Culture and Imperialism

Culture and Imperialism is a 1993 collection of thematically related essays by Palestinian-American academic Edward Said, tracing the connection between imperialism and culture throughout the 18th, 19th, and 20th centuries. The essays expand the arguments of Orientalism to describe general patterns of relation, between the modern metropolitan Western world and their overseas colonial territories.

Subject

In the work, Said explored the impact British novelists such as Jane Austen, Joseph Conrad, E.M. Forster, and Rudyard Kipling had on the establishment and maintenance of the British Empire,[2] and how colonization, anti-imperialism, and decolonization influenced Western literature during the 19th and 20th centuries.[3] In the beginning of the work, Said claims that the Daniel Defoe novel Robinson Crusoe, published in 1719, set the precedent for such ideas in Western literature; the novel being about a European man who travels to the Americas and establishes a fiefdom in a distant, non-European island.

As the connection between culture and empire, literature has "the power to narrate, or to block other narratives from forming and emerging", which might contradict the colonization of a people.[5] Hence he analyzes cultural objects to understand how imperialism functions: "For the enterprise of empire depends upon the idea of having an empire . . . and all kinds of preparations are made for it within a culture; then, in turn, imperialism acquires a kind of coherence, a set of experiences, and a presence of ruler and ruled alike within the culture."

Imperialism is "the practice, the theory, and the attitudes of a dominating metropolitan center ruling a distant territory." His definition of "culture" is more complex, but he strongly suggests that we ought not to forget imperialism when discussing it. Of his overall motive, Said states:

"The novels and other books I consider here I analyze because first of all I find them estimable and admirable works of art and learning, in which I and many other readers take pleasure and from which we derive profit. Second, the challenge is to connect them not only with that pleasure and profit but also with the imperial process of which they were manifestly and unconcealedly a part; rather than condemning or ignoring their participation in what was an unquestioned reality in their societies, I suggest that what we learn about this hitherto ignored aspect actually and truly enhances our reading and understanding of them."

The title is thought to be a reference to two older works, Culture and Anarchy (1867–68) by Matthew Arnold and Culture and Society (1958) by Raymond Williams.[9]

Said argues that, although the "age of empire" largely ended after the Second World War, when most colonies gained independence, imperialism continues to exert considerable cultural influence in the present. To be aware of this fact, it is necessary, according to Said, to look at how colonialists and imperialists employed "culture" to control distant land and peoples.

Synopsis

Said argues that cultural productions such as literature, music, and art are shaped by the political and economic context in which they are produced. He argues that imperialism has played a significant role in shaping Western culture, and that many works of art and literature can be seen as reflections or products of imperialism.

He also explores the ways in which imperialism has been represented in cultural productions, such as novels and films, and argues that these representations have often been used to justify and perpetuate

imperialism. He highlights the importance of examining cultural productions in their historical and political context, and argues that doing so can reveal the complex ways in which culture and power are intertwined. The book covers a range of topics, from the impact of colonialism on the works of Joseph Conrad and Jane Austen, to the ways in which Western films have depicted the East.

Chapter 1. Overlapping Territories, Intertwined Histories

Said says that West has positioned itself as a self-evidently superior, independently developed culture that naturally should share its civilization with inferior others via colonization, which is almost always a product of imperialism. Non-European cultures are therefore assigned a secondary status, which is paradoxically necessary for the supposed primacy of Western culture. Said argues for reading the literary canon with an awareness of these intertwined histories, that support the expansion of Western supremacy.

Chapter 2. Consolidated Vision

Said surveys several canonical works to argue that they support imperialism by the way they ignore or amplify certain narratives including works of Rudyard Kipling, Jane Austen, Giuseppe Verdi and Albert Camus.

Chapter 3. Resistance and Opposition

Resistance to imperialism is often times ignored in the Western narrative, but nevertheless, real. The voice of the colonized is not heard in the colony until independence is achieved. Said critiques the formation of a monolithic nationalism to replace a former colonial polity, instead drawing attention to the diversity and complexity of the individuals in the territory. He posits that peoples have multiple overlapping identities and shared heritage as compared to the divisiveness required by the imperial project.

Chapter 4. Freedom from Domination in the Future

The United States has replaced Europe as the self-appointed guardian of a purported superior Western civilization, and the narratives of European civilizing mission continue to this day with its center in North America. Said laments this development and believes that imperialism will not cease until we understand that no culture can claim to be superior to others, claim international authority, or direct the destinies of inferior others. Said believes that diversity is valuable and complex and cannot be reduced to simple identity symbiology. Said indicts public intellectuals in their silence towards the continuing narrative of Western exceptionalism and superiority. He exhorts them to transcend their national interests and see common interests and values across the rest of the world.

Reception

Edward Said was considered "one of the most important literary critics and philosophers of the late 20th century". Culture and Imperialism was hailed as long-awaited and seen as a direct successor to his main work, Orientalism. While The New York Times review notes the book's heavy resemblance to a collection of lectures, it concludes that "Yet that telegraphic style does not finally mar either the usefulness of 'Culture and Imperialism' or its importance." The book is seen as a "classic study", and has influenced many later authors, books and articles.

Philosopher and social anthropologist Ernest Gellner criticized Said for "exploiting Western guilt about imperialism."

Empire

An empire is an aggregate of many separate states or territories under a supreme ruler or oligarchy. This is in contrast to a federation, which is an extensive state voluntarily composed of autonomous states and peoples. An empire is a large polity which rules over territories outside of its original borders.

Definitions of what physically and politically constitutes an empire vary. It might be a state affecting imperial policies or a particular political structure. Empires are typically formed from diverse ethnic, national, cultural, and religious components.[8] 'Empire' and 'colonialism' are used to refer to relationships between a powerful state or society versus a less powerful one; Michael W. Doyle has defined empire as "effective control, whether formal or informal, of a subordinated society by an imperial society".[9]

Imperialism for Doyle is simply the process of establishing and maintaining an empire.[10] This is not to be confused with the Imperialism in the Marxist-Leninst sense of late modern phenomenon following the European Colonialism and representing the last stage of Capitalism.[11] Initially, the term was New Imperialism, where the qualifier "new" differentiated the contemporary imperialism from earlier imperialism, such as the formation of ancient empires and the first wave of European colonization.[12] Eventually, Lenin cancelled all earlier forms and began the history of Imperialism in the 1760s. The Leninist definition of imperialism removed the essence of empire from politics to economics and explicitly denied that modern capitalist imperialism had anything in common with the empires of the past.[13] Few historians follow the Marxist approach and most recognize that imperialism predates the European colonialism and capitalism by 4.5 millennia at least. The Marxist historians moved so far from mainstream historians' debates on empire that communication almost ceases.[14]

Tom Nairn and Paul James define empires as polities that "extend relations of power across territorial spaces over which they have no prior or given legal sovereignty, and where, in one or more of the domains of economics, politics, and culture, they gain some measure of extensive hegemony over those spaces to extract or accrue value".[15] Rein Taagepera has defined an empire as "any relatively large sovereign political entity whose components are not sovereign".[16] Peter Bang characterizes empire as "composite, layered and anything but uniform in their internal organization of power," and comprising "a range of different territories and communities, subjected hierarchically in various ways to a dominant power."[17]

However, sometimes an empire is only a semantic construction, such as when a ruler assumes the title of "emperor".[18][19][20][21] That polity over which the ruler reigns logically becomes an "empire", despite having no additional territory or hegemony. Examples of this form of empire are the Central African Empire, Mexican Empire, or the Korean Empire proclaimed in 1897 when Korea, far from gaining new territory, was on the verge of being annexed by the Empire of Japan, one of the last to use the name officially. Among the last states in the 20th century known as empires in this sense were the Central African Empire, Ethiopia, Vietnam, Manchukuo, Russia, Germany, and Korea.

Scholars typically distinguish empires from nation-states.[22][23][24] In an empire, there is a hierarchy whereby one group of people (usually, the metropole) has command over other groups of people, and there is a hierarchy of rights and prestige for different groups of people.[25] Josep Colomer distinguished between empires and states in the following way:

1. Empires were vastly larger than states
2. Empires lacked fixed or permanent boundaries whereas a state had fixed boundaries
3. Empires had a "compound of diverse groups and territorial units with asymmetric links with the center" whereas a state had "supreme authority over a territory and population"

4. Empires had multi-level, overlapping jurisdictions whereas a state sought monopoly and homogenization.

Characteristics

Many empires were the result of military conquest, incorporating the vanquished states into a political union, but imperial hegemony can be established in other ways. According to Edward Luttwak, there are two main ways to establish and maintain an imperial political structure: (i) as a territorial empire of direct conquest and control by force or (ii) as a coercive, hegemonic empire of indirect control. The former method provides greater tribute and direct political control, yet limits further expansion because it absorbs military forces to fixed garrisons. The latter method provides less tribute and indirect control, but avails military forces for further expansion.[26]

Empires can expand by both land and sea. Territorial empires (e.g. the Macedonian Empire and Byzantine Empire) tend to be contiguous areas extending directly outwards from the original frontier. The terrestrial empire's maritime analogue is the thalassocracy, an empire composed of islands and coasts which are accessible to its terrestrial homeland, such as the Athenian-dominated Delian League and British empires) with looser structures and more scattered territories, often consisting of many islands and other forms of possessions which required the creation and maintenance of a powerful navy.[27]

The Athenian Empire, the Roman Empire, and the British Empire developed at least in part under elective auspices. Empires such as the Holy Roman Empire also came together by electing the emperor with votes from member realms through the Imperial election. The Empire of Brazil declared itself an empire after separating from the Portuguese Empire in 1822. France has twice transitioned from being called the French Republic to being called the French Empire while it retained an overseas empire.[28] Europeans began applying the designation of "empire" to non-European monarchies, such as the Qing Empire and the Mughal Empire, as well as the Maratha Confederacy, eventually leading to the looser denotations applicable to any political structure meeting their criteria of "imperium". Some monarchies styled themselves as having greater size, scope, and power than the territorial, politico-military, and economic facts support. As a consequence, some monarchs assumed the title of "emperor" (or its corresponding translation, tsar, empereur, kaiser, shah etc.) and renamed their states as "The Empire of ..."

Empires were seen as an expanding power, administration, ideas, beliefs and cultural habits. Some empires tended to impose their culture on the subject states to strengthen the imperial structure; others opted for multicultural and cosmopolitan policies.[29] Cultures generated by empires could have notable effects that outlasted the empire itself.

In the mid-Twentieth century, the word "empire" obtained a negative connotation, viewed as inherently immoral or illegitimate.[30] Traditional or overt empire destroyed and discredited itself in the World Wars. The matters are worse in the German language where empire is "reich" and immediately associates with the Third Reich.[31] For the first time in history, countries which proudly called themselves empires disappeared from the map. The postwar world came under the domination of two superpowers both of which proclaimed themselves to be enemies of empire. As former colonies came to make up the majority of states in the United Nations, "empire" lost all legitimacy in this major international forum. "Any state stupid enough to call itself an empire became subject automatically to UN resolutions on decolonisation."[32] Most recent histories of empires have been hostile, especially if the authors were promoting nationalism. Stephen Howe, although himself hostile, listed positive qualities: the guaranteed stability, security, and legal order for their subjects. They tried to minimize ethnic and religious

antagonism inside the empire. The aristocracies that ruled them were often more cosmopolitan and broad-minded than their nationalistic successors.

History of imperialism

Early empires

Stephen Howe writes that with the exception of the Roman, Chinese and "perhaps ancient Egyptian states", early empires seldom survived the death of their founder and were usually limited in scope to conquest and collection of tribute, having little impact on the everyday lives of their subjects.

With the exception of Rome, the periods of dissolution following imperial falls were equally short. Successor states seldom outlived their founders and disappeared in the next and often larger empire. Some empires, like the Neo-Babylonian, Median and Lydian were outright conquered by a larger empire. The historical pattern was not a simple rise-and-fall cycle; rather it was rise, fall, and greater rise. Raoul Naroll called it "expanding pulsation"[37] and Ian Morris "exponential growth"[38]

Empires were limited in scope to conquest, as Howe observed, but conquest is a considerable scope. Many fought to the death to avoid it or to be liberated from it. Imperial conquests and attempts of conquest significantly contributed to the list of wars by death toll. The imperial impact on subjects can be regarded as "little," but only on those subjects who survived the imperial conquest and rule. We cannot ask the inhabitants of Carthage and Masada, for example, whether empire had little impact on their lives. We seldom hear the voices of subject peoples because history is mostly written by winners. The imperial sources tend to ignore or reduce the resistance by subdued states.[39] But one rich primary source of the subject population is the Hebrew Prophetic books. The hatred towards the ruling empires expressed in this source makes impression of an impact more serious than estimated by Howe. A classical writer and adherent of empire, Orosius explicitly preferred to avoid the views of subject populations.[40] And another classical Roman patriot, Lucan confessed that "words cannot express how bitterly we are hated" by subject peoples.[41]

The earliest known empire appeared in southern Egypt sometime around 3200 BC. Southern Egypt was divided by three kingdoms each centered on a powerful city. Hierapolis conquered the other two cities over two centuries, and later grew into the country of Egypt.[42] The Akkadian Empire, established by Sargon of Akkad (24th century BC), was an early all-Mesopotamian empire which spread into Anatolia, the Levant and Ancient Iran. This imperial achievement was repeated by Shamshi-Adad I of Assyria and Hammurabi of Babylon in the 19th and 18th centuries BC. In the 15th century BC, the New Kingdom of Ancient Egypt, ruled by Thutmose III, was ancient Africa's major force upon incorporating Nubia and the ancient city-states of the Levant.

c. 1500 BC in China rose the Shang Empire which was succeeded by the Zhou Empire c. 1100 BC. Both equalled or surpassed in territory their contemporary Near Eastern empires such as the Middle Assyrian Empire, Hittite Empire, Egyptian Empire and those of the Mitanni and Elamites. The Zhou Empire dissolved in 770 BC into feudal multi-state system which lasted for five and a half centuries until the universal conquest of Qin in 221 BC. The first empire comparable to Rome in organization was the Neo-Assyrian Empire (916–612 BC). The Median Empire was the first empire within the territory of Persia. By the 6th century BC, after having allied with the Babylonians, Scythians and Cimmerians to defeat the Neo-Assyrian Empire, the Medes were able to establish their own empire, which was the largest of its day and lasted for about sixty years.

Classical period

The Axial Age (mid-First Millennium BC) witnessed unprecedented imperial expansion in the Indo-Mediterranean region and China,[43] distinguished as the most "dramatic" surge in premodern history.[44] The successful and extensive Achaemenid Empire (550–330 BC), also known as the first Persian Empire, covered Mesopotamia, Egypt, parts of Greece, Thrace, the Middle East, much of Central Asia, and North-Western India. It is considered the first great empire in history or the first "world empire".[45] It was overthrown and replaced by the short-lived empire of Alexander the Great. His Empire was succeeded by three Empires ruled by the Diadochi—the Seleucid, Ptolemaic, and Macedonian, which, despite being independent, are called the "Hellenistic Empire" by virtue of their similarities in culture and administration.

Meanwhile, in the western Mediterranean the Empires of Carthage and Rome began their rise. Having decisively defeated Carthage in 202 BC, Rome defeated Macedonia in 200 BC and the Seleucids in 190–189 BC to establish an all-Mediterranean Empire. The Seleucid Empire broke apart and its former eastern part was absorbed by the Parthian Empire. In 30 BC Rome annexed Ptolemaic Egypt.

In India during the Axial Age appeared the Maurya Empire—a geographically extensive and powerful empire, ruled by the Mauryan dynasty from 321 to 185 BC. The empire was founded in 322 BC by Chandragupta Maurya through the help of Chanakya,[46] who rapidly expanded his power westward across central and western India, taking advantage of the disruptions of local powers following the withdrawal by Alexander the Great. By 320 BC, the Maurya Empire had fully occupied northwestern India as well as defeating and conquering the satraps left by Alexander. Under Emperor Ashoka the Great, the Maurya Empire became the first Indian empire to conquer the whole Indian Peninsula — an achievement repeated only twice, by the Gupta and Mughal Empires. In the reign of Ashoka Buddhism spread to become the dominant religion in many parts of the ancient India.[42]

In 221 BC, China became an empire when the State of Qin ended the chaotic Warring States period through its conquest of the other six states, starting the Qin Empire (221–207 BC). Its sovereign adopted the new title of Huangdi (皇帝), which is translated in English as "Emperor". The Qin Empire is known for the construction of the Great Wall of China and the Terracotta Army, as well as the standardization of currency, weights, measures and writing system. It laid the foundation for China's first golden age, the Han dynasty (202 BC–AD 9, AD 25–220). The Han Empire expanded into Central Asia and established trade through the Silk Road. Confucianism was, for the first time, adopted as an official state ideology. During the reign of the Emperor Wu of Han, the Xiongnu were pacified. By this time, only four empires stretched between the Pacific and the Atlantic: the Han Empire of China, the Kushan Empire, the Parthian Empire of Persia, and the Roman Empire. The collapse of the Han Empire in AD 220 saw China fragmented into the Three Kingdoms, only to be unified once again by the Jin Empire (AD 266–420). The relative weakness of the Jin Empire plunged China into political disunity that would last from AD 304 to AD 589 when the Sui Empire (AD 581–618) reunited China.[42]

The Romans were the first people to invent and embody the concept of "empire" in their two mandates: to wage war and to make and execute laws.[6] They were the most extensive Western empire until the early modern period, and left a lasting impact on European society. Many languages, cultural values, religious institutions, political divisions, urban centers, and legal systems can trace their origins to the Roman Empire. The Roman Empire governed and rested on exploitative actions. They took slaves and money from the peripheries to support the imperial center.[6] However, the absolute reliance on conquered peoples to carry out the empire's fortune, sustain wealth, and fight wars would ultimately lead to the collapse of the Roman Empire.[6] The Romans were strong believers in what they called their "civilizing mission". This term was legitimized and justified by writers like Cicero who wrote that only under

Roman rule could the world flourish and prosper.[6] This ideology, that was envisioned to bring a new world order, was eventually spread across the Mediterranean world and beyond. People started to build houses like Romans, eat the same food, wear the same clothes and engage in the same games.[6] Even rights of citizenship and authority to rule were granted to people not born within Roman territory.[6]

The Latin word imperium derives from imperare, meaning "to command", and originally referred to a magistrate's authority (usually in a military sense). As the Roman state expanded overseas, the term began to be used to describe Rome's authority over its colonies and client states. Successful generals were often given the title imperator, an honorific roughly meaning "commander". Although historians use the terms "Republic" and "Empire" to identify the periods of Roman history before and after absolute power was assumed by Augustus, the Romans themselves continued to refer to their government as the Res publica, meaning "public affair". On the other hand, the concept of imperium Romanum, as in, the authority of the Romans, is attested since the 2nd century BC. The modern concepts of "Empire" and "Emperor" did not appear until several centuries later, long after the fall of Rome in the West. Augustus established a new de facto monarchy, but sought to maintain the appearance of a republican government. He and his early successors used the informal titles of augustus and princeps, but over time the title of imperator came to denote the office of (what is now referred to as) "emperor".[47][48][49]

The Roman Catholic Church, founded in the early Imperial Period, spread across Europe, first by the activities of Christian evangelists, and later by official imperial promulgation. The legal systems of France and its former colonies are strongly influenced by Roman law.[50] Similarly, the United States was founded on a model inspired by the Roman Republic, with upper and lower legislative assemblies, and executive power vested in a single individual, the president. The president, as "commander-in-chief" of the armed forces, reflects the ancient Roman titles imperator princeps.[51] Since 2002, all the world is divided between US "commands" literally reflecting Roman imperia.

Post-classical period

In Western Asia, the term "Persian Empire" came to denote the Iranian imperial states established in the pre–Islamic and, beginning with the Safavid Empire, modern Persia.[42] In the 7th century, the Arab Empire was established by Muhammad, the founder of Islam.[52] Over the next century, in one of the fastest and vastest expansions in history,[53] his Empire conquered Persia and expanded on three continents (Asia, Africa, and Europe). At their height, under the Umayyad Caliphate, the territory that was conquered by the Arab Empire stretched from Iberia (at the Pyrenees) in the west to India (at Sind) in the east. In 751 AD, the Arab and Chinese Empires clashed in the Battle of Talas. These two Empires crossed the whole Old World from the Atlantic to the Pacific.

