking feature in Bey's analysis of sameness and difference is the clear echos of Situationism's homogenizing *Spectacle*. But the scope of *difference* envisioned by Bey is more intellectually satisfying. The Situationist hope was certainly for a gesture of *independence* in thought and aesthetic from the monotony of commodified desire. Situationists seem largely to have comprehend resistance in terms of the student rebellion in the Capitalist world of the 1960's. That moment undoubtably had its radical elements, but Bey's conception seems both more global and more historical.

A heterogeneous assortment of transgressive inspirations for a collection of "lost moments" of history. These are the temporary autonomous zones of other places and times, which can still be pulled from the interstices of official history. A very similar assortment of transgressive histories is recognized by a variety post-Situationist writers, including a number of theoretical-leaning fiction writers. For examples, books by Burrough [Burroughs, 1981; 1983; 1987], Acker

[Acker, 1996] and Matiasz [Matiasz, 1996] engage much the same gestalt of resistance. Some such frequently utilitized interstices are the radical-democratic pirate collectives of the 15th-18th Century, tri-racial isolates in colonized North America ("gone to Croatan…"), Moorish Sufism (including possible buried connections with Celtic cultural artifacts), the EZLN Mayan globalist particularism, squatter/anarchist communities of the 1980s, and American gay counter-culture of the Cold War. Such a list cannot be intended as definitive of anything. None of the mentioned writers are attempting a catalog of resistences as such. And yet some particular cultural moments stand out to Bey and other recent theorists, as well as to some contemporaneous novelists, as moments which are liberating precisely in unifying heterogeniety. For the fiction writers I mention (and others), the elements in these series can be unified even further in imagined utopias of plurality. Such an ideal is of a coalescence, even a kind of identity of resistance, in some particular times and places where groups of people with starkly divergent histories, races, religions, cultures, and languages have come, or been thrown, together, and have formed unities not despite but out of differences.

The jihad Bey envisions as the only possible resistance to the one-world is a struggle for unity in necessarily particularist identities—or better, presences. The identities of a resistance such as the Zapatistas is quite opposed to the identitarian logic of money. On one level, the Mayan-identity of the Zapatistas does not submit to the mediating equivalence of exchange. Mayan-identity is not the alienated self-identity of money just plainly insofar as it does not pose the separation from itself which defines alienation. But even more importantly, Zapatistism is not a *totalizing* ideology; it defines it own bounds and limits of identificatory force. The EZLN does not want to make anyone else Mayan, it is not colonizing. And yet, Zapatistism is not an isolationist or boosterist ideology

(and not merely because of the comparative disempowerment of its members—painfully many "liberation" movements readily rely on the crudest racial/nationalist dogma). The alliances and unities the EZLN has created have been *alliances of difference* of precisely the sort Bey hopes for. The Zapatistas are savvy on a global level without falling for the homogenization of globalism. And appropriately, the EZLN has fired, at least, a revolutionary identification for many quite different particularities throughout the world.

VIII. WORDS TO THE END

From conundrum to penumbra... and back again.

[with thanks to W.V.O.Quine]

In a dissertation that is—like this one—devoted either to questions of what is wrong in philosophy or to questions of what is wrong with reality, I assume it is customary to conclude with an answer to Lenin's famous question title, "What is to be done?" Before this question I remain helplessly mute. The most hopeful answer one can give, I suppose, is to answer, "Write a book like this one!" It is a nice answer. Nietzsche's answer; or Adorno's answer; probably Lenin's answer; in still other ways, Kant's answer, Hegel's answer, or even Plato's answer. Some years ago I hoped it would be my answer, but not really as I write this.