In East Asia, various Chinese empires (or dynasties) dominated the political, economic and cultural landscapes during this era, the most powerful of which was probably the Tang Empire (618–690, 705–907). Other influential Chinese empires during the post-classical period include the Sui Empire (581–618), the Great Liao Empire, the Song Empire, the Western Xia Empire (1038–1227), the Great Jin Empire (1115–1234), the Western Liao Empire (1124–1218), the Great Yuan Empire (1271–1368), and the Great Ming Empire (1368–1644). During this period, Japan and Korea underwent voluntary Sinicization.[54][55][56] The Sui, Tang and Song empires had the world's largest economy and were the most technologically advanced during their time;[57][58] the Great Yuan Empire was the world's ninth largest empire by total land area; while the Great Ming Empire is famous for the seven maritime expeditions led by Zheng He.[42]

Around the 6th century, the Yamato clan set up Japan's first empire and first and only dynasty.[59] During the next two centuries, Japan's kingdoms and tribes came to be unified under this

dynasty. The Japanese emperor adopted the Chinese title Son of Heaven. Emperor Kinmei (509–571) is considered the first historically verifiable Japanese emperor.[60] The Japanese imperial dynasty continues to this day, albeit in an almost entirely ceremonial role, and represents the oldest continuous hereditary monarchy in the world.

The Ajuran Sultanate was a Somali empire in the medieval times that dominated the Indian Ocean trade. It was a Somali Muslim sultanate[61][62][63] that ruled over large parts of the Horn of Africa in the Middle Ages. Through a strong centralized administration and an aggressive military stance towards invaders, the Ajuran Sultanate successfully resisted an Oromo invasion from the west and a Portuguese incursion from the east during the Gaal Madow and the Ajuran-Portuguese wars. Trading routes dating from the ancient and early medieval periods of Somali maritime enterprise were strengthened or re-established, and foreign trade and commerce in the coastal provinces flourished with ships sailing to and coming from many kingdoms and empires in East Asia, South Asia, Southeast Asia, Europe, Middle East, North Africa and East Africa.[64]

In the 7th century, Maritime Southeast Asia witnessed the rise of a Buddhist thallasocracy, the Srivijaya Empire, which thrived for 600 years and was succeeded by the Hindu-Buddhist Majapahit Empire that ruled from the 13th to 15th centuries. In the Southeast Asian mainland, the Hindu-Buddhist Khmer Empire was centered in the city of Angkor and flourished from the 9th to 13th centuries. Following the demise of the Khmer Empire, the Siamese Empire flourished alongside the Burmese and Lan Chang Empires from the 13th through the 18th centuries.

In Southeastern and Eastern Europe, during 917, the Eastern Roman Empire, sometimes called the Byzantine Empire, was forced to recognize the Imperial title of Bulgarian ruler Simeon the Great, who were then called Tsar, the first ruler to hold that precise imperial title. The Bulgarian Empire, established in the region in 680–681, remained a major power in Southeast Europe until its fall in the late 14th century. Bulgaria gradually reached its cultural and territorial apogee in the 9th century and early 10th century under Prince Boris I and Simeon I, when it became one of the largest states in Europe. This period is considered the Golden Age of medieval Bulgarian culture.[65][66][67]

At the time, in the Medieval West, the title "empire" had a specific technical meaning that was exclusively applied to states that considered themselves the heirs and successors of the Roman Empire. Among these were the "Byzantine Empire", which was the actual continuation of the Eastern portion of the Roman Empire, the Carolingian Empire, the largely Germanic Holy Roman Empire, and the Russian Empire. Yet, these states did not always fit the geographic, political, or military profiles of empires in the modern sense of the word. To legitimise their imperium, these states directly claimed the title of Empire from Rome. The sacrum Romanum imperium (Holy Roman Empire), which lasted from 800 to 1806, claimed to have exclusively comprehended Christian principalities, and was only nominally a discrete imperial state. The Holy Roman Empire was not always centrally-governed, as it had neither core nor peripheral territories, and was not governed by a central, politico-military elite. Hence, Voltaire's remark that the Holy Roman Empire "was neither holy, nor Roman, nor an empire" is accurate to the degree that it ignores[68] German rule over Italian, French, Provençal, Polish, Flemish, Dutch, and Bohemian populations, and the efforts of the ninth-century Holy Roman Emperors (i.e., the Ottonians) to establish central control. Voltaire's "nor an empire" observation applies to its late period.

In the thirteenth century, Genghis Khan expanded the Mongol Empire to be the largest contiguous empire in the world history. However, within two generations, the empire was separated into four discrete khanates under Genghis Khan's grandsons. One of them, Kublai Khan, conquered China and established the Yuan dynasty with the imperial capital at Beijing. One family ruled the whole Eurasian

land mass from the Pacific to the Adriatic and Baltic Seas. The emergence of the Pax Mongolica had significantly eased trade and commerce across Asia.[69][70]

In 1204, after the Fourth Crusade conquered Constantinople, the crusaders established a Latin Empire (1204–1261) in that city, while the defeated Byzantine Empire's descendants established two smaller, short-lived empires in Asia Minor: the Empire of Nicaea (1204–1261) and the Empire of Trebizond (1204–1461). Constantinople was retaken in 1261 by the Byzantine successor state centered in Nicaea, re-establishing the Byzantine Empire until 1453, by which time the Turkish-Muslim Ottoman Empire (ca. 1300–1918), had conquered most of the region. The Ottoman Empire was a successor of the Abbasid Empire and one of the most powerful empires in the world.[71] Centered on modern day Turkey, the Ottoman Empire overthrew the Byzantine Empire and dominated the eastern Mediterranean, battering at Austria and Malta, key geographical locations to central and south-west Europe respectively.[71]

This was not just a rivalry of East and West but a rivalry between Christians and Muslims.[71] Both the Christians and Muslims had alliances with other countries.[71] The flows of trade and of cultural influences across the supposed great divide never ceased, so the countries never stopped bartering with each other.[6] These epochal clashes between civilizations profoundly shaped many people's thinking back then, and continues to do so in the present day.[1] Modern hatred against Muslim communities in South-Eastern Europe, mainly in Bosnia and Kosovo, has often been articulated in terms of seeing them as unwelcome residues of this imperialism: in short, as Turks.

Fall of empires

The fall of an empire is typically associated with a change in the world order, with a new hegemon replacing the former empire. There is typically a decline in soft power and hard power. During the fall, the empire typically retreats its expanded operations. Trade shrinks as the former empire shifts its priorities towards domestic policy. Living conditions may deteriorate as the economy shrinks. Balkanization or territorial divisions may occur. However, this process is not universal. Some empires are more resilient and fall gracefully while others experience complete chaos.

Roman Empire

Further information: Fall of the Western Roman Empire

The fall of the western half of the Roman Empire is seen as one of the most pivotal points in all of human history. This event traditionally marks the transition from classical civilization to the birth of Europe. The Roman Empire started to decline at the end of the reign of the last of the Five Good Emperors, Marcus Aurelius in 161–180 A.D. There is still a debate over the cause of the fall of one of the largest empires in history. Piganiol argues that the Roman Empire under its authority can be described as "a period of terror",[115] holding its imperial system accountable for its failure. Another theory blames the rise of Christianity as the cause, arguing that the spread of certain Christian ideals caused internal weakness of the military and state.[116] In his book The Fall of the Roman Empire, Peter Heather contends that there are many factors, including issues of money and manpower, which produce military limitations and culminate in the Roman army's inability to effectively repel invading barbarians at the frontier.[117] The Western Roman economy was already stretched to its limit in the 4th and 5th centuries C.E. due to continual conflict and loss of territory which, in turn, generated loss of revenue from the tax base. There was also the looming presence of the Persians which, at any time, took a large percentage of the fighting force's attention. At the same time the Huns, a nomadic warrior people from the steppes of Asia, are also putting extreme pressure on the German tribes outside of the Roman frontier, which gave the German tribes no other choice, geographically, but to move into Roman territory. At this point, without increased funding, the Roman army could no longer effectively defend its borders against major waves of Germanic

tribes. This inability is illustrated by the crushing defeat at Adrianople in 378 C.E. and, later, the Crossing of the Rhine in 406 C.E.

An empire can fall for many reasons. However, why the fall of the Roman Empire was fatal, that is why the post-classical Europe never repeated its ancient unity, is a completely different question. Eurocentrism in the Roman case led to the theory of inevitable imperial fall and Western declinism in imperiology which remains the only widely believed case of historical inevitability. To describe any polity as an empire is usually to damn it as doomed to disappear,[118] usually due to imperial overstretch. Comparative history however alters the Eurocentric theory. The Chinese Empire rose synchronously with Rome and never fell. More precisely, China underwent several disintegrations but each time reunified. Asking why the post-Roman Europe, contrary to China, never reunified reveals factors which the case study of the fall of Rome cannot reveal. The latter question was addressed in this comparative analysis.

Cultural geography

Cultural geography is a subfield within human geography. Though the first traces of the study of different nations and cultures on Earth can be dated back to ancient geographers such as Ptolemy or Strabo, cultural geography as academic study firstly emerged as an alternative to the environmental determinist theories of the early 20th century, which had believed that people and societies are controlled by the environment in which they develop.[1] Rather than studying predetermined regions based upon environmental classifications, cultural geography became interested in cultural landscapes.[1] This was led by the "father of cultural geography" Carl O. Sauer of the University of California, Berkeley. As a result, cultural geography was long dominated by American writers.

Geographers drawing on this tradition see cultures and societies as developing out of their local landscapes but also shaping those landscapes.[2] This interaction between the natural landscape and humans creates the cultural landscape. This understanding is a foundation of cultural geography but has been augmented over the past forty years with more nuanced and complex concepts of culture, drawn from a wide range of disciplines including anthropology, sociology, literary theory, and feminism. No single definition of culture dominates within cultural geography. Regardless of their particular interpretation of culture, however, geographers wholeheartedly reject theories that treat culture as if it took place "on the head of a pin".[3]

Overview

Some of the topics within the field of study are globalization has been theorised as an explanation for cultural convergence.

This geography studies the geography of culture

- Theories of cultural hegemony or cultural assimilation via cultural imperialism
- Cultural areal differentiation, as a study of differences in way of life encompassing ideas, attitudes, languages, practices, institutions and structures of power and whole range of cultural practices in geographical areas.
- Study of cultural landscapes and cultural ecology.

- Other topics include sense of place, colonialism, post-colonialism, internationalism, immigration, emigration and ecotourism.

History

Charles Booth in the 19th century produced a series of books, Life and Labour of the People in London, with various maps highlighting poverty in the city

Though the first traces of the study of different nations and cultures on Earth can be dated back to ancient geographers such as Ptolemy or Strabo, cultural geography as academic study firstly emerged as an alternative to the environmental determinist theories of the early Twentieth century, which had believed that people and societies are controlled by the environment in which they develop.[1] Rather than studying predetermined regions based upon environmental classifications, cultural geography became interested in cultural landscapes.[1] This was led by Carl O. Sauer (called the father of cultural geography), at the University of California, Berkeley. As a result, cultural geography was long dominated by American writers.

Sauer defined the landscape as the defining unit of geographic study. He saw that cultures and societies both developed out of their landscape, but also shaped them too. This interaction between the natural landscape and humans creates the cultural landscape. Sauer's work was highly qualitative and descriptive and was challenged in the 1930s by the regional geography of Richard Hartshorne. Hartshorne called for systematic analysis of the elements that varied from place to place, a project taken up by the quantitative revolution. Cultural geography was sidelined by the positivist tendencies of this effort to make geography into a hard science although writers such as David Lowenthal continued to write about the more subjective, qualitative aspects of landscape.

In the 1970s, new kind of critique of positivism in geography directly challenged the deterministic and abstract ideas of quantitative geography. A revitalized cultural geography manifested itself in the engagement of geographers such as Yi-Fu Tuan and Edward Relph and Anne Buttimer with humanism, phenomenology, and hermeneutics. This break initiated a strong trend in human geography toward Post-positivism that developed under the label "new cultural geography" while deriving methods of systematic social and cultural critique from critical geography.[8][9]

Ongoing evolution of cultural geography

Cultural map of the world based on work by political scientists Ronald Inglehart and Christian Welzel in 2004Regional map of Gamelan, Kulintang, and Piphat music culture in Southeast Asia

Since the 1980s, a "new cultural geography" has emerged, drawing on a diverse set of theoretical traditions, including Marxist political-economic models, feminist theory, post-colonial theory, post-structuralism and psychoanalysis.

Drawing particularly from the theories of Michel Foucault and performativity in western academia, and the more diverse influences of postcolonial theory, there has been a concerted effort to deconstruct the cultural in order to reveal that power relations are fundamental to spatial processes and sense of place. Particular areas of interest are how identity politics are organized in space and the construction of subjectivity in particular places.

Some within the new cultural geography have turned their attention to critiquing some of its ideas, seeing its views on identity and space as static. It has followed the critiques of Foucault made by other 'poststructuralist' theorists such as Michel de Certeau and Gilles Deleuze. In this area, non-

representational geography and population mobility research have dominated. Others have attempted to incorporate these and other critiques back into the new cultural geography.

Groups within the geography community have differing views on the role of culture and how to analyze it in the context of geography. It is commonly thought that physical geography simply dictates aspects of culture such as shelter, clothing and cuisine. However, systematic development of this idea is generally discredited as environmental determinism. Geographers are now more likely to understand culture as a set of symbolic resources that help people make sense of the world around them, as well as a manifestation of the power relations between various groups and the structure through which social change is constrained and enabled.[12][13] There are many ways to look at what culture means in light of various geographical insights, but in general geographers study how cultural processes involve spatial patterns and processes while requiring the existence and maintenance of particular kinds of places.

Heart of Darkness

Heart of Darkness is an 1899 novella by Polish-British novelist Joseph Conrad in which the sailor Charles Marlow tells his listeners the story of his assignment as steamer captain for a Belgian company in the African interior. The novel is widely regarded as a critique of European colonial rule in Africa, whilst also examining the themes of power dynamics and morality. Although Conrad does not name the river on which most of the narrative takes place, at the time of writing, the Congo Free State—the location of the large and economically important Congo River—was a private colony of Belgium's King Leopold II. Marlow is given an assignment to find Kurtz, an ivory trader working on a trading station far up the river, who has "gone native" and is the object of Marlow's expedition.

Central to Conrad's work is the idea that there is little difference between "civilised people" and "savages". Heart of Darkness implicitly comments on imperialism and racism.[1] The novella's setting provides the frame for Marlow's story of his fascination for the prolific ivory trader Kurtz. Conrad draws parallels between London ("the greatest town on earth") and Africa as places of darkness.[2]

Originally issued as a three-part serial story in Blackwood's Magazine to celebrate the 1000th edition of the magazine,[3] Heart of Darkness has been widely republished and translated in many languages. It provided the inspiration for Francis Ford Coppola's 1979 film Apocalypse Now. In 1998, the Modern Library ranked Heart of Darkness 67th on their list of the 100 best novels in English of the 20th century.

Composition and publication

Joseph Conrad based Heart of Darkness on his own experiences in the Congo.

In 1890, at the age of 32, Conrad was appointed by a Belgian trading company to serve on one of its steamers. While sailing up the Congo River from one station to another, the captain became ill and Conrad assumed command. He guided the ship up the tributary Lualaba River to the trading company's innermost station, Kindu, in Eastern Congo Free State; Marlow has similar experiences to the author.

When Conrad began to write the novella, eight years after returning from Africa, he drew inspiration from his travel journals. He described Heart of Darkness as "a wild story" of a journalist who becomes

manager of a station in the (African) interior and makes himself worshipped by a tribe of natives. The tale was first published as a three-part serial, in February, March, and April 1899, in Blackwood's Magazine (February 1899 was the magazine's 1000th issue: special edition). Heart of Darkness was later included in the book Youth: a Narrative, and Two Other Stories, published on 13 November 1902 by William Blackwood.

The volume consisted of Youth: a Narrative, Heart of Darkness and The End of the Tether in that order. In 1917, for future editions of the book, Conrad wrote an "Author's Note" where he, after denying any "unity of artistic purpose" underlying the collection, discusses each of the three stories and makes light commentary on Marlow, the narrator of the tales within the first two stories. He said Marlow first appeared in Youth.

On 31 May 1902, in a letter to William Blackwood, Conrad remarked,

I call your own kind self to witness ... the last pages of *Heart of Darkness* where the interview of the man and the girl locks in—as it were—the whole 30000 words of narrative description into one suggestive view of a whole phase of life and makes of that story something quite on another plane than an anecdote of a man who went mad in the Centre of Africa.

There have been many proposed sources for the character of the antagonist, Kurtz. Georges-Antoine Klein, an agent who became ill and died aboard Conrad's steamer, is proposed by literary critics as a basis for Kurtz. The principal figures involved in the disastrous "rear column" of the Emin Pasha Relief Expedition have also been identified as likely sources, including column leader Edmund Musgrave Barttelot, his Scottish colleague, James Sligo Jameson,[9][10] slave trader Tippu Tip and the expedition leader, Welsh explorer Henry Morton Stanley.[8][11] Conrad's biographer Norman Sherry judged that Arthur Hodister (1847–1892), a Belgian solitary but successful trader, who spoke three Congolese languages and was venerated by Congolese to the point of deification, served as the main model, while later scholars have refuted this hypothesis. Adam Hochschild, in King Leopold's Ghost, believes that the Belgian soldier Léon Rom influenced the character. Peter Firchow mentions the possibility that Kurtz is a composite, modelled on various figures present in the Congo Free State at the time as well as on Conrad's imagining of what they might have had in common.

A corrective impulse to impose one's rule characterises Kurtz's writings which were discovered by Marlow during his journey, where he rants on behalf of the so-called "International Society for the Suppression of Savage Customs" about his supposedly altruistic and sentimental reasons to civilise the "savages"; one document ends with a dark proclamation to "Exterminate all the brutes!". The "International Society for the Suppression of Savage Customs" is interpreted as a sarcastic reference to one of the participants at the Berlin Conference, the International Association of the Congo (also called "International Congo Society").[18][19] The predecessor to this organisation was the "International Association for the Exploration and Civilization of Central Africa

Summary

Charles Marlow tells his friends the story of how he became captain of a river steamboat for an ivory trading company. As a child, Marlow was fascinated by "the blank spaces" on maps, particularly Africa. The image of a river on the map particularly fascinated Marlow.

In a flashback, Marlow makes his way to Africa, taking passage on a steamer. He travels 30 mi (50 km) up the river where his company's station is. Work on a railway is taking place. Marlow explores a narrow ravine, and is horrified to find himself in a place full of critically ill Africans who worked on the railroad and are now dying. Marlow must wait for ten days in the company's devastated Outer Station. Marlow meets

the company's chief accountant, who tells him of a [Mr. Kurtz](), who is in charge of a very important trading post, and is described as a respected first-class agent. The accountant predicts that Kurtz will go far.

Marlow departs with 60 men to travel to the Central Station, where the steamboat that he will command is based. At the station, he learns that his steamboat has been wrecked in an accident. The general manager informs Marlow that he could not wait for Marlow to arrive, and tells him of a rumour that Kurtz is ill. Marlow fishes his boat out of the river and spends months repairing it. Delayed by the lack of tools and replacement parts, Marlow is frustrated by the time it takes to perform the repairs. He learns that Kurtz is resented, not admired, by the manager. Once underway, the journey to Kurtz's station takes two months.

The journey pauses for the night about 8 miles (13 km) below the Inner Station. In the morning the boat is enveloped by a thick fog. The steamboat is later attacked by a barrage of arrows, and the helmsman is killed. Marlow sounds the steam whistle repeatedly, frightening the attackers away.

After landing at Kurtz's station, a man boards the steamboat: a Russian wanderer who strayed into Kurtz's camp. Marlow learns that the natives worship Kurtz and that he has been very ill. The Russian tells of how Kurtz opened his mind and admires Kurtz even for his power and his willingness to use it. Marlow suspects that Kurtz has gone mad.

Marlow observes the station and sees a row of posts topped with the severed heads of natives. Around the corner of the house, Kurtz appears with supporters who carry him as a ghost-like figure on a stretcher. The area fills with natives ready for battle, but Kurtz shouts something and they retreat. His entourage carries Kurtz to the steamer and lays him in a cabin. The manager tells Marlow that Kurtz has harmed the company's business in the region because his methods are "unsound". The Russian reveals that Kurtz believes the company wants to kill him, and Marlow confirms that hangings were discussed.

Arthur Hodister (1847–1892), who Conrad's biographer Norman Sherry has argued served as one of the sources of inspiration for Kurtz

After midnight, Kurtz returns to shore. Marlow finds Kurtz crawling back to the station house. Marlow threatens to harm Kurtz if he raises an alarm, but Kurtz only laments that he did not accomplish more. The next day they prepare to journey back down the river.

Kurtz's health worsens during the trip. The steamboat breaks down, and while stopped for repairs, Kurtz gives Marlow a packet of papers, including his commissioned report and a photograph, telling him to keep them from the manager. When Marlow next speaks with him, Kurtz is near death; Marlow hears him weakly whisper, "The horror! The horror!" A short while later, the manager's boy announces to the crew that Kurtz has died (the famous line "Mistah Kurtz—he dead" would become the epigraph of T. S. Eliot's poem "The Hollow Men"). The next day Marlow pays little attention to Kurtz's pilgrims as they bury "something" in a muddy hole.

Returning to Europe, Marlow is embittered and contemptuous of the "civilised" world. Several callers come to retrieve the papers Kurtz entrusted to him, but Marlow withholds them or offers papers he knows they have no interest in. He gives Kurtz's report to a journalist, for publication if he sees fit. Marlow is left with some personal letters and a photograph of Kurtz's fiancée. When Marlow visits her, she is deep in mourning although it has been more than a year since Kurtz's death. She presses Marlow for information, asking him to repeat Kurtz's final words. Marlow tells her that Kurtz's final word was her name.

Adaptations and influences

Radio and stage

Orson Welles adapted and starred in Heart of Darkness in a CBS Radio broadcast on 6 November 1938 as part of his series, The Mercury Theatre on the Air. In 1939, Welles adapted the story for his first film for RKO Pictures,[44] writing a screenplay with John Houseman. The story was adapted to focus on the rise of a fascist dictator.[44] Welles intended to play Marlow and Kurtz[44] and it was to be entirely filmed as a POV from Marlow's eyes. Welles even filmed a short presentation film illustrating his intent. It is reportedly lost. The film's prologue to be read by Welles said "You aren't going to see this picture - this picture is going to happen to you."[44] The project was never realised; one reason given was the loss of European markets after the outbreak of World War II. Welles still hoped to produce the film when he presented another radio adaptation of the story as his first program as producer-star of the CBS radio series This Is My Best. Welles scholar Bret Wood called the broadcast of 13 March 1945, "the closest representation of the film Welles might have made, crippled, of course, by the absence of the story's visual elements (which were so meticulously designed) and the half-hour length of the broadcast."[45]: 95, 153–156, 136–137

In 1991, Australian author/playwright Larry Buttrose wrote and staged a theatrical adaptation titled Kurtz with the Crossroads Theatre Company, Sydney.[46] The play was announced to be broadcast as a radio play to Australian radio audiences in August 2011 by the Vision Australia Radio Network,[47] and also by the RPH – Radio Print Handicapped Network across Australia. In 2011, composer Tarik O'Regan and librettist Tom Phillips adapted an opera of the same name, which premiered at the Linbury Theatre of the Royal Opera House in London.[48] A suite for orchestra and narrator was subsequently extrapolated from it.[49] In 2015, an adaptation of Welles' screenplay by Jamie Lloyd and Laurence Bowen aired on BBC Radio 4.[50] The production starred James McAvoy as Marlow. Another BBC Radio 4 adaptation, first broadcast in 2021, transposes the action to the 21st century.

Film and television

In 1958, the CBS television anthology Playhouse 90 (S3E7) aired a loose 90-minute television play adaptation. This version, written by Stewart Stern, uses the encounter between Marlow (Roddy McDowall) and Kurtz (Boris Karloff) as its final act, and adds a backstory in which Marlow had been Kurtz's adopted son. The cast includes Inga Swenson and Eartha Kitt.[52]

Perhaps the best known adaptation is Francis Ford Coppola's 1979 film Apocalypse Now, based on the screenplay by John Milius, which moves the story from the Congo to Vietnam and Cambodia during the Vietnam War.[53] In Apocalypse Now, Martin Sheen stars as Captain Benjamin L. Willard, a US Army Captain assigned to "terminate the command" of Colonel Walter E. Kurtz, played by Marlon Brando. A film documenting the production, titled Hearts of Darkness: A Filmmaker's Apocalypse, was released in 1991. It chronicles a series of difficulties and challenges that director Coppola encountered during the making of the film, several of which mirror some of the novella's themes.

A 1993 television film adaptation was written by Benedict Fitzgerald and directed by Nicolas Roeg. The film, which was aired by TNT, starred Tim Roth as Marlow, John Malkovich as Kurtz, Isaach de Bankolé as Mfumu, and James Fox as Gosse.[54] James Gray's 2019 science fiction film Ad Astra is loosely inspired by the events of the novel. It features Brad Pitt as an astronaut travelling to the edge of the Solar System to confront and potentially kill his father (Tommy Lee Jones), who has gone rogue.

In 2020, African Apocalypse, a documentary film directed and produced by Rob Lemkin and featuring Femi Nylander portrays a journey from Oxford, England to Niger on the trail of a colonial killer called Captain Paul Voulet. Voulet's descent into barbarity mirrors that of Kurtz in Conrad's Heart of Darkness. Nylander discovers Voulet's massacres happened at exactly the same time that Conrad wrote his book in 1899. It was broadcast by the BBC in May 2021 as an episode of the Arena documentary series.

A British animated film adaption of the novella is planned, directed by Gerald Conn. It was written by Mark Jenkins and Mary Kate O Flanagan and is produced by Gritty Realism and Michael Sheen. Kurtz is voiced by Sheen and Harlequin by Andrew Scott.[57] The animation uses sand to better convey atmosphere of the book.[58] A Brazilian animated film (2023) also adapts the novella. It is directed by Rogério Nunes and Alois Di Leo and moves the story to a near future Rio de Janeiro.

Video games

The video game Far Cry 2, released on 21 October 2008, is a loose modernised adaptation of Heart of Darkness. The player assumes the role of a mercenary operating in Africa whose task it is to kill an arms dealer, the elusive "Jackal". The last area of the game is called "The Heart of Darkness".[62][63][64]

Spec Ops: The Line, released on 26 June 2012, is a direct modernised adaptation of Heart of Darkness. The player assumes the role of Delta Force operator Captain Martin Walker as he and his team search Dubai for survivors in the aftermath of catastrophic sandstorms that left the city without contact to the outside world. The character John Konrad, who replaces the character Kurtz, is a reference to Joseph Conrad.

Literature

T. S. Eliot's 1925 poem "The Hollow Men" quotes, as its first epigraph, a line from Heart of Darkness: "Mistah Kurtz – he dead."[66] Eliot had planned to use a quotation from the climax of the tale as the epigraph for The Waste Land, but Ezra Pound advised against it. Eliot said of the quote that "it is much the most appropriate I can find, and somewhat elucidative." Biographer Peter Ackroyd suggested that the passage inspired or at least anticipated the central theme of the poem.[69]

Chinua Achebe's 1958 novel Things Fall Apart is Achebe's response to what he saw as Conrad's portrayal of Africa and Africans as symbols: "the antithesis of Europe and therefore civilization". Achebe set out to write a novel about Africa and Africans by an African. In Things Fall Apart we see the effects of colonialism and Christian missionary endeavours on an Igbo community in West Africa through the eyes of that community's West African protagonists.

Another literary work with an acknowledged debt to Heart of Darkness is Wilson Harris' 1960 postcolonial novel Palace of the Peacock. J. G. Ballard's 1962 climate fiction novel The Drowned World includes many similarities to Conrad's novella. However, Ballard said he had read nothing by Conrad before writing the novel, prompting literary critic Robert S. Lehman to remark that "the novel's allusion to Conrad works nicely, even if it is not really an allusion to Conrad".

Robert Silverberg's 1970 novel Downward to the Earth uses themes and characters based on Heart of Darkness set on the alien world of Belzagor. In Josef Škvorecký's 1984 novel The Engineer of Human Souls, Kurtz is seen as the epitome of exterminatory colonialism and, there and elsewhere, Škvorecký emphasises the importance of Conrad's concern with Russian imperialism in Eastern Europe.

Timothy Findley's 1993 novel Headhunter is an extensive adaptation that reimagines Kurtz and Marlow as psychiatrists in Toronto. The novel begins: "On a winter's day, while a blizzard raged through the streets of Toronto, Lilah Kemp inadvertently set Kurtz free from page 92 of Heart of Darkness." Ann

Patchett's 2011 novel State of Wonder reimagines the story with the central figures as female scientists in contemporary Brazil.

Comics

The comic-book adaptation Au coeur des ténèbres, written by Stéphane Miquel [fr] and illustrated by Loïc Godart [fr], was published by Soleil in 2014. Jean-Pierre Pécau [fr] and Benjamin Bachelier [fr] created another French comic adaptation, published as Coeur de ténèbres by Delcourt in 2020. Georges Bess' 2021 comic book Amen is a liberal adaptation of Heart of Darkness as a space opera.

Black Skin, White Masks

(French: *Peau noire, masques blancs*) is a 1952 book by philosopher-psychiatrist Frantz Fanon. The book is written in the style of autoethnography, with Fanon sharing his own experiences while presenting a historical critique of the effects of racism and dehumanization, inherent in situations of colonial domination, on the human psyche.[1]

The violent overtones in Fanon can be broken down into two categories: The violence of the colonizer through annihilation of body, psyche, culture, along with the demarcation of space, and secondly, the violence of the colonized as an attempt to retrieve dignity, sense of self, and history through anti-colonial struggle.[2]

Black Skin, White Masks applies a historical critique on the complex ways in which identity, particularly Blackness, is constructed and produced. Fanon confronts complex formations of colonized psychic constructions of Blackness. He applies psychoanalysis to explain the feelings of dependency and inadequacy that black people experience. Fanon portrays white people as having a deep-seated fear of educated blacks. He argues that, no matter how assimilated to white norms a black person may become, whites will always exercise a sense of 'inferiority.' This way of thinking was designed to keep 'Blacks' stuck in an "inferior status within a colonial order." The divided self-perception of a Black Subject who has lost his native cultural origin, and embraced the culture of the Mother Country, produces an inferior sense of self in the "Black Man." The Black Man will try to appropriate and imitate the culture of the colonizer—donning the "white masks" of the book's title. Such behavior is more readily evident in upwardly mobile and educated Black people who can afford to acquire status symbols within the world of the colonial ecumene, such as an education abroad and mastery of the language of the colonizer.

Based upon, and derived from, the concepts of the collective unconscious and collective catharsis, the sixth chapter, "The Negro and Psychopathology", presents brief, deep psychoanalyses of colonized black people, and thus proposes the inability of black people to fit into the norms (social, cultural, racial) established by white society (the colonizer). That "a normal Negro child, having grown up in a normal Negro family, will become abnormal on the slightest contact of the white world."[3] That, in a white society, such an extreme psychological response originates from the unconscious and unnatural training of black people, from early childhood, to associate "blackness" with "wrongness". That such unconscious mental training of black children is effected with comic books and cartoons, which are cultural media that instil and affix, in the mind of the white child, the society's cultural representations of black people as villains. Moreover, when black children are exposed to such images of villainous black people, the children will experience a psychopathology (psychological trauma), which mental wound becomes inherent to their individual, behavioral make-up: a part of the child's personality. That the early-life

suffering of said psychopathology – black skin associated with villainy – creates a collective nature among the men and women who were reduced to colonized populations. In *Black Skin, White Masks,* Fanon speaks about Mayotte Capécia and Abdoulaye Sadji, writers contemporary with him. Fanon describes *I Am a Martinican Woman* and *Nini, mulâtresse du Sénégal* as examples of some of the cultural damage of colonization. Capécia, a black woman, wants to marry a white man despite the social and cultural boundaries in place. Fanon believes Capécia is desperate for white approval. The colonial culture has left an impression on black Martinican women to believe that "whiteness is virtue and beauty" and that they can in turn "save their race by making themselves whiter."

In section B of chapter seven, on "The Black Man and Hegel", Fanon examines the dialectics of the philosopher and conveys his suspicions of the black man being under the rubric of a philosophy modeled after whiteness. According to Fanon there is a conflict that takes form internally as self-deprecation because of this white philosophical affirmation.

Reception

First published in French in Paris, *Black Skin, White Masks* (1952) did not attract much mainstream attention in English-speaking countries. It explored the effects of colonialism and imposing a servile psychology upon the colonized man, woman, and child. The adverse effects were assessed as part of the post-colonial cultural legacy of the Mother Country to former imperial subjects. The book was translated into English by Charles L. Markmann, and published by Grove Press in 1967. In 2008 Grove published a new translation of the book, by Richard Philcox, which, it claims, "updates its language for a new generation of readers" (although opinions are mixed as to which translation is preferable).[4]

Together with Fanon's *The Wretched of the Earth*, it received wider attention during cultural upheavals starting in the 1960s, in the United States as well as former colonial countries in the Caribbean and Africa. It is considered an important anti-colonial, anti-racist, and Afro-pessimist work in Anglophone countries. But in Francophone countries, the book is ranked as a relatively minor Fanon work in comparison to his later, more radical works. The topic is explicitly connected culturally to the societies of the ethnic African and other peoples of color living within the French Colonial Empire (1534–1980).[5]

The psychological and psychiatric insights remain valid, especially as applied by peoples of diverse colonial and imperial histories, such as the Palestinians and Kurds in the Middle East, the Tamils in Sri Lanka, the African Americans in the US, and Puerto Ricans, in their contemporary struggles for cultural and political autonomy. Contemporary theorists of nationalism and of anti-colonialism, of liberation theology and of cultural studies, have preferred Frantz Fanon's later culturally and politically revolutionary works, such as *The Wretched of the Earth* (1962).[6] Nevertheless, *Black Skin, White Masks* continues to generate debate. In 2015, leading African studies scholar Lewis R. Gordon published a book titled *What Fanon Said: A Philosophical Introduction To His Life And Thought*.[7]

Anthony Elliott writes that *Black Skin, White Masks* is a seminal work.

Freedom and Blackness

Freedom and Blackness, according to Sidney Mintz, is not a culture deliberately set upon breaking "cultural rules and norms"; instead, its focus is to be free. Free to express themselves in a way that is authentic to the Caribbean culture, and free to be able to live free from those who were once called master. A culture separate from that of their European colonizers yet still be recognized on an equal level. This movement of freedom and blackness requires knowledge on multiple interdisciplinary studies, such as politics for emancipation, racial inequalities and post-emancipation, all within the context of a post-colonial world. Colonization, instead of helping countries, has destroyed culture all over the world. Colonization has enforced the thought process of "white supremacy" and has suppressed/eradicated cultures all over the Caribbean. An example of this, according to Fanon, is the Malagasy culture. He explains that the Malagasy culture has been colonized so much that if they were to be liberated, they would be left with nothing. Fanon regulates imagination of Blackness by his willingness to merely "envisage" through a rubric of epidermalization, which is yet another form of enclosure.[9]

Phobogenesis

Phobogenesis is a term derived from psychiatry and psychoanalysis, and is specifically obtained from the concept of the phobic object.[10] This is a thing or person that elicits "irrational feelings of dread, fear, and hate" in a subject, and whose threat is often exaggerated.[11] In the context of race, Fanon postulates that the black person is a phobogenic object, sparking anxiety in the eyes of white subjects. Fanon's definition of phobia is based on that of French psychologist Angelo Hesnard, who defined phobia as a "neurosis characterized by the anxious fear of an object (in the broadest sense of anything outside the individual) or, by extension, of a situation".[12] Thus, black people as a phobogenic object elicit insecurity in white people.

Fanon follows Hesnard's definition to assert that this insecurity causes both fear and hatred of the phobogenic object at the same time. Therefore, in Fanon's theory, the white subject finds the black person both revolting and threatening simultaneously. The reaction induced by the phobogenic object is extremely irrational and exaggerated, as is the danger posed by it. The object is attributed "evil intentions and … a malefic power", giving excessive weight to its threat to the white subject.[13] This reaction prioritizes emotion and affect in a manner that "defies all rational thinking", Fanon's words, highlighting that the psychiatric aspect of racial hatred is not clearly or rationally explicable.[14] As described by Fanon,the whole ideology sticks to one principle of perspective (the picture or illusion in one's mind) about something to convey a feeling or attitude.

The Postmodern Condition by Jean-François Lyotard

Mike Sutton discusses Jean-François Lyotard's classic report on *The Postmodern Condition*.

The Postmodern Condition, published in 1979, was commissioned by the Council of Universities of the Provincial Government of Quebec. It is a report on the state of knowledge, particularly scientific knowledge, in the contemporary world, by the French philosopher Jean-François Lyotard (1924-98).

In this book, Lyotard considers knowledge, including its ubiquity. His concern here is prescient, given computerisation's pervasive influence on our lives in the half century since his report.

Knowledge in philosophy is concerned centrally with metaphysics and epistemology: 'What can we know?' and 'How do we know?' respectively. The empirical sciences emerge from such questions. Now, with information plentiful and readily available, 'knowledge' is to many people merely what they think they know. This is not always reliable. Lyotard also sees knowledge becoming weaponised for what Nietzsche called 'the will to power'. Modern economies utilise knowledge to grow. Technology, capital growth, and globalisation all depend on it. Hence the use of science as a feedstock for technology and capital growth, which he sees as a modern demonstration of the will to power. In the postmodern world, knowledge has become commodified.

Legitimacy & Language Games

So how do we know if some supposed knowledge is correct, or fit for use? Given the widespread availability of information, and the ease with which it can be spread, who or what can we trust, and what is bogus or dangerous? Can we trust authorities? Indeed, who *are* the authorities?

Lyotard sees the problem of legitimation of knowledge as paramount in contemporary life. Those with knowledge can now question others with similar knowledge. Fashions or ideas can rise up and disappear with dizzying rapidity.

How do we communicate information anyway? According to Lyotard, by means of language games. The term 'language game' was introduced to philosophy by Ludwig Wittgenstein (1889-1951). Through experience, and conversations with others, we all implicitly learn the rules of the language games we play to communicate information.

Language games are about making meaningful statements; and making a meaningful statement is sometimes called a 'speech act' by philosophers of language. In his seminal 1962 paper, 'How to Do Things with Words', J.L. Austin defined three aspects of speech acts: *locutionary* – the meaning of an utterance ('Do we have bread?'); *illocutionary* – the implication or purpose of that utterance (I want to eat some bread); and *perlocutionary* – the effects of utterances on the hearer – which could range from making a mental note (to get more bread) to being affected emotionally ('I forgot to get bread and feel bad about it'). So statements do not just imply their primary meaning. They can also change their meaning with context, as understandings of the words are developed either by the same speakers or by different speakers as the information is passed on. This way, understandings and misunderstandings, facts and rumours, and different interpretations develop. Maxims and principles, customs and practices, skills, and other knowledge which does not require formal research but which does require description and detail, can all be affected by the language games through which they have been transmitted, and by the background culture of the hearers and transmitters. And there is much scope for misunderstanding – think of the common expression, 'you're talking a different language': this is an acknowledgement of different language games being played. Furthermore, there is at least a mildly competitive – what Lyotard calls 'agonistic' – aspect to each game.

Nevertheless, the practical use of language is a cooperative effort, and requires a social bond. The social systems we live in prime this bonding by setting the contexts in which words are understood. For instance, Lyotard sees a self-regulating democratic society which promotes competition as a different context to a Marxist society, where income inequalities are seen to be politically motivated. The social bond is also active when knowledge is passed down generations, or when stories and instructions are exchanged.

Scientific Knowledge

Unlike narrative knowledge – the knowledge of everyday experience – scientific knowledge is supposed to be legitimised: it consists of facts and theories discovered by research and discussed among professionals.