I would like to give Deleuze and Guattari's advice from the introduction to *A Thousand Plateaus* [Deleuze and Guattari, 1987b] as a summary of the preceding document, "Read this book as you would listen to a record album." I still like that advice, and still believe that honesty requires such advice—not just for this particular dissertation which pulls threads from many places, but for any attempt at theory that simultaneously denies its own hopes for totalization and formal consistency. Much of my project has been to identify a large number of failures that I think are related: the failure of immanence and immanent critique; the failure of philosophical truth and representation; many failures at the core of subjectivity and subjectivation; the failures of systematicity; even, in a paradoxical way, the failures of totalizing ideologies whose totalizing force lies at the root of many other failures. Since this dissertation—like Deleuze and Guatarri's book in this regard—does not believe in totality as the *right* mode of either conception or action, what else could the chapters and sections be *besides* a series of "tracks" to listen to for their individual themes and motifs?

Nonetheless, I realize that a mere easy dismissal of a unifying project is hardly a satisfactory conclusion for either writer or readers. Although this document must present as a series of vignettes, each analyzing a mechanism of failure, or of the ideological cover totalization utilizes, there is an almost dialectical unity of the various gestures. Not nearly so neat, and not nearly so directional as in Hegel's *Phenomenology* (or Marx's *Capital*). But there remain lessons to be learned from each striation of this dissertation. A few central concepts are brought to each layer, and play themselves out there, even if they do not arrive at some grander unity of conclusion, purpose and recommendation in this conclusion.

Three concepts operate behind the scenes—and occassionally in front of them—of each chapter and section.

First Concept: The Necessary/Impossible Pair

Necessity and impossibility, it seems to me, are closely conjoined in ideologies, and in the subjects interpellated by those ideologies. Obviously, a traditional modal logic—or the common-sense that underlies it—would feel an affront in putting the terms together as other than plain antonyms. Fair enough for the "normal" case, but ideology is special.[108] Almost by definition, the process of subjectivation, the *sine qua non* of ideology, creates beliefs, attitudes, emotions, 'truths' even, that are both necessary and impossible. These facets of self—our ideological and thereby subjective self—are necessary inasmuch as having them is at the core of *being* what we are. We literally could not be a self without believing as we do. It is chiefly through Lacan, who pops up throughout the dissertation—only occasionally systematically—that I talk about this fact of subjective necessity.

At the same time, many of those things that we *must* believe *cannot* be believed coherently. There remain internal contradictions at the core of ideologies; and these contradictions remain not as accidents, but as essential, functional necessities of ideologies. A positivistic thinker, insofar as one might be willing to talk about ideologies at all (for example, analytic Marxists, like Roemer or Elster), might hope for a reduction of an ideology to a coherent collection of interested beliefs. I mention what I call the Engels/Gramsci approach in the section *Why Ideology is Not Ideational*. This amounts to precisely the positivism I indicate in this paragraph (but

let us not jump to any characterization of Engels or Gramsci generally from this naming).

If an ideology were just a system of beliefs that the ruling class foists on an unwitting working class, coherency and consistency would be a high goal in such a scheme or plot. We might, indeed, very soon design AI machines upon whom we will impose ideologies as a way of normativizing their actions—similar epistemic/semantic schemes are currently called 'ontologies' by actual computer scientists. Again, coherency would be a desideratum here (one thinks of old *Star Trek* episodes, or Clark's *2001*). But actual lived ideologies have not, and I believe cannot, have such consistency. Real ideologies function, subjectivate, by means of their inconsistencies. I think the best effort I have made in discussing this was in the section *The American in Me*, in relation to some now-superseded contradictory coeval tendencies of American racial ideology. But I have had the notion of inconsistency in mind in all my ideological case-studies.