Although he does not say so, Lyotard seems to subscribe to the view of Sir Karl Popper (1902-94) who defined science as conjectures which can in principle be falsified, but for the time being (maybe even forever) are accepted. Another philosopher of science, Thomas Kuhn (1922-96), argued that science proceeds by paradigm shifts: a major discovery takes place (for example, Darwinism, quantum mechanics or relativity), which is then verified and refined over a period of time, until observations and evidence require a better model or theory to replace it. Neither Popper, Kuhn, nor Lyotard imply a view of science as absolute or enduring truth. Rather, they see science as providing models of what might be the case, through descriptions of the facts and discoveries which support the model. But the paradigm can change with new facts and discoveries that can't be accounted for within the old model.

Lyotard's attitude to scientific experts and technocrats generally seems to be that running the world should not be left to the scientific method alone. More is required. Scientific methods can provide reasoned arguments based on models, but politically speaking, there is a need to see a bigger picture. Lyotard sympathises with Niklas Luhmann's observation that overreliance on scientific method and modelling in administration and government can lead to important factors being left out of consideration. This can lead to unfairness, and to minorities being neglected.

There has been much misunderstanding of Lyotard's attitude to science. In *The Postmodern Condition* he does not go further than Popper and Kuhn in his basic definition of science. There is no implication that he considers scientific knowledge unsafe or illegitimate. He would probably have been horrified by the anti-vaccine movement. Some modern interpreters of his criticisms of science do not seem to have understood this. Certain academics cite Lyotard's attitude to science as being one of scepticism and mistrust. This is unfortunate, and untrue, and a mistrust of science has had baleful consequences. For example, in their book *Cynical Theories* (2020), Helen Pluckrose and James Lindsay show how movements such as postcolonial theory, race theory, queer theory, and gender theory – which ought to be liberal and based on trying to be kind to people – have been taken over by "far-left progressive social crusaders [who] portray themselves as the sole and righteous champions of social and moral progress" and who consequently seek militant action. These 'crusaders' mistakenly assume that the original postmodernists, such as Lyotard, Jacques Derrida, and Michel Foucault, give them permission to abandon principles of scientific reasoning, especially of objective, observable truth, when theorising. So, instead of analysis, the crusaders produce barely comprehensible anti-scientific arguments which can lead to the ostracism of those who oppose their views through an intolerance of criticism, with the resultant no-platforming.

Grand Narratives & Little Narratives

Probably the best-known statement by Lyotard is his definition of postmodernism as 'the death of metanarratives'. Metanarratives are beliefs held by a large number of often knowledgeable people which are supposed to explain (parts of) human history. They are sometimes also called 'grand narratives'.

Greater availability of information and research means that many traditional grand narratives, such as Christianity or Marxism, are open to criticism, and sometimes to demolition. In postmodernism, this applies to scientific laws as well as to ethics or theology. As Lyotard puts it, postmodern science has become a search for instabilities. Newton's laws of motion and gravity were considered incontrovertible until the advent of the theory of relativity – showing that science is indeed falsifiable and only as good as the empirical evidence which supports it. Ethical laws have also changed, and there is no agreement on one single ethical position. Likewise with theology.

While grand narratives are subject to revision in the postmodern world, society will always rely on 'little narratives' (or as Lyotard calls them, *petit recits*), which inform thinking well, within limits. These limits are not necessarily easy to specify. When does a theory or law become inapplicable? This is an open question for society to solve differently in many situations, scientific, ethical, economic, or theological. But it leads to uncertainty and confusion about what to rely on in the world and in our lives. This is another legitimation problem.

Lyotard adds an Appendix about the postmodern phenomenon in general. He examines the role of the arts, referring to the aims of the postmodern in literature: the use of syntax, vocabulary, and narration to represent the hitherto unrepresented, and the abandoning of unity of vision and traditional forms. He also considers Immanuel Kant's (1724-1804) concept of the 'sublime' in postmodern terms. Kant ultimately describes the sublime as wonder at the boundlessness of reason and experience of its universal validity (as opposed to the beautiful, experience of which is associated with perfect form). The sublime cannot necessarily be represented in ordinary language. Lyotard poses the problem: "But how to make visible that… which cannot be seen? The sublime is the intellectual realisation of the conceivable, beyond the popular or that which appeals only to the senses."

Insight & Foresight

So what did Lyotard reveal in his report on the postmodern condition?

Even back in 1979, he saw that the emerging information age would change our attitudes to knowledge. Nineteenth and early twentieth century philosophy could have no inkling of the amount of information which would eventually be at peoples' disposal. The Internet would have been a revolution indeed to Frege and Nietzsche. By 1979, the easy availability of information was emerging, with the prospect of even greater availability to come. But what in fact did this presage? Mainly a predilection to question facts and opinions, an ability to communicate personal opinions, and the possibility of contributing one's own evidence to the debate. This has led to difficulties in the legitimation of knowledge and the increased disregard for metanarratives. Science is also questioned, and not always by people who are well-informed. Elsewhere, narrative and scientific knowledge are muddled up. Dubious claimed 'knowledge' is widely available from influencers and others, sometimes with baleful consequences.

Lyotard sees that all of this will both damage and strengthen the social bond. But it can also lead to new thinking and ways of expression – new language games. He sees the need for the widest possible exchange of opinions and information, including the production of ideas going against or outside of established norms; the *avant garde* in the arts; a search for instabilities in science… In all this, Lyotard anticipated both the 'post truth' world in which we find ourselves today, and the changes in attitudes which our being awash with information

has brought. His insight when writing this prophetic thesis over forty years ago was extraordinary.

3 THE ORDER OF DISCOURSE

Michel Foucault
Inaugural Lecture at the Collège de France, given
2 December 1970

I

I wish I could have slipped surreptitiously into this discourse
which I must present today, and into the ones I shall have to
give here, perhaps for many years to come. I should have pre-
ferred to be enveloped by speech, and carried away well beyond
all possible beginnings, rather than have to begin it myself. I
should have preferred to become aware that a nameless voice was
already speaking long before me, so that I should only have
needed to join in, to continue the sentence it had started and
lodge myself, without really being noticed, in its interstices, as
if it had signalled to me by pausing, for an instant, in suspense.
Thus there would be no beginning, and instead of being the one
from whom discourse proceeded, I should be at the mercy of its
chance unfolding, a slender gap, the point of its possible dis-
appearance.

I should have liked there to be a voice behind me which had
begun to speak a very long time before, doubling in advance
everything I am going to say, a voice which would say: 'You
must go on, I can't go on, you must go on, I'll go on, you must
say words, as long as there are any, until they find me, until
they say me, strange pain, strange sin, you must go on, perhaps
it's done already, perhaps they have said me already, perhaps
they have carried me to the threshold of my story, before the
door that opens on my story, that would surprise me, if it opens.'[1]

I think a good many people have a similar desire to be freed
from the obligation to begin, a similar desire to be on the other
side of discourse from the outset, without having to consider
from the outside what might be strange, frightening, and per-
haps maleficent about it. To this very common wish, the institu-
tion's reply is ironic, since it solemnises beginnings, surrounds
them with a circle of attention and silence, and imposes ritualised
forms on them, as if to make them more easily recognisable from
a distance.

Desire says: 'I should not like to have to enter this risky order
of discourse; I should not like to be involved in its peremptoriness
and decisiveness; I should like it to be all around me like a calm,
deep transparence, infinitely open, where others would fit in
with my expectations, and from which truths would emerge one
by one; I should only have to let myself be carried, within it and
by it, like a happy wreck.' The institution replies: 'You should
not be afraid of beginnings; we are all here in order to show you
that discourse belongs to the order of laws, that we have long

been looking after its appearances; that a place has been made ready for it, a place which honours it but disarms it; and that if discourse may sometimes have some power, nevertheless it is from us and us alone that it gets it.'

But perhaps this institution and this desire are nothing but two contrary replies to the same anxiety: anxiety about what discourse is in its material reality as a thing pronounced or written; anxiety about this transitory existence which admittedly is destined to be effaced, but according to a time-scale which is not ours; anxiety at feeling beneath this activity (despite its greyness and ordinariness) powers and dangers that are hard to imagine; anxiety at suspecting the struggles, victories, injuries, dominations and enslavements, through so many words even though long usage has worn away their roughness.

What, then, is so perilous in the fact that people speak, and that their discourse proliferates to infinity? Where is the danger in that?

II

Here is the hypothesis which I would like to put forward tonight in order to fix the terrain - or perhaps the very provisional theatre - of the work I am doing: that in every society the production of discourse is at once controlled, selected, organised and redistributed by a certain number of procedures whose role is to ward off its powers and dangers, to gain mastery over its chance events, to evade its ponderous, formidable materiality.

In a society like ours, the procedures of exclusion are well known. The most obvious and familiar is the prohibition. We know quite well that we do not have the right to say everything, that we cannot speak of just anything in any circumstances whatever, and that not everyone has the right to speak of anything whatever. In the taboo on the object of speech, and the ritual of the circumstances of speech, and the privileged or exclusive right of the speaking subject, we have the play of three types of prohibition which intersect, reinforce or compensate for each other, forming a complex grid which changes constantly. I will merely note that at the present time the regions where the grid is tightest, where the black squares are most numerous, are those of sexuality and politics; as if discourse, far from being that transparent or neutral element in which sexuality is disarmed and politics pacified, is in fact one of the places where sexuality and politics exercise in a privileged way some of their most formidable powers. It does not matter that discourse appears to be of little account, because the prohibitions that surround it very soon reveal its link with desire and with power. There is nothing surprising about that, since, as psychoanalysis has shown, discourse is not simply that which manifests (or hides) desire - it is also the object of desire; and since, as history constantly teaches us, discourse is not simply that which translates struggles or systems

of domination, but is the thing for which and by which there is struggle, discourse is the power which is to be seized.

There exists in our society another principle of exclusion, not another prohibition but a division and a rejection. I refer to the opposition between reason and madness.[2] Since the depths of the Middle Ages, the madman has been the one whose discourse cannot have the same currency as others. His word may be considered null and void, having neither truth nor importance, worthless as evidence in law, inadmissible in the authentification of deeds or contracts, incapable even of bringing about the trans-substantiation of bread into body at Mass. On the other hand, strange powers not held by any other may be attributed to the madman's speech: the power of uttering a hidden truth, of telling the future, of seeing in all naivety what the others' wisdom cannot perceive. It is curious to note that for centuries in Europe the speech of the madman was either not heard at all or else taken for the word of truth. It either fell into the void, being rejected as soon as it was proffered, or else people deciphered in it a rationality, naive or crafty, which they regarded as more rational than that of the sane. In any event, whether excluded, or secretly invested with reason, the madman's speech, strictly, did not exist. It was through his words that his madness was recognised; they were the place where the division between reason and madness was exercised, but they were never recorded or listened to. No doctor before the end of the eighteenth century had ever thought of finding out what was said, or how and why it was said, in this speech which nonetheless determined the difference. This whole immense discourse of the madman was taken for mere noise, and he was only symbolically allowed to speak, in the theatre, where he would step forward, disarmed and reconciled, because there he played the role of truth in a mask.

You will tell me that all this is finished today or is coming to an end; that the madman's speech is no longer on the other side of the divide; that it is no longer null and void; on the contrary, it puts us on the alert; that we now look for a meaning in it, for the outline or the ruins of some oeuvre; and that we have even gone so far as to come across this speech of madness in what we articulate ourselves, in that slight stumbling by which we lose track of what we are saying. But all this attention to the speech of madness does not prove that the old division is no longer operative. You have only to think of the whole framework of knowledge through which we decipher that speech, and of the whole network of institutions which permit someone - a doctor or a psychoanalyst - to listen to it, and which at the same time permit the patient to bring along his poor words or, in desperation, to withhold them. You have only to think of all this to become suspicious that the division, far from being effaced, is working differently, along other lines, through new institutions, and with effects that are not at all the same. And even if the doctor's role were only that of lending an ear to a speech that is free at last, he still

does this listening in the context of the same division. He is listening to a discourse which is invested with desire, and which – for its greater exaltation or its greater anguish – thinks it is loaded with terrible powers. If the silence of reason is required for the curing of monsters, it is enough for that silence to be on the alert, and it is in this that the division remains.

It is perhaps risky to consider the opposition between true and false as a third system of exclusion, along with those just mentioned. How could one reasonably compare the constraint of truth with divisions like those, which are arbitrary to start with or which at least are organised around historical contingencies; which are not only modifiable but in perpetual displacement; which are supported by a whole system of institutions which impose them and renew them; and which act in a constraining and sometimes violent way?

Certainly, when viewed from the level of a proposition, on the inside of a discourse, the division between true and false is neither arbitrary nor modifiable nor institutional nor violent. But when we view things on a different scale, when we ask the question of what this will to truth has been and constantly is, across our discourses, this will to truth which has crossed so many centuries of our history; what is, in its very general form, the type of division which governs our will to know (notre volonté de savoir), then what we see taking shape is perhaps something like a system of exclusion, a historical, modifiable, and institutionally constraining system.

There is no doubt that this division is historically constituted. For the Greek poets of the sixth century BC, the true discourse (in the strong and valorised sense of the word), the discourse which inspired respect and terror, and to which one had to submit because it ruled, was the one pronounced by men who spoke as of right and according to the required ritual; the discourse which dispensed justice and gave everyone his share; the discourse which in prophesying the future not only announced what was going to happen but helped to make it happen, carrying men's minds along with it and thus weaving itself into the fabric of destiny. Yet already a century later the highest truth no longer resided in what discourse was or did, but in what it said: a day came when truth was displaced from the ritualised, efficacious and just act of enunciation, towards the utterance itself, its meaning, its form, its object, its relation to its reference. Between Hesiod and Plato a certain division was established, separating true discourse from false discourse: a new division because henceforth the true discourse is no longer precious and desirable, since it is no longer the one linked to the exercise of power. The sophist is banished.

This historical division probably gave our will to know its general form. However, it has never stopped shifting: sometimes the great mutations in scientific thought can perhaps be read as the consequences of a discovery, but they can also be read as the appearance of new forms in the will to truth. There is doubtless a will to

truth in the nineteenth century which differs from the will to know characteristic of Classical culture in the forms it deploys, in the domains of objects to which it addresses itself, and in the techniques on which it is based. To go back a little further: at the turn of the sixteenth century (and particularly in England), there appeared a will to know which, anticipating its actual contents, sketched out schemas of possible, observable, measurable, classifiable objects; a will to know which imposed on the knowing subject, and in some sense prior to all experience, a certain position, a certain gaze and a certain function (to see rather than to read, to verify rather than to make commentaries on); a will to know which was prescribed (but in a more general manner than by any specific instrument) by the technical level where knowledges had to be invested in order to be verifiable and useful. It was just as if, starting from the great Platonic division, the will to truth had its own history, which is not that of constraining truths: the history of the range of objects to be known, of the functions and positions of the knowing subject, of the material, technical, and instrumental investments of knowledge.

This will to truth, like the other systems of exclusion, rests on an institutional support: it is both reinforced and renewed by whole strata of practices, such as pedagogy, of course; and the system of books, publishing, libraries; learned societies in the past and laboratories now. But it is also renewed, no doubt more profoundly, by the way in which knowledge is put to work, valorised, distributed, and in a sense attributed, in a society. Let us recall at this point, and only symbolically, the old Greek principle: though arithmetic may well be the concern of democratic cities, because it teaches about the relations of equality, geometry alone must be taught in oligarchies, since it demonstrates the proportions within inequality.

Finally, I believe that this will to truth – leaning in this way on a support and an institutional distribution – tends to exert a sort of pressure and something like a power of constraint (I am still speaking of our own society) on other discourses. I am thinking of the way in which for centuries Western literature sought to ground itself on the natural, the 'vraisemblable', on sincerity, on science as well – in short, on 'true' discourse. I am thinking likewise of the manner in which economic practices, codified as precepts or recipes and ultimately as morality, have sought since the sixteenth century to ground themselves, rationalise themselves, and justify themselves in a theory of wealth and production. I am also thinking of the way in which a body as prescriptive as the penal system sought its bases or its justification, at first of course in a theory of justice, then, since the nineteenth century, in a sociological, psychological, medical, and psychiatric knowledge: it is as if even the word of the law could no longer be authorised, in our society, except by a discourse of truth.

Of the three great systems of exclusion which forge discourse – the forbidden speech, the division of madness and the will to truth,

I have spoken of the third at greatest length. The fact is that it is towards this third system that the other two have been drifting constantly for centuries. The third system increasingly attempts to assimilate the others, both in order to modify them and to provide them with a foundation. The first two are constantly becoming more fragile and more uncertain, to the extent that they are now invaded by the will to truth, which for its part constantly grows stronger, deeper, and more implacable.

And yet we speak of the will to truth no doubt least of all. It is as if, for us, the will to truth and its vicissitudes were masked by truth itself in its necessary unfolding. The reason is perhaps this: although since the Greeks 'true' discourse is no longer the discourse that answers to the demands of desire, or the discourse which exercises power, what is at stake in the will to truth, in the will to utter this 'true' discourse, if not desire and power? 'True' discourse, freed from desire and power by the necessity of its form, cannot recognise the will to truth which pervades it;[3] and the will to truth, having imposed itself on us for a very long time, is such that the truth it wants cannot fail to mask it.

Thus all that appears to our eyes is a truth conceived as a richness, a fecundity, a gentle and insidiously universal force, and in contrast we are unaware of the will to truth, that prodigious machinery designed to exclude. All those who, from time to time in our history, have tried to dodge this will to truth and to put it into question against truth, at the very point where truth undertakes to justify the prohibition and to define madness, all of them, from Nietzsche to Artaud and Bataille, must now serve as the (no doubt lofty) signs for our daily work.

III

There are, of course, many other procedures for controlling and delimiting discourse. Those of which I have spoken up to now operate in a sense from the exterior. They function as systems of exclusion. They have to do with the part of discourse which puts power and desire at stake.

I believe we can isolate another group: internal procedures, since discourses themselves exercise their own control; procedures which function rather as principles of classification, of ordering, of distribution, as if this time another dimension of discourse had to be mastered: that of events and chance.

In the first place, commentary. I suppose – but without being very certain – that there is scarcely a society without its major narratives, which are recounted, repeated, and varied; formulae, texts, and ritualised sets of discourses which are recited in well-defined circumstances; things said once and preserved because it is suspected that behind them there is a secret or a treasure. In short, we may suspect that there is in all societies, with great consistency, a kind of gradation among discourses: those which are said in the ordinary course of days and exchanges, and which

vanish as soon as they have been pronounced; and those which give rise to a certain number of new speech-acts which take them up, transform them or speak of them, in short, those discourses which, over and above their formulation, are said indefinitely, remain said, and are to be said again. We know them in our own cultural system: they are religious or juridical texts, but also those texts (curious ones, when we consider their status) which are called 'literary'; and to a certain extent, scientific texts.

This differentiation is certainly neither stable, nor constant, nor absolute. There is not, on the one side, the category of fundamental or creative discourses, given for all time, and on the other, the mass of discourses which repeat, gloss, and comment. Plenty of major texts become blurred and disappear, and sometimes commentaries move into the primary position. But though its points of application may change, the function remains; and the principle of a differentiation is continuously put back in play. The radical effacement of this gradation can only ever be play, utopia, or anguish. The Borges-style play of a commentary which is nothing but the solemn and expected reappearance word for word of the text that is commented on; or the play of a criticism that would speak forever of a work which does not exist. The lyrical dream of a discourse which is reborn absolutely new and innocent at every point, and which reappears constantly in all freshness, derived from things, feelings or thoughts. The anguish of that patient of Janet's for whom the least utterance was gospel truth, concealing inexhaustible treasures of meaning and worthy to be repeated, re-commenced, and commented on indefinitely: 'When I think,' he would say when reading or listening, 'when I think of this sentence which like the others will go off into eternity, and which I have perhaps not yet fully understood.'[4]

But who can fail to see that this would be to annul one of the terms of the relation each time, and not to do away with the relation itself? It is a relation which is constantly changing with time; which takes multiple and divergent forms in a given epoch. The juridical exegesis is very different from the religious commentary (and this has been the case for a very long time). One and the same literary work can give rise simultaneously to very distinct types of discourse: the 'Odyssey' as a primary text is repeated, in the same period, in the translation by Bérard, and in the endless 'explications de texte', and in Joyce's 'Ulysses'.

For the moment I want to do no more than indicate that, in what is broadly called commentary, the hierarchy between primary and secondary text plays two roles which are in solidarity with each other. On the one hand it allows the (endless) construction of new discourses: the dominance of the primary text, its permanence, its status as a discourse which can always be re-actualised, the multiple or hidden meaning with which it is credited, the essential reticence and richness which is attributed to it, all this is the basis for an open possibility of speaking. But on the other hand the commentary's only role, whatever the techniques used,

coherence or systematicity. Medicine is not constituted by the total of what can be truthfully said about illness; botany cannot be defined by the sum of all the truths concerning plants. There are two reasons for this: first of all, botany and medicine are made up of errors as well as truths, like any other discipline – errors which are not residues or foreign bodies but which have positive functions, a historical efficacity, and a role that is often indissociable from that of the truths. And besides, for a proposition to belong to botany or pathology, it has to fulfil certain conditions, in a sense stricter and more complex than pure and simple truth: but in any case, other conditions. It must address itself to a determinate plane of objects: from the end of the seventeenth century, for example, for a proposition to be 'botanical' it had to deal with the visible structure of the plant, the system of its close and distant resemblances or the mechanism of its fluids; it could no longer retain its symbolic value, as was the case in the sixteenth century, nor the set of virtues and properties which were accorded to it in antiquity. But without belonging to a discipline, a proposition must use conceptual or technical instruments of a well-defined type; from the nineteenth century, a proposition was no longer medical – it fell 'outside medicine' and acquired the status of an individual phantasm or popular imagery – if it used notions that were at the same time metaphorical, qualitative, and substantial (like those of engorgement, of overheated liquids or of dried-out solids). In contrast it could and had to make use of notions that were equally metaphorical but based on another model, a functional and physiological one (that of the irritation, inflammation, or degeneration of the tissues). Still further: in order to be part of a discipline, a proposition has to be able to be inscribed on a certain type of theoretical horizon: suffice it to recall that the search for the primitive language, which was a perfectly acceptable theme up to the eighteenth century, was sufficient, in the second half of the nineteenth century, to make any discourse fall into – I hesitate to say error – chimera and reverie, into pure and simple linguistic monstrosity.

Within its own limits, each discipline recognises true and false propositions; but it pushes back a whole teratology of knowledge beyond its margins. The exterior of a science is both more and less populated than is often believed: there is of course immediate experience, the imaginary themes which endlessly carry and renew immemorial beliefs; but perhaps there are no errors in the strict sense, for error can only arise and be decided inside a definite practice; on the other hand, there are monsters on the prowl whose form changes with the history of knowledge. In short, a proposition must fulfil complex and heavy requirements to be able to belong to the grouping of a discipline; before it can be called true or false, it must be 'in the true', as Canguilhem would say.

People have often wondered how the botanists or biologists of the nineteenth century managed not to see that what Mendel was

saying was true. But it was because Mendel was speaking of objects, applying methods, and placing himself on a theoretical horizon which were alien to the biology of his time. Naudin, before him, had of course posited the thesis that hereditary traits are discrete; yet, no matter how new or strange this principle was, it was able to fit into the discourse of biology, at least as an enigma. What Mendel did was to constitute the hereditary trait as an absolutely new biological object, thanks to a kind of filtering which had never been used before: he detached the trait from the species, and from the sex which transmits it; the field in which he observed it being the infinitely open series of the generations, where it appears and disappears according to statistical regularities. This was a new object which called for new conceptual instruments and new theoretical foundations. Mendel spoke the truth, but he was not 'within the true' of the biological discourse of his time: it was not according to such rules that biological objects and concepts were formed. It needed a complete change of scale, the deployment of a whole new range of objects in biology for Mendel to enter into the true and for his propositions to appear (in large measure) correct. Mendel was a true monster, which meant that science could not speak of him; whereas about thirty years earlier, at the height of the nineteenth century, Scheiden, for example, who denied plant sexuality, but in accordance with the rules of biological discourse, was merely formulating a disciplined error.

It is always possible that one might speak the truth in the space of a wild exteriority, but one is 'in the true' only by obeying the rules of a discursive 'policing' which one has to reactivate in each of one's discourses.

The discipline is a principle of control over the production of discourse. The discipline fixes limits for discourse by the action of an identity which takes the form of a permanent re-actuation of the rules.

We are accustomed to see in an author's fecundity, in the multiplicity of the commentaries, and in the development of a discipline so many infinite resources for the creation of discourses. Perhaps so, but they are nonetheless principles of constraint; it is very likely impossible to account for their positive and multiplicatory role if we do not take into consideration their restrictive and constraining function.

IV

There is, I believe, a third group of procedures which permit the control of discourses. This time it is not a matter of mastering their powers or averting the unpredictability of their appearance, but of determining the condition of their application, of imposing a certain number of rules on the individuals who hold them, and thus of not permitting everyone to have access to them. There is a rarefaction, this time, of the speaking subjects; none

shall enter the order of discourse if he does not satisfy certain requirements or if he is not, from the outset, qualified to do so. To be more precise: not all the regions of discourse are equally open and penetrable; some of them are largely forbidden (they are differentiated and differentiating), while others seem to be almost open to all winds and put at the disposal of every speaking subject, without prior restrictions.

In this regard I should like to recount an anecdote which is so beautiful that one trembles at the thought that it might be true. It gathers into a single figure all the constraints of discourse: those which limit its powers, those which master its aleatory appearances, those which carry out the selection among speaking subjects. At the beginning of the seventeenth century, the Shogun heard tell that the Europeans' superiority in matters of navigation, commerce, politics, and military skill was due to their knowledge of mathematics. He desired to get hold of so precious a knowledge. As he had been told of an English sailor who possessed the secret of these miraculous discourses, he summoned him to his palace and kept him there. Alone with him, he took lessons. He learned mathematics. He retained power, and lived to a great old age. It was not until the nineteenth century that there were Japanese mathematicians. But the anecdote does not stop there: it has its European side too. The story has it that this English sailor, Will Adams, was an autodidact, a carpenter who had learnt geometry in the course of working in a shipyard. Should we see this story as the expression of one of the great myths of European culture? The universal communication of knowledge and the infinite free exchange of discourses in Europe, against the monopolised and secret knowledge of Oriental tyranny?

This idea, of course, does not stand up to examination. Exchange and communication are positive figures working inside complex systems of restriction, and probably would not be able to function independently of them. The most superficial and visible of these systems of restriction is constituted by what can be gathered under the name of ritual. Ritual defines the qualification which must be possessed by individuals who speak (and who must occupy such-and-such a position and formulate such-and-such a type of statement, in the play of a dialogue, of interrogation or recitation); it defines the gestures, behaviour, circumstances, and the whole set of signs which must accompany discourse; finally, it fixes the supposed or imposed efficacity of the words, their effect on those to whom they are addressed, and the limits of their constraining value. Religious, judicial, therapeutic, and in large measure also political discourses can scarcely be dissociated from this deployment of a ritual which determines both the particular properties and the stipulated roles of the speaking subjects.

A somewhat different way of functioning is that of the 'societies of discourse', which function to preserve or produce discourses, but in order to make them circulate in a closed space, distributing

them only according to strict rules, and without the holders being dispossessed by this distribution. An archaic model for this is provided by the groups of rhapsodists who possessed the knowledge of the poems to be recited or potentially to be varied and transformed. But though the object of this knowledge was after all a ritual recitation, the knowledge was protected, defended and preserved within a definite group by the often very complex exercises of memory which it implied. To pass an apprenticeship in it allowed one to enter both a group and a secret which the act of recitation showed but did not divulge; the roles of speaker and listener were not interchangeable.

There are hardly any such 'societies of discourse' now, with their ambiguous play of the secret and its divulgation. But this should not deceive us: even in the order of 'true' discourse, even in the order of discourse that is published and free from all ritual, there are still forms of appropriation of secrets, and non-interchangeable roles. It may well be that the act of writing as it is institutionalised today, in the book, the publishing-system and the person of the writer, takes place in a 'society of discourse', which though diffuse is certainly constraining. The difference between the writer and any other speaking or writing subject (a difference constantly stressed by the writer himself), the intransitive nature (according to him) of his discourse, the fundamental singularity which he has been ascribing for so long to 'writing', the dissymmetry that is asserted between 'creation' and any use of the linguistic system – all this shows the existence of a certain 'society of discourse', and tends moreover to bring back its play of practices. But there are many others still, functioning according to entirely different schemas of exclusivity and disclosure: e.g., technical or scientific secrets, or the forms of diffusion and circulation of medical discourse, or those who have appropriated the discourse of politics or economics.

At first glance, the 'doctrines' (religious, political, philosophical) seem to constitute the reverse of a 'society of discourse', in which the number of speaking individuals tended to be limited even if it was not fixed; between those individuals, the discourse could circulate and be transmitted. Doctrine, on the contrary, tends to be diffused, and it is by the holding in common of one and the same discursive ensemble that individuals (as many as one cares to imagine) define their reciprocal allegiance. In appearance, the only prerequisite is the recognition of the same truths and the acceptance of a certain rule of (more or less flexible) conformity with the validated discourses. If doctrines were nothing more than this, they would not be so very different from scientific disciplines, and the discursive control would apply only to the form or the content of the statement, not to the speaking subject. But doctrinal allegiance puts in question both the statement and the speaking subject, the one by the other. It puts the speaking subject in question through and on the basis of the statement, as is proved by the procedures of exclusion and the mechanisms of rejection which come into action when a speaking

subject has formulated one or several unassimilable statements; heresy and orthodoxy do not derive from a fanatical exaggeration of the doctrinal mechanisms, but rather belong fundamentally to them. And conversely the doctrine puts the statements in question on the basis of the speaking subjects, to the extent that the doctrine always stands as the sign, manifestation and instrument of a prior adherence to a class, a social status, a race, a nationality, an interest, a revolt, a resistance or an acceptance. Doctrine binds individuals to certain types of enunciation and consequently forbids them all others; but it uses, in return, certain types of enunciation to bind individuals amongst themselves, and to differentiate them by that very fact from all others. Doctrine brings about a double subjection: of the speaking subjects to discourses, and of discourses to the (at least virtual) group of speaking individuals.

On a much broader scale, we are obliged to recognise large cleavages in what might be called the social appropriation of discourses. Although education may well be, by right, the instrument thanks to which any individual in a society like ours can have access to any kind of discourse whatever, this does not prevent it from following, as is well known, in its distribution, in what it allows and what it prevents, the lines marked out by social distances, oppositions and struggles. Any system of education is a political way of maintaining or modifying the appropriation of discourses, along with the knowledges and powers which they carry.

I am well aware that it is very abstract to separate speech-rituals, societies of discourse, doctrinal groups and social appropriations, as I have just done. Most of the time, they are linked to each other and constitute kinds of great edifices which ensure the distribution of speaking subjects into the different types of discourse and the appropriation of discourses to certain categories of subject. Let us say, in a word, that those are the major procedures of subjection used by discourse. What, after all, is an education system, other than a ritualisation of speech, a qualification and a fixing of the roles for speaking subjects, the constitution of a doctrinal group, however diffuse, a distribution and an appropriation of discourse with its powers and knowledges? What is 'écriture' (the writing of the 'writers') other than a similar system of subjection, which perhaps takes slightly different forms, but forms whose main rhythms are analogous? Does not the judicial system, does not the institutional system of medicine likewise constitute, in some of their aspects at least, similar systems of subjection of and by discourse?

V

I wonder whether a certain number of themes in philosophy have not come to correspond to these activities of limitation and exclusion, and perhaps also to reinforce them.

They correspond to them first of all by proposing an ideal truth as the law of discourse and an immanent rationality as the principle of their unfolding, and they re-introduce an ethic of knowledge, which promises to give the truth only to the desire for truth itself and only to the power of thinking it.

Then they reinforce the limitations and exclusions by a denial of the specific reality of discourse in general.

Ever since the sophists' tricks and influence were excluded and since their paradoxes have been more or less safely muzzled, it seems that Western thought has taken care to ensure that discourse should occupy the smallest possible space between thought and speech. Western thought seems to have made sure that the act of discoursing should appear to be no more than a certain bridging (apport) between thinking and speaking - a thought dressed in its signs and made visible by means of words, or conversely the very structures of language put into action and producing a meaning-effect.

This very ancient elision of the reality of discourse in philosophical thought has taken many forms in the course of history. We have seen it again quite recently in the guise of several familiar themes.

Perhaps the idea of the founding subject is a way of eliding the reality of discourse. The founding subject, indeed, is given the task of directly animating the empty forms of language with his aims; it is he who in moving through the density and inertia of empty things grasps by intuition the meaning lying deposited within them; it is likewise the founding subject who founds horizons of meaning beyond time which history will henceforth only have to elucidate and where propositions, sciences and deductive ensembles will find their ultimate grounding. In his relation to meaning, the founding subject has at his disposal signs, marks, traces, letters. But he does not need to pass via the singular instance of discourse in order to manifest them.

The opposing theme, that of originating experience, plays an analogous role. It supposes that at the very basis of experience, even before it could be grasped in the form of a cogito, there were prior significations - in a sense, already said - wandering around in the world, arranging it all around us and opening it up from the outset to a sort of primitive recognition. Thus a primordial complicity with the world is supposed to be the foundation of our possibility of speaking of it, in it, of indicating it and naming it, of judging it and ultimately of knowing it in the form of truth. If there is discourse, then, what can it legitimately be other than a discreet reading? Things are already murmuring meanings which our language has only to pick up; and this language, right from its most rudimentary project, was already speaking to us of a being of which it is like the skeleton.

The idea of universal mediation is yet another way, I believe, of eliding the reality of discourse, and despite appearances to the contrary. For it would seem at first glance that by rediscovering everywhere the movement of a logos which elevates particularities

to the status of concepts and allows immediate consciousness to unfurl in the end the whole rationality of the world, one puts discourse itself at the centre of one's speculation. But this logos, in fact, is only a discourse that has already been held, or rather it is things themselves, and events, which imperceptibly turn themselves into discourse as they unfold the secret of their own essence. Thus discourse is little more than the gleaming of a truth in the process of being born to its own gaze; and when everything finally can take the form of discourse, when every-thing can be said and when discourse can be spoken about every-thing, it is because all things, having manifested and exchanged their meaning, can go back into the silent interiority of their consciousness of self.

Thus in a philosophy of the founding subject, in a philosophy of originary experience, and in a philosophy of universal media-tion alike, discourse is no more than a play, of writing in the first case, of reading in the second, and of exchange in the third, and this exchange, this reading, this writing never put anything at stake except signs. In this way, discourse is annulled in its reality and put at the disposal of the signifier.

What civilisation has ever appeared to be more respectful of discourse than ours? Where has it ever been more honoured, or better honoured? Where has it ever been, seemingly, more rad-ically liberated from its constraints, and universalised? Yet it seems to me that beneath this apparent veneration of discourse, under this apparent logophilia, a certain fear is hidden. It is just as if prohibitions, barriers, thresholds and limits had been set up in order to master, at least partly, the great proliferation of discourse, in order to remove from its richness the most danger-ous part, and in order to organise its disorder according to figures which dodge what is most uncontrollable about it. It is as if we had tried to efface all trace of its irruption into the activity of thought and language. No doubt there is in our society, and, I imagine, in all others, but following a different outline and different rhythms, a profound logophobia, a sort of mute terror against these events, against this mass of things said, against the surging-up of all these statements, against all that could be violent, discontinuous, pugnacious, disorderly as well, and perilous about them - against this great incessant and disordered buzzing of discourse.

And if we want to - I would not say, efface this fear, but - analyse it in its conditions, its action and its effects, we must, I believe, resolve to take three decisions which our thinking today tends to resist and which correspond to the three groups of functions which I have just mentioned: we must call into question our will to truth, restore to discourse its character as an event, and finally throw off the sovereignty of the signifier.

These are the tasks, or rather some of the themes, which govern the work I should like to do here in the coming years. We can see at once certain methodological requirements which they imply.

First of all, a principle of reversal: where tradition sees the source of discourses, the principle of their swarming abundance and of their continuity, in those figures which seem to play a positive role, e.g., those of the author, the discipline, the will to truth, we must rather recognise the negative action of a cutting-up and a rarefaction of discourse.

But once we have noticed these principles of rarefaction, once we have ceased to consider them as a fundamental and creative instance, what do we discover underneath them? Must we admit the virtual plenitude of a world of uninterrupted discourses? This is where we have to bring other methodological principles into play.

A principle of discontinuity, then: the fact that there are systems of rarefaction does not mean that beneath them or beyond them there reigns a vast unlimited discourse, continuous and silent, which is quelled and repressed by them, and which we have the task of raising up by restoring the power of speech to it. We must not imagine that there is a great unsaid or a great unthought which runs throughout the world and intertwines with all its forms and all its events, and which we would have to articulate or to think at last. Discourses must be treated as discontinuous practices, which cross each other, are sometimes juxtaposed with one another, but can just as well exclude or be unaware of each other.

A principle of specificity: we must not resolve discourse into a play of pre-existing significations; we must not imagine that the world turns towards us a legible face which we would have only to decipher; the world is not the accomplice of our knowledge; there is no prediscursive providence which disposes the world in our favour. We must conceive discourse as a violence which we do to things, or in any case as a practice which we impose on them; and it is in this practice that the events of discourse find the principle of their regularity.

The fourth rule is that of exteriority: we must not go from discourse towards its interior, hidden nucleus, towards the heart of a thought or a signification supposed to be manifested in it; but, on the basis of discourse itself, its appearance and its regularity, go towards its external conditions of possibility, towards what gives rise to the aleatory series of these events, and fixes its limits.

Four notions, then, must serve as the regulating principle of the analysis: the event, the series, the regularity, the condition of possibility. Term for term we find the notion of event opposed to that of creation, series opposed to unity, regularity opposed to originality, and condition of possibility opposed to significa-tion. These other four notions (signification, originality, unity,

creation) have in a general way dominated the traditional history of ideas, where by common agreement one sought the point of creation, the unity of a work, an epoch or a theme, the mark of individual originality, and the infinite treasure of buried significations.

I will add only two remarks. One concerns history. It is often entered to the credit of contemporary history that it removed the privileges once accorded to the singular event and revealed the structures of longer duration. That is so. However, I am not sure that the work of these historians was exactly done in this direction. Or rather I do not think there is an inverse ratio between noticing the event and analysing the long durations. On the contrary, it seems to be by pushing to its extreme the fine grain of the event, by stretching the resolution-power of historical analysis as far as official price-lists (les mercuriales), title deeds, parish registers, harbour archives examined year by year and week by week, that these historians saw - beyond the battles, decrees, dynasties or assemblies - the outline of massive phenomena with a range of a hundred or many hundreds of years. History as practised today does not turn away from events; on the contrary, it is constantly enlarging their field, discovering new layers of them, shallower or deeper. It is constantly isolating new sets of them, in which they are sometimes numerous, dense and interchangeable, sometimes rare and decisive: from the almost daily variations in price to inflations over a hundred years. But the important thing is that history does not consider an event without defining the series of which it is part, without specifying the mode of analysis from which that series derives, without seeking to find out the regularity of phenomena and the limits of probability of their emergence, without inquiring into the variations, bends and angles of the graph, without wanting to determine the conditions on which they depend. Of course, history has for a long time no longer sought to understand events by the action of causes and effects in the formless unity of a great becoming, vaguely homogeneous or ruthlessly hierarchised; but this change was not made in order to rediscover prior structures, alien and hostile to the event. It was made in order to establish diverse series, intertwined and often divergent but not autonomous, which enable us to circumscribe the 'place' of the event, the margins of its chance variability, and the conditions of its appearance.

The fundamental notions which we now require are no longer those of consciousness and continuity (with their correlative problems of freedom and causality), nor any longer those of sign and structure. They are those of the event and the series, along with the play of the notions which are linked to them: regularity, dimension of chance (aléa), discontinuity, dependence, transformation; it is by means of a set of notions like this that my projected analysis of discourses is articulated, not on the traditional thematics which the philosophers of yesterday still take for 'living' history, but on the effective work of historians.