The conjunction of necessary and impossible that I assert poses special problems in the context of early modern philosophy. I do not write much directly about Descartes, Hume, Kant, or similar cannonical philosophers-of-mind. But they are nonetheless my targets, much as they have been the targets of perhaps the majority of philosophy since Nietzsche—not just the targets of phenomenologists and postmodernists, but even that of the likes of Wittgenstein, Quine or Goodman. There are many more dissertations pointed to by the few sentences of this paragraph than I am able to write. But without trying to write them, I can still safely observe that philosophy between Descartes and Nietzsche took as axiomatic that it was possible to form a deduction from some collection of inevitable ideas to a veracious picture of the world. What was necessary

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[108]Under the topic *Ideology in Opaque Contexts*, I made some remarks about what is special about ideology in an epistemic sense. As well, the discussions of Mocnik try to flesh out some related points. The special kind of antonymic relationship between 'necessary' and 'impossible' is also pointed to somewhat passingly in footnote 89, in discussion of Greimasian squares.

was both actual and possible. I am not the first, not the best, and will not be the last; but I am still trying to exorcize the ghost of Descartes—and perhaps thereby to give Descartes' daemon its due. Underneath obscure and technical digressions in evolutionary biology, Lacanian analytics, literary rants on movies about sex, and most everthing else herein, lay so many attempts to answer the audacious inference,

> Doubtless, then, I exist, since I am deceived; and, let him deceive me as he may, he can never bring it about that I am nothing, so long as I shall be conscious that I am something. So that it must, in fine, be maintained, all things being maturely and carefully considered, that this proposition (pronunciatum) I am, I exist, is necessarily true each time it is expressed by me, or conceived in my mind. [Descartes, 1641,

http://philos.wright.edu/Descartes/Meditation2.html][109]

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[109]Or more accurately (though my Latin is rusty),
Sed est deceptor nescio quis, summe potens, summe callidus, qui de industria me semper fallit. Haud dubie igitur ego etiam sum, si me fallit; & fallat quantum potest, nunquam tamen efficiet, ut nihil sim quamdiu me aliquid esse cogitabo. Adeo ut, omnibus satis superque pensitatis, denique statuendum sit hoc pronuntiatum, Ego sum, ego existo, quoties a me profertur, vel mente concipitur, necessario esse verum.
[http://philos.wright.edu/Descartes/Meditation2L.html#I3]

Second Concept: Totalization

Ideologies, sometimes, have a tendency toward totality. Sometimes they forclose discussion of particular notions by becoming *outsideless*. One might analogize *outsidelessness* to surfaces, spheres, Möbius strips, Kline bottles, and Hilbert spaces. Lacan's digressions into topology were, in part, efforts to capture this notion; albeit, perhaps, too literalistically. Rather than push too much for a specific geometric or mathematical metaphor, I think it most useful to connect totalization with my "first concept" of necessity as a feature of subjectivation. As much as I can find an outside from which to look in at hegemonic (totalized) ideologies, I notice a "paradoxical" contrast between superstructure and base; Symbolic Order and reality; phenomena and noumena; Ideology and history. A number of pairs proposed by a number of thinkers point to what I want to observe, which can actually be stated fairly simply: certain beliefs, at certain times, are so inevitable to some subjectivities that they are difficult to notice, and impossible to refute; and yet these same beliefs are historically transient, even fleeting.

Discursive rationality has its place, and its scope. But it also has its distinct limitations; and these limits wall off everything really important. The ideologies that truly control us, and that most profoundly shape human social relations, are those that have forclosed outsides. While the content of certain scientific theories, for example, remains open to disputation, argument and evidence, many other beliefs exist purely in the background, assumed uniformly by all parties to such thereby superficial disputes. Conception has a horizon. And beyond this horizon, nothing is visible, and nothing can be described. And yet, our *a priori* is—in a phrase of Foucault—an *historical a priori*. The limits of our conception are not those that limited subjects of the past, interpellated by different ideologies, nor those that will limit subjects of the future.

One of the basic problems that I have attempted to address by this dissertation is understanding how ideas that cannot be doubted now, were unimagined in the past, and will be dismissed as comical in the future. I have attempted to address this in part out of the anti-Cartesianism discussed in the prior topic of this conclusion; but I have also another motive. As a political radical—or even just as someone with a political motive of any sort—I want to change social reality; and as an academic and a philosopher, I suppose I want to do it by the "talking cure." At the same time, I recognize that I am a subject interpellated by ideologies. As such, whatever I speak of may be only what I *can* speak of: detritus, epiphenomena, superficiality—but what I would need to speak of might be that which lies past my horizon of conception, on the outside of the outsideless ideologies in which I live.