Yet it is also in this regard that this analysis poses philosophical, or theoretical, problems, and very likely formidable ones. If discourses must be treated first of all as sets of discursive events, what status must be given to that notion of event which was so rarely taken into consideration by philosophers? Naturally the event is neither substance nor accident, neither quality nor process; the event is not of the order of bodies. And yet it is not something immaterial either; it is always at the level of materiality that it takes effect, that it is effect; it has its locus and it consists in the relation, the coexistence, the dispersion, the overlapping, the accumulation, and the selection of material elements. It is not the act or the property of a body; it is produced as an effect of, and within, a dispersion of matter. Let us say that the philosophy of the event should move in the at first sight paradoxical direction of a materialism of the incorporeal.

Furthermore, if discursive events must be treated along the lines of homogeneous series which, however, are discontinuous in relation to each other, what status must be given to this discontinuity? It is of course not a matter of the succession of instants in time, nor of the plurality of different thinking subjects. It is a question of caesurae which break up the instant and disperse the subject into a plurality of possible positions and functions. This kind of discontinuity strikes and invalidates the smallest units that were traditionally recognised and which are the hardest to contest: the instant and the subject. Beneath them, and independently of them, we must conceive relations between these discontinuous series which are not of the order of succession (or simultaneity) within one (or several) consciousnesses; we must elaborate - outside of the philosophies of the subject and of time - a theory of discontinuous systematicities. Finally, though it is true that these discontinuous discursive series each have, within certain limits, their regularity, it is undoubtedly no longer possible to establish links of mechanical causality or of ideal necessity between the elements which constitute them. We must accept the introduction of the aléa as a category in the production of events. There once more we feel the absence of a theory enabling us to think the relations between chance and thought.

The result is that the narrow gap which is to be set to work in the history of ideas, and which consists of dealing not with the representations which might be behind discourse, but with discourses as regular and distinct series of events - this narrow gap looks, I'm afraid, like a small (and perhaps odious) piece of machinery which would enable us to introduce chance, the discontinuous, and materiality at the very roots of thought. This is a triple peril which a certain form of history tries to exorcise by narrating the continuous unravelling of an ideal necessity. They are three notions that should allow us to connect the history of systems of thought to the practice of historians. And they are three directions which the work of theoretical elaboration will have to follow.

The analyses which I propose to make, following these principles and making this horizon my line of reference, will fall into two sets. On the one hand the 'critical' section, which will put into practice the principle of reversal: trying to grasp the forms of exclusion, of limitation, of appropriation of which I was speaking just now; showing how they are formed, in response to what needs, how they have been modified and displaced, what constraint they have effectively exerted, to what extent they have been evaded. On the other hand there is the 'genealogical' set, which puts the other three principles to work: how did series of discourses come to be formed, across the grain of, in spite of, or with the aid of these systems of constraints; what was the specific norm of each one, and what were their conditions of appearance, growth, variation.

First, the critical set. A first group of analyses might deal with what I have designated as functions of exclusion. I formerly studied one of them, in respect of one determinate period: the divide between madness and reason in the classical epoch. Later, I might try to analyse a system of prohibition of language, the one concerning sexuality from the sixteenth to the nineteenth century. The aim would be to see not how this interdiction has been progressively and fortunately effaced, but how it has been displaced and re-articulated from a practice of confession in which the forbidden behaviour was named, classified, hierarchised in the most explicit way, up to the appearance, at first very timid and belated, of sexual thematics in nineteenth-century medicine and psychiatry; of course these are still only somewhat symbolic orientation-points, but one could already wager that the rhythms are not the ones we think, and the prohibitions have not always occupied the place that we imagine.

In the immediate future, I should like to apply myself to the third system of exclusion; this I envisage in two ways. On the one hand, I want to try to discover how this choice of truth, inside which we are caught but which we ceaselessly renew, was made – but also how it was repeated, renewed, and displaced. I will consider first the epoch of the Sophists at its beginning, with Socrates, or at least with Platonic philosophy, to see how efficacious discourse, ritual discourse, discourse loaded with powers and perils, gradually came to conform to a division between true and false discourse. Then I will consider the turn of the sixteenth century, at the time when there appears, especially in England, a science of the gaze, of observation, of the established fact, a certain natural philosophy, no doubt inseparable from the setting-up of new political structures, and, inseparable, too, from religious ideology; this was without a doubt a new form of the will to know. Finally, the third orientation-point will be the beginning of the nineteenth century, with its great acts that founded modern science, the formation of an industrial society and the positivist ideology which accompanied it. These will be my

three cross-sections in the morphology of our will to know, three stages of our philistinism.

I would also like to take up the same question again, but from a quite different angle: to measure the effect of a discourse with scientific claims - a medical, psychiatric, and also sociological discourse - on that set of practices and prescriptive discourses constituted by the penal system. The starting point and basic material for this analysis will be the study of psychiatric expertise and its role in penal practices.

Still looking at it from this critical perspective, but at another level, the procedures of limitation of discourses should be analysed. I indicated several of these just now: the principle of the author, of commentary, of the discipline. A certain number of studies can be envisaged from this perspective. I am thinking, for example, of an analysis of the history of medicine from the sixteenth to the nineteenth century. The objective would be not so much to pinpoint the discoveries made or the concepts put to work, but to grasp how, in the construction of medical discourse, and also in the whole institution that supports, transmits and reinforces it, the principle of the author, of the commentary, and of the discipline were used. The analysis would seek to find out how the principle of the great author operated: Hippocrates and Galen, of course, but also Paracelsus, Sydenham, or Boerhaave. It would seek to find out how the practice of the aphorism and the commentary were carried on, even late into the nineteenth century, and how they gradually gave place to the practice of the case, of the collection of cases, of the clinical apprenticeship using a concrete case. It would seek to discover, finally, according to what model medicine tried to constitute itself as a discipline, leaning at first on natural history, then on anatomy and biology.

One could also consider the way in which literary criticism and literary history in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries constituted the person of the author and the figure of the oeuvre, using, modifying, and displacing the procedures of religious exegesis, biblical criticism, hagiography, historical or legendary 'lives', autobiography, and memoirs. One day we will also have to study the role played by Freud in psychoanalytic knowledge, which is surely very different from that of Newton in physics (and of all founders of disciplines), and also very different from the role that can be played by an author in the field of philosophical discourse (even if, like Kant, he is at the origin of a different way of philosophising).

So there are some projects for the critical side of the task, for the analysis of the instances of discursive control. As for the genealogical aspect, it will concern the effective formation of discourse either within the limits of this control, or outside them, or more often on both sides of the boundary at once. The critical task will be to analyse the processes of rarefaction, but also of regrouping and unification of discourses; genealogy will study their formation, at once dispersed, discontinuous, and regular. In truth these two tasks are never completely separable: .

there are not, on one side, the forms of rejection, exclusion, regrouping and attribution, and then on the other side, at a deeper level, the spontaneous surging-up of discourses which, immediately before or after their manifestation, are submitted to selection and control. The regular formation of discourse can incorporate the procedures of control, in certain conditions and to a certain extent (that is what happens, for instance, when a discipline takes on the form and status of a scientific discourse); and conversely the figures of control can take shape within a discursive formation (as is the case with literary criticism as the discourse that constitutes the author): so much so that any critical task, putting in question the instances of control, must at the same time analyse the discursive regularities through which they are formed; and any genealogical description must take into account the limits which operate in real formations. The difference between the critical and the genealogical enterprise is not so much a difference of object or domain, but of point of attack, perspective, and delimitation.

Earlier on I mentioned one possible study, that of the taboos which affect the discourse of sexuality. It would be difficult, and in any case abstract, to carry out this study without analysing at the same time the sets of discourses – literary, religious or ethical, biological or medical, juridical too - where sexuality is discussed, and where it is named, described, metaphorised, explained, judged. We are very far from having constituted a unitary and regular discourse of sexuality; perhaps we never will, and perhaps it is not in this direction that we are going. No matter. The taboos do not have the same form and do not function in the same way in literary discourse and in medical discourse, in that of psychiatry or in that of the direction of conscience. Conversely, these different discursive regularities do not have the same way of reinforcing, evading, or displacing the taboos. So the study can be done only according to pluralities of series in which there are taboos at work which are at least partly different in each.

One could also consider the series of discourses which in the sixteenth and seventeeth centuries dealt with wealth and poverty, money, production, commerce. We are dealing there with sets of very heterogeneous statements, formulated by the rich and the poor, the learned and the ignorant, protestants and catholics, officers of the king, traders or moralists. Each one has its own form of regularity, likewise its own systems of constraint. None of them exactly prefigures that other form of discursive regularity which will later take on the air of a discipline and which will be called 'the analysis of wealth', then 'political economy'. Yet it is on the basis of this series that a new regularity was formed, taking up or excluding, justifying or brushing aside this one or that one of their utterances.

We can also conceive of a study which would deal with the discourses concerning heredity, such as we can find them, up to the beginning of the twentieth century, scattered and dispersed through various disciplines, observations, techniques and formulae. The task would then be to show by what play of articu-

lation these series in the end recomposed themselves, in the epistemologically coherent and institutionally recognised figure of genetics. This is the work that has just been done by François Jacob with a brilliance and an erudition which could not be equalled.

Thus the critical and the genealogical descriptions must alternate, and complement each other, each supporting the other by turns. The critical portion of the analysis applies to the systems that envelop discourse, and tries to identify and grasp these principles of sanctioning, exclusion, and scarcity of discourse. Let us say, playing on words, that it practises a studied casualness. The genealogical portion, on the other hand, applies to the series where discourse is effectively formed: it tries to grasp it in its power of affirmation, by which I mean not so much a power which would be opposed to that of denying, but rather the power to constitute domains of objects, in respect of which one can affirm or deny true or false propositions. Let us call these domains of objects positivities, and let us say, again playing on words, that if the critical style is that of studious casualness, the genealogical mood will be that of a happy positivism.

In any event, one thing at least has to be emphasised: discourse analysis understood like this does not reveal the universality of a meaning, but brings to light the action of imposed scarcity, with a fundamental power of affirmation. Scarcity and affirmation; ultimately, scarcity *of* affirmation, and not the continuous generosity of meaning, and not the monarchy of the signifier.

And now, let those with gaps in their vocabulary say – if they find the term more convenient than meaningful – that all this is structuralism.

VIII

I know that but for the aid of certain models and supports I would not have been able to undertake these researches which I have tried to sketch out for you. I believe I am greatly indebted to Georges Dumézl, since it was he who urged me to work, at an age when I still thought that to write was a pleasure. But I also owe a great deal to his work. May he forgive me if I have stretched the meaning or departed from the rigour of those texts which are his and which dominate us today. It was he who taught me to analyse the internal economy of a discourse in a manner quite different from the methods of traditional exegesis or linguistic formalism. It was he who taught me to observe the system of functional correlations between discourses by the play of comparisons from one to the other. It was he who taught me how to describe the transformations of a discourse and its relations to institutions. If I have tried to apply this method to discourses quite different from legendary or mythical narratives, it was probably because I had in front of me the works of the historians of science, especially Georges Canguilhem. It is to him that I

owe the insight that the history of science is not necessarily caught in an alternative: either to chronicle discoveries or to describe the ideas and opinions that border science on the side of its indeterminate genesis or on the side of its later expulsions, but that it was possible and necessary to write the history of science as a set of theoretical models and conceptual instruments which is both coherent and transformable.

But I consider that my greatest debt is to Jean Hyppolite. I am well aware that in the eyes of many his work belongs under the aegis of Hegel, and that our entire epoch, whether in logic or epistemology, whether in Marx or Nietzsche, is trying to escape from Hegel: and what I have tried to say just now about discourse is very unfaithful to the Hegelian logos.

But to make a real escape from Hegel presupposes an exact appreciation of what it costs to detach ourselves from him. It pre-supposes a knowledge of how close Hegel has come to us, perhaps insidiously. It presupposes a knowledge of what is still Hegelian in that which allows us to think against Hegel; and an ability to gauge how much our resources against him are perhaps still a ruse which he is using against us, and at the end of which he is waiting for us, immobile and elsewhere.

If so many of us are indebted to Jean Hyppolite, it is because he tirelessly explored, for us and ahead of us, this path by which one gets away from Hegel, establishes a distance, and by which one ends up being drawn back to him, but otherwise, and then constrained to leave him once again.

First of all Jean Hyppolite took the trouble to give a presence to the great and somewhat ghostly shadow of Hegel which had been on the prowl since the nineteenth century and with which people used to wrestle obscurely. It was by means of a transla-tion (of the 'Phenomenology of Mind') that he gave Hegel this presence. And the proof that Hegel himself is well and truly present in this French text is the fact that even Germans have consulted it so as to understand better what, for a moment at least, was going on in the German version.

Jean Hyppolite sought and followed all the ways out of this text, as if his concern was: can we still philosophise where Hegel is no longer possible? Can a philosophy still exist and yet not be Hegelian? Are the non-Hegelian elements in our thought also necessarily non-philosophical? And is the anti-philosophical necessarily non-Hegelian? So that he was not merely trying to give a meticulous historical description of this presence of Hegel: he wanted to make it into one of modernity's schemata of exper-ience (is it possible to think science, history, politics and every-day suffering in the Hegelian mode?); and conversely he wanted to make our modernity the test of Hegelianism and thereby of philosophy. For him the relation to Hegel was the site of an exper-iment, a confrontation from which he was never sure that phil-osophy would emerge victorious. He did not use the Hegelian system as a reassuring universe; he saw in it the extreme risk taken by philosophy.

Hence, I believe, the displacements he carried out, not so much within Hegelian philosophy but upon it, and upon philosophy as Hegel conceived it. Hence also a whole inversion of themes. Instead of conceiving philosophy as the totality at last capable of thinking itself and grasping itself in the movement of the concept, Jean Hyppolite made it into a task without end set against an infinite horizon: always up early, his philosophy was never ready to finish itself. A task without end, and consequently a task forever re-commenced, given over to the form and the paradox of repetition: philosophy as the inaccessible thought of the totality was for Jean Hyppolite the most repeatable thing in the extreme irregularity of experience; it was what is given and taken away as a question endlessly taken up again in life, in death, in memory. In this way he transformed the Hegelian theme of the closure on to the consciousness of self into a theme of repetitive interrogation. But philosophy, being repetition, was not ulterior to the concept; it did not have to pursue the edifice of abstraction, it had always to hold itself back, break with its acquired generalities and put itself back in contact with non-philosophy. It had to approach most closely not the thing that completes it but the thing that precedes it, that is not yet awakened to its disquiet. It had to take up the singularity of history, the regional rationalities of science, the depth of memory within consciousness - not in order to reduce them but in order to think them. Thus there appears the theme of a philosophy that is present, disquieted, mobile all along its line of contact with non-philosophy, yet existing only by means of non-philosophy and revealing the meaning it has for us. If philosophy is in this repeated contact with non-philosophy, what is the beginning of philosophy? Is philosophy already there, secretly present in what is not itself, starting to formulate itself half-aloud in the murmur of things? But then perhaps philosophical discourse no longer has a raison d'être; or must it begin from a foundation that is at once arbitrary and absolute? In this way the Hegelian theme of the movement proper to the immediate is replaced by that of the foundation of philosophical discourse and its formal structure.

And finally the last displacement that Jean Hyppolite carried out on Hegelian philosophy: if philosophy must begin as an absolute discourse, what about history? And what is this beginning which begins with a single individual, in a society, in a social class, and in the midst of struggles?

These five displacements, leading to the extreme edge of Hegelian philosophy, and no doubt pushing it over on to the other side of its own limits, summon up one by one the great figures of modern philosophy, whom Hyppolite never ceased confronting with Hegel: Marx with the questions of history, Fichte with the problem of the absolute beginning of philosophy, Bergson with the theme of contact with the non-philosophical, Kierkegaard with the problem of repetition and truth, Husserl with the theme of philosophy as an infinite task linked to the history of our

"Letter to a Japanese Friend"
Jacques Derrida

10 July 1983

Dear Professor Izutsu,

At our last meeting I promised you some schematic and preliminary reflections on the word "deconstruction". What we discussed were prolegomena to a possible translation of this word into Japanese, one which would at least try to avoid, if possible, a negative determination of its significations or connotations. The question would be therefore what deconstruction is not, or rather ought not to be. I underline these words "possible" and "ought". For if the difficulties of translation can be anticipated (and the question of deconstruction is also through and through the question of translation, and of the language of concepts, of the conceptual corpus of so-called "western" metaphysics), one should not begin by naively believing that the word "deconstruction" corresponds in French to some clear and univocal signification. There is already in "my" language a serious [sombre] problem of translation between what here or there can be envisaged for the word, and the usage itself, the reserves of the word. And it is already clear that even in French, things change from one context to another. More so in the German, English, and especially American contexts, where the same word is already attached to very different connotations, inflections, and emotional or affective values. Their analysis would be interesting and warrants a study of its own.

When I chose the word, or when it imposed itself on me - I think it was in *Of Grammatology* - I little thought it would be credited with such a central role in the discourse that interested me at the time. Among other things I wished to translate and adapt to my own ends the Heidggerian word Destruktion or Abbau. Each signified in this context an operation bearing on the structure or traditional architecture of the fundamental concepts of ontology or of Western metaphysics. But in French "destruction" too obviously implied an annihilation or a negative reduction much closer perhaps to Nietzschean "demolition" than to the Heideggerian interpretation or to the type of reading that I proposed. So I ruled that out. I remember having looked to see if the word "deconstruction" (which came to me it seemed quite spontaneously) was good French. I found it in the Littré. The grammatical, linguistic, or rhetorical senses [portees] were found bound up with a "mechanical" sense [portee "machinique"]. This association appeared very fortunate, and fortunately adapted to what I wanted at least to suggest. Perhaps I could cite some of the entries from the Littré.

"Deconstruction: action of deconstructing. Grammatical term. Disarranging the construction of words in a sentence. 'Of deconstruction, common way of saying construction', Lemare, De la maniére d'apprendre les langues, ch.17, in *Cours de langue Latine*. Deconstruire: 1. To disassemble the parts of a whole. To deconstruct a machine to transport it elsewhere. 2. Grammatical term... To deconstruct verse, rendering it, by the suppression of meter, similar to prose. Absolutely. ('In the system of prenotional sentences, one also starts with translation and one of its advantages is never needing to deconstruct,' Lemare, ibid.) 3. Se deconstruire [to deconstruct itself] ... to lose its construction. 'Modern scholarship has shown us that in a region of the timeless East, a language reaching its own state of perfection is deconstructed [s'est deconstruite] and altered from

within itself according to the single law of change, natural to the human mind,' Villemain, *Preface du Dictionaire de l'Academie*."

Naturally it will be necessary to translate all of this into Japanese but that only postpones the problem. It goes without saying that if all the significations enumerated by the Littré interested me because of their affinity with what I "meant" [voulais-dire], they concerned, metaphorically, so to say, only models or regions of a meaning and not the totality of what deconstruction aspires to at its most ambitious. This is not limited to a linguistico-grammatical model, let alone a mechanical model. These models themselves ought to be submitted to a deconstructive questioning. It is true then that these "models" have been behind a number of misunderstandings about the concept and word of "deconstruction" because of the temptation to reduce it to these models.

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This is why, especially in the United States, the motif of deconstruction has been associated with "poststructuralism" (a word unknown in France until its "return" from the States). But the undoing, decomposing, and desedimenting of structures, in a certain sense more historical than the structuralist movement it called into question, was not a negative operation. Rather than destroying, it was also necessary to understand how an "ensemble" was constituted and to reconstruct it to this end. However, the negative appearance was and remains much more difficult to efface than is suggested by the grammaar of the word (de-), even though it can designate a genealogical restoration [remonter] rather than a demolition. That is why the word, at least on its own, has never appeared satisfactory to me (but what word is), and must always be girded by an entire discourse. It is difficult to effect it afterward because, in the work of deconstruction, I have had to, as I have to here, multiply the cautionary indicators and put aside all the traditional philosophical concepts, while reaffirming the necessity of returning to them, at least under erasure. Hence, this has been called, precipitately, a type of negative theology (this was neither true nor false but I shall not enter into the debate here).

All the same, and in spite of appearances, deconstruction is neither an analysis nor a critique and its translation would have to take that into consideration. It is not an analysis in particular because the dismantling of a structure is not a regression toward a simple element, toward an indissoluble origin. These values, like that of analysis, are themselves philosophemes subject to

deconstruction. No more is it a critique, in a general sense or in Kantian sense. The instance of krinein or of krisis (decision, choice, judgment, discernment) is itself, as is all the apparatus of transcendental critique, one of the essential "themes" or "objects" of deconstruction.