My attempt to speak from the outside of the outsidelessness I must be within, my horizon of conception, is peformed through what Jeremy Barris wrote about as a 'dance' [Barris, 1990]. First I step outside of what I am actually outside of—those fairly short-lived ideologies I write about in Chapter V, or the narrow racial ideologies in the latter part of Chapter IV, for example—then I step back into what, for me, has no outside—gender, causality, perhaps race as an ontological conceit. It is almost as if the sufficiently rapid juxtoposition of chapters and sections might carry with it a perceptual trace, as staring at a repeating and contrastive pattern can leave a visual remnant on a flat surface after the pattern's removal (although perhaps an inversion or distortion of the original pattern). What I try to create by the exercise of this dissertation is at least a nagging doubt, "What if those things we *know* to be true are ideological falsities in some unspecifiable

manner?"

My pessimism that opens this conclusion arises from the fact that I cannot hope for better than a subjunctive mood to my strongest conclusions. To paraphrase Nietzsche: supposing our deepest held beliefs to be limited, compliant, and false, what then? There is no good positive advice to give here. Critical theory's immanentist ideology critique does not crank out verisimilitudinous revolutionary slogans. The perspective of the proletariat may be *truer* in some regards, but we still are left with a matter of degrees. Or still worse, what we need is not truth at all—we already have plenty of that, and it has generally let us down. What we need is an enunciative position outside speech, a subject outside ideology, an actor and knower who is outside our outsideless horizon of being. We ain't got that! The closest I come to being able to point at the Revolutionary Subject this paragraph fantasizes is with Hakim Bey's excursions into mysticism; with Situationism's drifts into… well, into mysticism also, I suppose; a sort of *feminine jouissance* in my exegeses of 'hysterical movies' (Lacan's mysticism, and Benjamin's). As a footnote, one could observe how much Bataille, or Sorel, or perhaps less flatteringly, Baudrillard, wind up where I have wound up. This is not exactly where I wanted to go when I started this dissertation, despite the good company I keep here.

Third Concept: Ideological Adhesion

My salvation—to carry on (no doubt too far) the analogy of the unsatisfying mysticism of my "second concept," above—is in a realization that crystalized for me while writing later portions of this dissertation. I introduce the 'adhesive theory of ideological change' in my section *The Irrelevance of Critique*, use it quite extensively throughout Chapter VII, and use it somewhat more lightly in Chapter V, in the section *Biology and Her Sisters*, and elsewhere. Explicitly identifying the adhesive theory, and naming it such, came after I had made implicit use of the idea in a large number of places. It both does and does not do what the term 'terrorism' of my title was intended for.

I believe that change within totalized ideologies must have extrinsic sources. Talking about terrorism is in many ways like talking about mysticism, as I do in this conclusion and in the places referred to by this conclusion. It is to pose an externality—an 'intrusion of the real' in Zizek-ese—as a cause behind change within ideology. I still believe in this effectivity of extrinsic causes: the cry of 'Fire!' I talk about, or the quieting-by-death of ideologically influential embodied discursive positions, really does quite often wind up shaping the resultant range of discursive positions. But the terrorist effectivity remains at the level of 'that about which we cannot speak' (to paraphrase the last remark of the *Tractatus*); about it I must still remain silent. At the same time, however, Barris' dance reveals an extrinsic intrinsity—or maybe, an intrinsic extrinsity. Ideology is its own outside! Or rather, ideologies are outsides for each other.

What occurs over and over, I have found, is that ideologies sometimes attach themselves together. In doing this, the most global of totalizations sometimes glom on to trivial and transient ideologies, or the reverse—but with the effect that the tail wags the dog. Moreover, ideologies sometimes attach without necessarily being directly of the same domain. It may well occur that a Kuhnian thorn—some "small" bit of

observation, or tangential theoretical quandry—in the side of a grander theory winds up unraveling the whole of the theory. But what really interests me is those times that conceptually and historically dissimilar set of ideas undergo this same (pseudo-)Kuhnian process. Why disease with liberation (*Forgotten Aids Myths*)? Why causality with film representations of femininity (*The Ideology of Causation* and *Hysterical Movies*)? Why evolutionary biology with *Homo Economicus* (*Biology and Her Sisters*)? Why electrification with capital punishment (*The Irrelevance of Critique*)?

For all of the ideological conjunctions I examine one can find analogies, overlapping histories, and specific shared conceptual terms. In some pairs these are closer than in others. But in none of the examples I analyze in this dissertation do I think that anyone could determine the adhesed causal histories save through the virtue of hindsight. Or in some cases, one can see them only through the lens of a hopeful imagination. We can simply observe that adhesions occur; and observe with a certain optimism that political histories can sometimes thereby take unexpected turns. For totalizing ideologies—hegemonies—critique lacks a ground, and direct confrontation can hardly be even imagined. And yet these same totalities sometimes ride along with ephemera, things that lie within our horizons of conception and are within our power to influence consciously and directly. Our nagging problem remains in identifying what ideologies are so fused in anything but retrospect.

APPENDIX A: COPYRIGHT TERMS

Intellectual property is a sham. Increasingly, IP law serves as a means of social control and regulation by the powerful of the less powerful, and as a means of transferring wealth from the poor to the rich. A depressing downward spiral of freedoms leads from the Berne Convention, to repeatedly extended barring of intellectual works from the public domain by the U.S. Congress, to the truly sickening World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) in all its contrivances. At the same time, over the last few years a virus—or several competing viruses—has infected a certain domain of expression, that surrounding computer source code. Licenses like the GNU General Public License (GPL), Perl Artistic License, Berkeley Software License, and others, have been means of creating intellectual works under copyright terms specially crafted to make derived works remain in the open, and remain beneficial to the public good.

Computer source code has been a special case. It falls into a different economy of derived works than do other intellectual products, and is subject to different technical contraints and possibilities. However, many people familiar with the efforts of "Open Source" licenses, like the examples mentioned, have wanted to create a similar framework for the protection of "content." The best such framework to date is the OpenContent License (OPL). The OPL may not be the last word in protecting the freedom of ideas. But it is a good start. I release this document, the Dissertation in Philosophy titled "The Speculum and the Scalpel" by David Mertz, under the terms of the OPL:

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APPENDIX B: BILDUNGSROMANS

A long time ago—shortly before I started in this doctoral program—I wrote an extended review of a book by Jagdish Hattiangadi called How is Language Possible?. Hattiangadi's book is largely about a subject that I guess one would do well to call 'evolutionary epistemology'. He thinks—or at least he thought 12 years ago—that since people have at least a bit of a tendency to believe true things over false ones, we must have evolved biologically to act in this weakly verisimilitudinous manner. I don't think that Hattiangadi's book is a particularly pivotal one, although I still think it is interesting and worthwhile. But as a point of biography, I entered Massachusetts, and graduate school, with a certain nagging doubt.

In the conclusion to my dissertation, I talk a bit about trying to answer Descartes' cogito. But actually, there is something underneath the cogito, and underneath most all of philosophy. We assume—as philosophers, but also just as human beings—that we have a verisimilitudinous tendency. Truth is something we arrive at, at least at times. What if this is not "true"? What if we are not the sorts of beings that tend towards truths; or truths are not the sorts of things that one can tend towards. This is the little nagging doubt that I wrote a dissertation about.