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Deconstruction takes place, it is an event that does not await the deliberation, consciousness, or organization of a subject, or even of modernity. It deconstructs itself. It can be deconstructed. [Ça

se deconstruit.] The "it" [ça] is not here an impersonal thing that is opposed to some egological subjectivity. It is in deconstruction (the Littré says, "to deconstruct itself [se deconstruire]... to lose its construction"). And the "se" of "se deconstruire," which is not the reflexivity of an ego or of a consciousness, bears the whole enigma. I recognize, my dear driend, that in trying to make a word clearer so as to assist its translation, I am only thereby increasing the difficulties: "the impossible task of the translator" (Benjamin). This too is meant by "deconstructs".

If deconstruction takes place everywhere it [ça] takes place, where there is something (and is not therefore limited to meaning or to the text in the current and bookish sense of the word), we still have to think through what is happening in our world, in modernity, at the time when deconstruction is becoming a motif, with its word, its privileged themes, its mobile strategy, etc. I have no simple and formalizable response to this question. All my essays are attempts to have it out with this formidable question. They are modest symptoms of it, quite as much as tentative interpretations. I would not even dare to say, following a Heideggerian schema, that we are in an "epoch" of being-in-deconstruction, of a being-in-deconstruction that would manifest or dissimulate itself at one and the same time in other "epochs". This thought of "epochs" and especially that of a gathering of the destiny of being and of the unity of its destination or its dispersions (Schicken, Geschick) will never be very convincing.

To be very schematic I would say that the difficulty of defining an therefore also of translating the word "deconstruction" stems from the fact that all the predicates, all the defining concepts, all the lexical significations, and even the syntactic articulations, which seem at one moment to lend themselves to this definition or to that translation, are also deconstructed or deconstructible, directly or otherwise, etc. And that goes for the word

deconstruction, as for every word. *Of Grammatology* questioned the unity "word" and all the privileges with which is was credited, especially in its nominal form. It is therefore only a discourse or rather a writing that can make up for the incapacity of the word to be equal to a "thought". All sentences of the type "deconstruction is X" or "deconstruction is not X" a priori miss the point, which is to say that they are at least false. As you know, one of the principal things at stake in what is called in my texts "deconstruction" is precisely the delimiting of ontology and above all of the third person present indicative: S is P.

The word "deconstruction", like all other words, acquires its value only from its inscription in a chain of possible substitutions, in what is too blithely called a "context". For me, for what I have tried and still try to write, the word has interest only within a certain context, where it replaces and lets itself be determined by such other words as "ecriture", "trace", "differance", "supplement", "hymen", "pharmakon", "marge", "entame", "parergon", etc. By definition, the list can never be closed, and I have cited only names, which is inadequate and done only for reasons of economy. In fact I should have cited the sentences and the interlinking of sentences which in their turn determine these names in some of my texts.

What deconstruction is not? everything of course! What is deconstruction? nothing of course! I do not think, for all these reasons, that it is a good word [un bon mot]. It is certainly not elegant [beau]. It has definitely been of service in a highly determined situation. In order to know what has been imposed upon it in a chain of possible substitutions, despite its essential imperfection, this "highly determined situation" will need to be analyzed and deconstructed. This is difficult and I am not going to do it here. One final word to conclude this letter, which is alread too long. I do not believe that translation is a secondary

and derived event in relation to an original languag or text. And as "deconstruction" is a word, as I have just said, that is essentially replaceable in a chain of substitution, then that can also be done from one language to another. The chance, first of all the chance of (the) "deconstruction", would be that another word (the same word and an other) can be found in Japanese to say the same thing (the same and an other), to speak of deconstruction, and to lead elsewhere to its being written and transcribed, in a word which will also be more beautiful. When I speak of this writing of the other which will be more beautiful, I clearly understand translation as involving the same risk and chance as the poem. How to translate "poem"? a "poem"?...

With my best wishes,

   Jacques Derrida

Jean-François Lyotard

DEFINING THE POSTMODERN

EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION

THE CLAIM THAT WE LIVE in the postmodern era has three separate grounds: first, that the ideas of progress, rationality, and scientific objectivity which legitimated Western modernity are no longer acceptable in large part because they take no account of cultural differences; second, that there is no confidence that "high" or avant-garde art and culture have more value than "low" or popular culture; and, third, that it is no longer possible securely to separate the "real" from the "copy," or the "natural" from the "artificial," in a historical situation where technologies (including technologies which produce and disseminate information and images) have so much control and reach.

Jean-François Lyotard, who has been responsible for influential critiques of modernist and universalist ideas of progress and rationality, as well as illuminating defences of the avant-garde, here argues against a historical reading of the "post" in "postmodernism." For him, the postmodern does not follow the modern in time: rather, modernity had always contained its "postmodern" moments.

Further reading: J. Collins 1989; Connor 1989; Docherty 1993; Harvey 1989; Hutcheon 1989; Jameson 1990; Lyotard 1986.

The Cultural Studies Reader, Ed by Simon During.

I should like to make only a small number of observations, in order to point to – and not at all to resolve – some problems surrounding the term 'postmodern'. My aim is not to close the debate, but to open it, to allow it to develop by avoiding certain confusions and ambiguities, as far as this is possible.

There are many debates implied by, and implicated in, the term 'postmodern'. I will distinguish three of them.

First, the opposition between postmodernism and modernism, or the Modern Movement (1910–45), in architectural theory. According to Paolo Portoghesi (*Dell'architettura moderna*), there is a rupture or break, and this break would be the abrogation of the hegemony of Euclidean geometry, which was sublimated in the plastic poetry of the movement known as De Stijl, for example. According to Victorio Grigotti, another Italian architect, the difference between the two periods is characterized by what is possibly a more interesting fissure. There is no longer any close linkage between the architectural project and socio-historical progress in the realization of human emancipation on the larger scale. Postmodern architecture is condemned to generate a multiplicity of small transformations in the space it inherits, and to give up the project of a last rebuilding of the whole space occupied by humanity. In this sense, a perspective is opened in the larger landscape.

In this account there is no longer a horizon of universalization, of general emancipation before the eyes of postmodern man, or in particular, of the postmodern architect. The disappearance of this idea of progress within rationality and freedom would explain a certain tone, style or modus which are specific to postmodern architecture. I would say a sort of *bricolage*: the high frequency of quotations of elements from previous styles or periods (classical or modern), giving up the consideration of environment, and so on.

Just a remark about this aspect. The 'post', in the term 'postmodernist' is in this case to be understood in the sense of a simple succession, of a diachrony of periods, each of them clearly identifiable. Something like a conversion, a new direction after the previous one. I should like to observe that this idea of chronology is totally modern. It belongs to Christianity, Cartesianism, Jacobinism. Since we are beginning something completely new, we have to re-set the hands of the clock at zero. The idea of modernity is closely bound up with this principle that it is possible and necessary to break with tradition and to begin a new way of living and thinking. Today we can presume that this 'breaking' is, rather, a manner of forgetting or repressing the past. That's to say of repeating it. Not overcoming it.

I would say that the quotation of elements of past architectures in the new ones seems to me to be the same procedure as the use of remains coming from past life in the dream-work as described by Freud, in the *Interpretation of Dreams*. This use of repetition or quotation, be it ironical or not, cynical or not, can be seen in the trends dominating contemporary painting, under the name of 'transavantgardism' (Achille Bonito Oliva) or under the name of neo-expressionism. I'll come back to this question in my third point.

The second point. A second connotation of the term 'postmodern', and I admit that I am at least partly responsible for the misunderstanding associated with this meaning.

The general idea is a trivial one. One can note a sort of decay in the confidence placed by the last two centuries in the idea of progress. This idea of progress

as possible, probable or necessary was rooted in the certainty that the development of the arts, technology, knowledge and liberty would be profitable to mankind as a whole. To be sure, the question of knowing which was the subject truly victimized by the lack of development – whether it was the poor, the worker, the illiterate – remained open during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. There were disputes, even wars, between liberals, conservatives and leftists over the very name of the subject we are to help to become emancipated. Nevertheless, all the parties concurred in the same belief that enterprises, discoveries and institutions are legitimate only insofar as they contribute to the emancipation of mankind.

After two centuries, we are more sensitive to signs that signify the contrary. Neither economic nor political liberalism, nor the various Marxisms, emerge from the sanguinary last two centuries free from the suspicion of crimes against mankind. We can list a series of proper names (names of places, persons and dates) capable of illustrating and founding our suspicion. Following Theodor Adorno, I use the name of Auschwitz to point out the irrelevance of empirical matter, the stuff of recent past history, in terms of the modern claim to help mankind to emancipate itself. What kind of thought is able to sublate (*Aufheben*) Auschwitz in a general (either empirical or speculative) process towards a universal emancipation? So there is a sort of sorrow in the *Zeitgeist*. This can express itself by reactive or reactionary attitudes or by utopias, but never by a positive orientation offering a new perspective.

The development of techno-sciences has become a means of increasing disease, not of fighting it. We can no longer call this development by the old name of progress. This development seems to be taking place by itself, by an autonomous force or 'motricity'. It doesn't respond to a demand coming from human needs. On the contrary, human entities (individual or social) seem always to be destabilized by the results of this development. The intellectual results as much as the material ones. I would say that mankind is in the condition of running after the process of accumulating new objects of practice and thought. In my view it is a real and obscure question to determine the reason of this process of complexification. It's something like a destiny towards a more and more complex condition. Our demands for security, identity and happiness, coming from our condition as living beings and even social beings appear today irrelevant in the face of this sort of obligation to complexify, mediate, memorize and synthesize every object, and to change its scale. We are in this techno-scientific world like Gulliver: sometimes too big, sometimes too small, never at the right scale. Consequently, the claim for simplicity, in general, appears today that of a barbarian.

From this point, it would be necessary to consider the division of mankind into two parts: one part confronted with the challenge of complexity; the other with the terrible ancient task of survival. This is a major aspect of the failure of the modern project (which was, in principle, valid for mankind as a whole).

The third argument is more complex, and I shall present it as briefly as possible. The question of postmodernity is also the question of the expressions of thought: art, literature, philosophy, politics. You know that in the field of art for example, and more especially the plastic arts, the dominant idea is that the big movement of avant-gardism is over. There seems to be general agreement about laughing at the avant-gardes, considered as the expression of an obsolete modernity. I don't

like the term avant garde any more than anyone else, because of its military connotations. Nevertheless I would like to observe that the very process of avant-gardism in painting was in reality a long, obstinate and highly responsible investigation of the presuppositions implied in modernity. The right approach, in order to understand the work of painters from, say, Manet to Duchamp or Barnett Newman is to compare their work with the anamnesis which takes place in psychoanalytical therapy. Just as the patient elaborates his present trouble by freely associating the more imaginary, immaterial, irrelevant bits with past situations, so discovering hidden meanings of his life, we can consider the work of Cézanne, Picasso, Delaunay, Kandinsky, Klee, Mondrian, Malevitch and finally Duchamp as a working through – what Freud called *Durcharbeitung* – operated by modernity on itself. If we give up this responsibility, it is certain that we are condemned to repeat, without any displacement, the modern neurosis, the Western schizophrenia, paranoia, and so on. This being granted, the 'post' of postmodernity does not mean a process of coming back or flashing back, feeding back, but of *ana-lysing, anamnesing*, of reflecting.

within itself according to the single law of change, natural to the human mind,' Villemain, *Preface du Dictionaire de l'Academie*."

Naturally it will be necessary to translate all of this into Japanese but that only postpones the problem. It goes without saying that if all the significations enumerated by the Littré interested me because of their affinity with what I "meant" [voulais-dire], they concerned, metaphorically, so to say, only models or regions of meaning and not the totality of what deconstruction aspires to at its most ambitious. This is not limited to a linguistico-grammatical model, let alone a mechanical model. These models themselves ought to be submitted to a deconstructive questioning. It is true then that these "models" have been behind a number of misunderstandings about the concept and word of "deconstruction" because of the temptation to reduce it to these models.

It must also be said that the word was rarely used and was largely unknown in France. It had to be reconstructed in some way, and its use value had been determined by the discourse that was then being attempted around and on the basis of *Of Grammatology*. It is to this value that I am now going to try to give some precision and not some primitive meaning or etymology sheltered from or outside of any contextual strategy.

A few more words on the subject of "the context". At that time structuralism was dominant. "Deconstruction" seemed to be going in the same direction since the word signified a certain attention to structures (which themselves were neither simply ideas, nor forms, nor syntheses, nor systems). To deconstruct was also a structuralist gesture or in any case a gesture that assumed a certain need for the structuralist problematic. But it was also an antistructuralist gesture, and its fortune rests in part on this ambiguity. Structures were to be undone, decomposed,

desedimented (all types of structures, linguistic, "logocentric", "phonocentric" - structuralism being especially at that time dominated by linguistic models and by a so-called structural linguistics that was also called Saussurian - socio-institutional, political, cultural, and above all and from the start philosophical.)

This is why, especially in the United States, the motif of deconstruction has been associated with "poststructuralism" (a word unknown in France until its "return" from the States). But the undoing, decomposing, and desedimenting of structures, in a certain sense more historical than the structuralist movement it called into question, was not a negative operation. Rather than destroying, it was also necessary to understand how an "ensemble" was constituted and to reconstruct it to this end. However, the negative appearance was and remains much more difficult to efface than is suggested by the grammaar of the word (de-), even though it can designate a genealogical restoration [remonter] rather than a demolition. That is why the word, at least on its own, has never appeared satisfactory to me (but what word is), and must always be girded by an entire discourse. It is difficult to effect it afterward because, in the work of deconstruction, I have had to, as I have to here, multiply the cautionary indicators and put aside all the traditional philosophical concepts, while reaffirming the necessity of returning to them, at least under erasure. Hence, this has been called, precipitately, a type of negative theology (this was neither true nor false but I shall not enter into the debate here).

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I would say the same about method. Deconstruction is not a method and cannot be tranformed into one. Especially if the technical and procedural significations of the word are stressed. It is true that in certain circles (university or cultural, especially in the United States) the technical and methodological "metaphor" that seems necessarily attached to the very word deconstruction has been able to seduce or lead astray. Hence the debate that has developed in these circles: Can deconstruction become a methodology for reading and for interpretation? Can it thus be allowed to be reappropriated and domesticated by academic institutions?

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"Letter to a Japanese Friend"
Jacques Derrida

10 July 1983

Dear Professor Izutsu,

At our last meeting I promised you some schematic and preliminary reflections on the word "deconstruction". What we discussed were prolegomena to a possible translation of this word into Japanese, one which would at least try to avoid, if possible, a negative determination of its significations or connotations. The question would be therefore what deconstruction is not, or rather ought not to be. I underline these words "possible" and "ought". For if the difficulties of translation can be anticipated (and the question of deconstruction is also through and through the question of translation, and of the language of concepts, of the conceptual corpus of so-called "western" metaphysics), one should not begin by naively believing that the word "deconstruction" corresponds in French to some clear and univocal signification. There is already in "my" language a serious [sombre] problem of translation between what here or there can be envisaged for the word, and the usage itself, the reserves of the word. And it is already clear that even in French, things change from one context to another. More so in the German, English, and especially American contexts, where the same word is already attached to very different connotations, inflections, and emotional or affective values. Their analysis would be interesting and warrants a study of its own.

When I chose the word, or when it imposed itself on me - I think it was in *Of Grammatology* - I little thought it would be credited with such a central role in the discourse that interested me at the time. Among other things I wished to translate and adapt to my own ends the Heidggerian word Destruktion or Abbau. Each signified in this context an operation bearing on the structure or traditional architecture of the fundamental concepts of ontology or of Western metaphysics. But in French "destruction" too obviously implied an annihilation or a negative reduction much closer perhaps to Nietzschean "demolition" than to the Heideggerian interpretation or to the type of reading that I proposed. So I ruled that out. I remember having looked to see if the word "deconstruction" (which came to me it seemed quite spontaneously) was good French. I found it in the Littré. The grammatical, linguistic, or rhetorical senses [portees] were found bound up with a "mechanical" sense [portee "machinique"]. This association appeared very fortunate, and fortunately adapted to what I wanted at least to suggest. Perhaps I could cite some of the entries from the Littré.

"Deconstruction: action of deconstructing. Grammatical term. Disarranging the construction of words in a sentence. 'Of deconstruction, common way of saying construction', Lemare, De la maniére d'apprendre les langues, ch.17, in *Cours de langue Latine*. Deconstruire: 1. To disassemble the parts of a whole. To deconstruct a machine to transport it elsewhere. 2. Grammatical term... To deconstruct verse, rendering it, by the suppression of meter, similar to prose. Absolutely. ('In the system of prenotional sentences, one also starts with translation and one of its advantages is never needing to deconstruct,' Lemare, ibid.) 3. Se deconstruire [to deconstruct itself] ... to lose its construction. 'Modern scholarship has shown us that in a region of the timeless East, a language reaching its own state of perfection is deconstructed [s'est deconstruite] and altered from

deconstruction, as for every word. "Of Grammatology" questioned the unity "word" and all the privileges with which is was credited, especially in its nominal form. It is therefore only a discourse or rather a writing that can make up for the incapacity of the word to be equal to a "thought". All sentences of the type "deconstruction is X" or "deconstruction is not X" a priori miss the point, which is to say that they are at least false. As you know, one of the principal things at stake in what is called in my texts "deconstruction" is precisely the delimiting of ontology and above all of the third person present indicative: S is P.

The word "deconstruction", like all other words, acquires its value only from its inscription in a chain of possible substitutions, in what is too blithely called a "context". For me, for what I have tried and still try to write, the word has interest only within a certain context, where it replaces and lets itself be determined by such other words as "ecriture", "trace", "differance", "supplement", "hymen", "pharmakon", "marge", "entame", "parergon", etc. By definition, the list can never be closed, and I have cited only names, which is inadequate and done only for reasons of economy. In fact I should have cited the sentences and the interlinking of sentences which in their turn determine these names in some of my texts.

What deconstruction is not? everything of course! What is deconstruction? nothing of course! I do not think, for all these reasons, that it is a good word [un bon mot]. It is certainly not elegant [beau]. It has definitely been of service in a highly determined situation. In order to know what has been imposed upon it in a chain of possible substitutions, despite its essential imperfection, this "highly determined situation" will need to be analyzed and deconstructed. This is difficult and I am not going to do it here. One final word to conclude this letter, which is alread too long. I do not believe that translation is a secondary

and derived event in relation to an original languag or text. And as "deconstruction" is a word, as I have just said, that is essentially replaceable in a chain of substitution, then that can also be done from one language to another. The chance, first of all the chance of (the) "deconstruction", would be that another word (the same word and an other) can be found in Japanese to say the same thing (the same and an other), to speak of deconstruction, and to lead elsewhere to its being written and transcribed, in a word which will also be more beautiful. When I speak of this writing of the other which will be more beautiful, I clearly understand translation as involving the same risk and chance as the poem. How to translate "poem"? a "poem"?...

With my best wishes,

Jacques Derrida

Raymond Williams

CULTURE IS ORDINARY [1958]

Editor's introduction

Raymond Williams (1921–1988) was a decisive influence on the formation of cultural studies. This early text, with its insistence that 'culture is ordinary, in every society and in every mind', marks out a preoccupation with *lived* culture that was to animate all of Williams's work. For Williams the word 'culture' meant both 'a whole way of life' (culture in the anthropological sense, synonymous with everyday life) and the forms of signification (novels, films, but also advertising and television) that circulate within a society. Thus the challenge for studying culture was to understand how these two meanings of culture coexist. In a society saturated by mass-circulated texts, any clear separation between the two notions of culture becomes impossible. Yet it is clearly a simplification to reduce the experience of culture to those meanings that are most visible (for instance those we find in magazines and on TV). Williams did not provide a solution to this problem; rather he continually strove to foreground the puzzling of culture as a problem. In this sense the idea of 'national culture' becomes an arena for thinking about the problem of ordinary culture within societies where local, national and global meanings circulate and collide.