Obviously, I have a problem here. I've said as much in my dissertation, especially in its introduction, although saying it doesn't alleviate the problem at all. Anything I might do to try to prove the contrary of our verisimilitudinous assumption is just a way of exemplifying it. Any critique or refutation I might provide in relation to my nagging doubt firstly affirms and presupposes the very verisimilitudinous assumption I want to upset. I am trapped—and the rest of you with me, I think—but my confinement still shouldn't imply my correctness. Or at least that is still my little doubt.

I suppose I could have written a dissertation about radical skepticism. Brains in vats. Evil demons. I suppose for an updated twist, I could write about virtual realities of a computer generated sort. But I think it would have been a forgone conclusion that I lose that game. Maybe such scenarios are right, and if so, there is nothing much I can say one way or another. God doesn't rescue me; as He did Descartes. But I think what I did write is much better than that other dissertation. What I wanted to do—and what I think I did—was instead take as given that everything I (or we) believe is pretty much accurate, at least in an overall way. But I have wanted to ask whether even given all that, this nagging verisimilitudinous assumption holds up. Obviously, I think it does not.

I think that if one thinks about my dissertation in terms of my nagging doubt and the approach to it I mention, it might make a little more sense why I include the many of the jarringly heterogenous elements in my dissertation that I do. For example, I know it is difficult to read my biology chapter in continuity with the later ones. But if only for the reasons of biography I have mentioned, I thought it fair to give evolutionary epistemology its chance at grounding our verisimilitudinous assumption. I

find, of course, that a biological ground does not *ground* truth. But it needed its chance.

I have already hinted at a reading strategy by now; but let me say it explicitly. The dissertation I am defending today is really a Bildungsromans. It is the story of how I spent the last decade of my intellectual life. Many of the things that have happened in this last decade did not just happen to me, but also to the philosophical community around me. This decade, I find, has been epitomized and exemplified foremost in the fact that Slavoj Zizek started writing books in English—those in Slovenian are not accessible to me, and are similarly closed to much of the philosophical community. These books have been a joy to read, but have also been something of a curse. With each successive book, Zizek has snatched away those three-fourths thought and half written words that I wished to use in my own essays and chapters. The challenge for me—in a certain odd way rightly overly long in coming—has been to write what I wanted to write without it winding up as mere plagiarism.

As important as Zizek's books have been, they are part of a philosophical moment—maybe even a movement—that shares a number of constellations. These constellations are identified by four specific names, each affixed with the prefix 'post-'. The more commonplace 'post-'s—postmodern and post-structuralist, among a few others—are approximations here. The better names are—almost—the four names obliquely bandied in the introduction to Zizek's first book: Althusser, Lacan, Foucault and Habermas. The last is a ruse, however. I do not think Habermas quite warrants his own prefix, but rather he is listed more for the chair he sits in than for the books he writes. The proper name here would be, by my allusion, Horkheimer; but better still, simply Critical Theory. To write social philosophy in the 1990's is to come to grips with Althusser, Lacan, Foucault and Critical Theory. By and large, this is what Judith Butler, Etienne Balibar, Jacques-Alain Miller, Frederic Jameson, Laclau and Mouffe, and a variety of other thinkers have been doing. I myself am included in that list—at least if it is made long enough.

If there is one neat question that I would try to place underneath this whole list of thinkers—including myself—it would be, "How does ideology work, given the ultimate vacuity of subjectivation?" That is pretty much the topic of all my dissertation. I tend to be more motivated by the epistemic impetus of my mentioned nagging doubt than are most of those listed or hinted at. Actually, my epistemic questions do not, in the end, fall all that far from the almost wholly unmentioned Quine, and Kuhn, and Feyerabend, and Latour, who picqued them in the first place, in my biography. But whatever the starting of my journey to this moment of social philosophy in the 1990s, the current ground must be post-Lacanian, post-Althusserian, post-Foucauldian, and post-Critical Theory. I hope to have said something while standing on this ground.

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Words are micro-organisms, living dust that the electronic revolution only assembles and
orders, right up to the differentiated levels of meaning." [Virilio, 1991a, p.67]

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