Describing himself at times as a Welsh European, the correlations between 'nation' and 'culture' were a continual and problematic theme in Williams's writing. It is perhaps in his novels (the first significantly called *Border Country* (1960) – referring both to the region of Wales called the Borders and more metaphorically to the experience of living across local, national and global borders) that he articulates the most local (regional) sense of culture. Yet he also makes it clear that in modern society a sense of culture as a common resource of meaning seems to inevitably impact at the level of 'nation' even if that 'nation' is distinct from the nationalist images peddled by governments and media moguls. In an attempt to provide a form for articulating an experience of a common culture that resonates across both the amalgam of representations and the experience of living culture

he coined the phrase 'structures of feeling'. Although a vague term the conjoining of 'structure' and 'feeling' (with all the seemingly irreconcilable differences that the two words suggest) offers a perspective from which to view anthropological culture saturated by a mass of representations. That 'structures of feeling' seem invariably to register a 'national' imaginary is of obvious importance for thinking about everyday life.

Further reading: Eldridge and Eldridge 1994; Hall 1993; Williams [1961] 1992.

THE BUS STOP WAS OUTSIDE THE CATHEDRAL. I had been looking at the Mappa Mundi, with its rivers out of Paradise, and at the chained library, where a party of clergymen had got in easily, but where I had waited an hour and cajoled a verger before I even saw the chains. Now, across the street, a cinema advertised the *Six-Five Special* and a cartoon version of *Gulliver's Travels*. The bus arrived, with a driver and a conductress deeply absorbed in each other. We went out of the city, over the old bridge, and on through the orchards and the green meadows and the fields red under the plough. Ahead were the Black Mountains, and we climbed among them, watching the steep fields end at the grey walls, beyond which the bracken and heather and whin had not yet been driven back. To the east, along the ridge, stood the line of grey Norman castles; to the west, the fortress wall of the mountains. Then, as we still climbed, the rock changed under us. Here, now, was limestone, and the line of the early iron workings along the scarp. The farming valleys, with their scattered white houses, fell away behind. Ahead of us were the narrower valleys: the steel-rolling mill, the gasworks, the grey terraces, the pitheads. The bus stopped, and the driver and conductress got out, still absorbed. They had done this journey so often, and seen all its stages. It is a journey, in fact, that in one form or another we have all made.

I was born and grew up halfway along that bus journey. Where I lived is still a farming valley, though the road through it is being widened and straightened, to carry the heavy lorries to the north. Not far away, my grandfather, and so back through the generations, worked as a farm labourer until he was turned out of his cottage and, in his fifties, became a roadman. His sons went at thirteen or fourteen on to the farms, his daughters into service. My father, his third son, left the farm at fifteen to be a boy porter on the railway, and later became a signalman, working in a box in this valley until he died. I went up the road to the village school, where a curtain divided the two classes — Second to eight or nine, First to fourteen. At eleven I went to the local grammar school, and later to Cambridge.

Culture is ordinary: that is where we must start. To grow up in that country was to see the shape of a culture, and its modes of change. I could stand on the mountains and look north to the farms and the cathedral, or south to the smoke and the flare of the blast furnace making a second sunset. To grow up in that family was to see the shaping of minds: the learning of new skills, the shifting of relationships, the emergence of different language and ideas. My grandfather, a big hard labourer, wept while he spoke, finely and excitedly, at the parish meeting, of being turned out of his cottage. My father, not long before he died, spoke quietly and happily of when he had started a trade-union branch and a Labour Party group in the village, and, without

bitterness, of the 'kept men' of the new politics. I speak a different idiom, but I think of these same things.

Culture is ordinary: that is the first fact. Every human society has its own shape, its own purposes, its own meanings. Every human society expresses these, in institutions, and in arts and learning. The making of a society is the finding of common meanings and directions, and its growth is an active debate and amendment under the pressures of experience, contact, and discovery, writing themselves into the land. The growing society is there, yet it is also made and remade in every individual mind. The making of a mind is, first, the slow learning of shapes, purposes, and meanings, so that work, observation and communication are possible. Then, second, but equal in importance, is the testing of these in experience, the making of new observations, comparisons, and meanings. A culture has two aspects: the known meanings and directions, which its members are trained to; the new observations and meanings, which are offered and tested. These are the ordinary processes of human societies and human minds, and we see through them the nature of a culture: that it is always both traditional and creative; that it is both the most ordinary common meanings and the finest individual meanings. We use the word culture in these two senses: to mean a whole way of life — the common meanings; to mean the arts and learning — the special processes of discovery and creative effort. Some writers reserve the word for one or other of these senses; I insist on both, and on the significance of their conjunction. The questions I ask about our culture are questions about our general and common purposes, yet also questions about deep personal meanings. Culture is ordinary, in every society and in every mind.

Now there are two senses of culture — two colours attached to it — that I know about but refuse to learn. The first I discovered at Cambridge, in a teashop. I was not, by the way, oppressed by Cambridge. I was not cast down by old buildings, for I had come from a country with twenty centuries of history written visibly into the earth: I liked walking through a Tudor court, but it did not make me feel raw. I was not amazed by the existence of a place of learning; I had always known the cathedral, and the bookcases I now sit to work at in Oxford are of the same design as those in the chained library. Nor was learning, in my family, some strange eccentricity; I was not, on a scholarship in Cambridge, a new kind of animal up a brand-new ladder. Learning was ordinary; we learned where we could. Always, from those scattered white houses, it had made sense to go out and become a scholar or a poet or a teacher. Yet few of us could be spared from the immediate work; a price had been set on this kind of learning, and it was more, much more, than we could individually pay. Now, when we could pay in common, it was a good, ordinary life.

I was not oppressed by the university, but the teashop, acting as if it were one of the older and more respectable departments, was a different matter. Here was culture, not in any sense I knew, but in a special sense: the outward and emphatically visible sign of a special kind of people, cultivated people. They were not, the great majority of them, particularly learned; they practised few arts; but they had it, and they showed you they had it. They are still there, I suppose, still showing it, though even they must be hearing rude noises from outside, from a few scholars and writers they call — how comforting a label is! — angry young men. As a matter of fact there is no need to be rude. It is simply that if that is culture, we don't want it; we have seen other people living.

But of course it is not culture, and those of my colleagues who, hating the teashop, make culture, on its account, a dirty word, are mistaken. If the people in the teashop go on insisting that culture is their trivial differences of behaviour, their trivial variations of speech habit, we cannot stop them, but we can ignore them. They are not that important, to take culture from where it belongs.

Yet, probably also disliking the teashop, there were writers I read then, who went into the same category in my mind. When I now read a book such as Clive Bell's *Civilisation*, I experience not so much disagreement as stupor. What kind of life can it be, I wonder, to produce this extraordinary fussiness, this extraordinary decision to call certain things culture and then separate them, as with a park wall, from ordinary people and ordinary work? At home we met and made music, listened to it, recited and listened to poems, valued fine language. I have heard better music and better poems since; there is the world to draw on. But I know, from the most ordinary experience, that the interest is there, the capacity is there. Of course, farther along that bus journey, the old social organization in which these things had their place has been broken. People have been driven and concentrated into new kinds of work, new kinds of relationship; work, by the way, which built the park walls, and the houses inside them, and which is now at last bringing, to the unanimous disgust of the teashop, clean and decent and furnished living to the people themselves. Culture is ordinary: through every change let us hold fast to that.

The other sense, or colour, that I refuse to learn, is very different. Only two English words rhyme with culture, and these, as it happens, are sepulture and vulture. We don't yet call museums or galleries or even universities culture-sepultures, but I hear a lot, lately, about culture-vultures (man must rhyme), and I hear also, in the same North Atlantic argot, of do-gooders and highbrows and superior prigs. Now I don't like the teashop, but I don't like this drinking-hole either. I know there are people who are humourless about the arts and learning, and I know there is a difference between goodness and sanctimony. But the growing implications of this spreading argot — the true cant of a new kind of rogue — I reject absolutely. For, honestly, how can anyone use a word like 'do-gooder' with this new, offbeat complacency? How can anyone wither himself to a state where he must use these new flip words for any attachment to learning or the arts? It is plain that what may have started as a feeling about hypocrisy, or about pretentiousness (in itself a two-edged word), is becoming a guilt-ridden tic at the mention of any serious standards whatever. And the word 'culture' has been heavily compromised by this conditioning: Goering reached for his gun; many reach for their chequebooks; a growing number, now, reach for the latest bit of argot.

'Good' has been drained of much of its meaning, in these circles, by the exclusion of its ethical content and emphasis on a purely technical standard; to do a good job is better than to be a do-gooder. But do we need reminding that any crook can, in his own terms, do a good job? The smooth reassurance of technical efficiency is no substitute for the whole positive human reference. Yet men who once made this reference, men who were or wanted to be writers or scholars, are now, with every appearance of satisfaction, advertising men, publicity boys, names in the strip newspapers. These men were given skills, given attachments, which are now in the service of the most brazen money-grabbing exploitation of the inexperience of ordinary people. And it is these men – this new, dangerous class – who have invented and

disseminated the argot, in an attempt to influence ordinary people — who because they do real work have real standards in the fields they know — against real standards in the fields these men knew and have abandoned. The old cheapjack is still there in the market, with the country boys' half-crowns on his reputed packets of gold rings or watches. He thinks of his victims as a slow, ignorant crowd, but they live, and farm, while he coughs behind his portable stall. The new cheapjack is in offices with contemporary *décor*, using scraps of linguistics, psychology and sociology to influence what he thinks of as the mass mind. He too, however, will have to pick up and move on, and meanwhile we are not to be influenced by his argot; we can simply refuse to learn it. Culture is ordinary. An interest in learning or the arts is simple, pleasant and natural. A desire to know what is best, and to do what is good, is the whole positive nature of man. We are not to be scared from these things by noises. There are many versions of what is wrong with our culture. So far I have tried only to clear away the detritus which makes it difficult for us to think seriously about it at all. When I got to Cambridge I encountered two serious influences which have left a very deep impression on my mind. The first was Marxism, the second the teaching of Leavis. Through all subsequent disagreement I retain my respect for both.

The Marxists said many things, but those that mattered were three. First, they said that a culture must be finally interpreted in relation to its underlying system of production. I have argued this theoretically elsewhere — it is a more difficult idea than it looks — but I still accept its emphasis. Everything I had seen, growing up in that border country, had led me towards such an emphasis: a culture is a whole way of life, and the arts are part of a social organization which economic change clearly radically affects. I did not have to be taught dissatisfaction with the existing economic system, but the subsequent questions about our culture were, in these terms, vague. It was said that it was a class-dominated culture, deliberately restricting a common inheritance to a small class, while leaving the masses ignorant. The fact of restriction I accepted — it is still very obvious that only the *deserving* poor get much educational opportunity, and I was in no mood, as I walked about Cambridge, to feel glad that I had been thought deserving; I was no better and no worse than the people I came from. On the other hand, just because of this, I got angry at my friends' talk about the ignorant masses: one kind of Communist has always talked like this, and has got his answer, at Poznan and Budapest, as the imperialists, making the same assumption, were answered in India, in Indo-China, in Africa. There is an English bourgeois culture, with its powerful educational, literary and social institutions, in close contact with the actual centres of power. To say that most working people are excluded from these is self-evident, though the doors, under sustained pressure, are slowly opening. But to go on to say that working people are excluded from English culture is nonsense; they have their own growing institutions, and much of the strictly bourgeois culture they would in any case not want. A great part of the English way of life, and of its arts and learning, is not bourgeois in any discoverable sense. There are institutions, and common meanings, which are in no sense the sole product of the commercial middle class; and there are art and learning, a common English inheritance, produced by many kinds of men, including many who hated the very class and system which now take pride in consuming it. The bourgeoisie has given us much, including a narrow but real system of morality; that is at least better than its court predecessors. The leisure which the bourgeoisie attained has given us much of cultural value. But this is not to say that

contemporary culture is bourgeois culture: a mistake that everyone, from Conservatives to Marxists, seems to make. There is a distinct working-class way of life, which I for one value – not only because I was bred in it, for I now, in certain respects, live differently. I think this way of life, with its emphases of neighbourhood, mutual obligation, and common betterment, as expressed in the great working-class political and industrial institutions, is in fact the best basis for any future English society. As for the arts and learning, they are in a real sense a national inheritance, which is, or should be, available to everyone. So when the Marxists say that we live in a dying culture, and that the masses are ignorant, I have to ask them, as I asked them then, where on earth they have lived. A dying culture, and ignorant masses, are not what I have known and see.

What I had got from the Marxists then, so far, was a relationship between culture and production, and the observation that education was restricted. The other things I rejected, as I rejected also their third point, that since culture and production are related, the advocacy of a different system of production is in some way a cultural directive, indicating not only a way of life but new arts and learning. I did some writing while I was, for eighteen months, a member of the Communist Party, and I found out in trivial ways what other writers, here and in Europe, have found out more gravely: the practical consequences of this kind of theoretical error. In this respect, I saw the future, and it didn't work. The Marxist interpretation of culture can never be accepted while it retains, as it need not retain, this directive element, this insistence that if you honestly want socialism you must write, think, learn in certain prescribed ways. A culture is common meanings, the product of a whole people, and offered individual meanings, the product of a man's whole committed personal and social experience. It is stupid and arrogant to suppose that any of these meanings can in any way be prescribed; they are made by living, made and remade, in ways we cannot know in advance. To try to jump the future, to pretend that in some way you *are* the future, is strictly insane. Prediction is another matter, an offered meaning, but the only thing we can say about culture in an England that has socialized its means of production is that all the channels of expression and communication should be cleared and open, so that the whole actual life, that we cannot know in advance, that we can know only in part even while it is being lived, may be brought to consciousness and meaning.

Leavis has never liked Marxists, which is in one way a pity, for they know more than he does about modern English society, and about its immediate history. He, on the other hand, knows more than any Marxist I have met about the real relations between art and experience. We have all learned from him in this, and we have also learned his version of what is wrong with English culture. The diagnosis is radical, and is rapidly becoming orthodox. There was an old, mainly agricultural England, with a traditional culture of great value. This has been replaced by a modern, organized, industrial state, whose characteristic institutions deliberately cheapen our natural human responses, making art and literature into desperate survivors and witnesses, while a new mechanized vulgarity sweeps into the centres of power. The only defence is in education, which will at least keep certain things alive, and which will also, at least in a minority, develop ways of thinking and feeling which are competent to understand what is happening and to maintain the finest individual values. I need not add how widespread this diagnosis has become, though little enough acknowledgement is still made to Leavis himself. For my own part, I was deeply impressed by it:

deeply enough for my ultimate rejection of it to be a personal crisis lasting several years.

For, obviously, it seemed to fit a good deal of my experience. It did not tell me that my father and grandfather were ignorant wage-slaves; it did not tell me that the smart, busy, commercial culture (which I had come to as a stranger, so much so that for years I had violent headaches whenever I passed through London and saw underground advertisements and evening newspapers) was the thing I had to catch up with. I even made a fool of myself, or was made to think so, when after a lecture in which the usual point was made that 'neighbour' now does not mean what it did to Shakespeare, I said – imagine! – that to me it did. (When my father was dying, this year, one man came in and dug his garden; another loaded and delivered a lorry of sleepers for firewood; another came and chopped the sleepers into blocks; another – I don't know who, it was never said – left a sack of potatoes at the back door; a woman came in and took away a basket of washing.) But even this was explicable; I came from a bit of the old society, but my future was Surbiton (it took me years to find Surbiton, and have a good look at it, but it's served a good many as a symbol – without having lived there I couldn't say whether rightly). So there I was, and it all seemed to fit.

Yet not all. Once I got away, and thought about it, it didn't really fit properly. For one thing I knew this: at home we were glad of the Industrial Revolution, and of its consequent social and political changes. True, we lived in a very beautiful farming valley, and the valleys beyond the limestone we could all see were ugly. But there was one gift that was overriding, one gift which at any price we would take, the gift of power that is everything to men who have worked with their hands. It was slow in coming to us, in all its effects, but steam power, the petrol engine, electricity, these and their host of products in commodities and services, we took as quickly as we could get them, and were glad. I have seen all these things being used, and I have seen the things they replaced. I will not listen with patience to any acid listing of them – you know the sneer you can get into plumbing, baby Austins, aspirin, contraceptives, canned food. But I say to these Pharisees: dirty water, an earth bucket, a four-mile walk each way to work, headaches, broken women, hunger and monotony of diet. The working people, in town and country alike, will not listen (and I support them) to any account of our society which supposes that these things are not progress: not just mechanical, external progress either, but a real service of life. Moreover, in the new conditions, there was more real freedom to dispose of our lives, more real personal grasp where it mattered, more real say. Any account of our culture which explicitly or implicitly denies the value of an industrial society is really irrelevant; not in a million years would you make us give up this power.

So then the social basis of the case was unacceptable, but could one, trying to be a writer, a scholar, a teacher, ignore the indictment of the new cultural vulgarity? For the plumbing and the tractors and the medicines could one ignore the strip newspapers, the multiplying cheapjacks, the raucous triviality? As a matter of priorities, yes, if necessary; but was the cheapening of response really a consequence of the cheapening of power? It looks like it, I know, but is this really as much as one can say? I believe the central problem of our society, in the coming half-century, is the use of our new resources to make a good common culture; the means to a good, abundant economy we already understand. I think the good common culture can be made, but before we can be serious about this, we must rid ourselves of a legacy from our most

useful critics – a legacy of two false equations, one false analogy, and one false proposition.

The false proposition is easily disposed of. It is a fact that the new power brought ugliness: the coal brought dirt, the factory brought overcrowding, communications brought a mess of wires. But the proposition that ugliness is a price we pay, or refuse to pay, for economic power need no longer be true. New sources of power, new methods of production, improved systems of transport and communication can, quite practically, make England clean and pleasant again, and with much more power, not less. Any new ugliness is the product of stupidity, indifference, or simply incoordination; these things will be easier to deal with than when power was necessarily noisy, dirty, and disfiguring.

The false equations are more difficult. One is the equation between popular education and the new commercial culture: the latter proceeding inevitably from the former. Let the masses in, it is said, and this is what you inevitably get. Now the question is obviously difficult, but I can't accept this equation, for two reasons. The first is a matter of faith: I don't believe that the ordinary people in fact resemble the normal description of the masses, low and trivial in taste and habit. I put it another way: that there are in fact no masses, but only ways of seeing people as masses. With the coming of industrialism, much of the old social organization broke down and it became a matter of difficult personal experience that we were constantly seeing people we did not know, and it was tempting to mass them, as 'the others', in our minds. Again, people were physically massed, in the industrial towns, and a new class structure (the names of our social classes, and the word 'class' itself in this sense, date only from the Industrial Revolution) was practically imposed. The improvement in communications, in particular the development of new forms of multiple transmission of news and entertainment, created unbridgeable divisions between transmitter and audience, which again led to the audience being interpreted as an unknown mass. Masses became a new word for mob: the others, the unknown, the unwashed, the crowd beyond one. As a way of knowing other people, this formula is obviously ridiculous, but, in the new conditions, it seemed an effective formula – the only one possible. Certainly it was the formula that was used by those whose money gave them access to the new communication techniques; the lowness of taste and habit, which human beings assign very easily to other human beings, was assumed, as a bridge. The new culture was built on this formula, and if I reject the formula, if I insist that this lowness is not inherent in ordinary people, you can brush my insistence aside, but I shall go on holding to it. A different formula, I know from experience, gets a radically different response.

My second reason is historical: I deny, and can prove my denial, that popular education and commercial culture are cause and effect. I have shown elsewhere that the myth of 1870 – the Education Act which is said to have produced, as its children grew up, a new cheap and nasty press – is indeed myth. There was more than enough literacy, long before 1870, to support a cheap press, and in fact there were cheap and really bad newspapers selling in great quantities before the 1870 Act was heard of. The bad new commercial culture came out of the social chaos of industrialism, and out of the success, in this chaos, of the 'masses' formula, not out of popular education. Northcliffe did few worse things than start this myth, for while the connection between bad culture and the social chaos of industrialism is significant, the

connection between it and popular education is vicious. The Northcliffe Revolution, by the way, was a radical change in the financial structure of the press, basing it on a new kind of revenue – the new mass advertising of the 1890s – rather than the making of a cheap popular press, in which he had been widely and successfully preceded. But I tire of making these points. Everyone prefers to believe Northcliffe. Yet does nobody, even a Royal Commission, read the most ordinarily accessible newspaper history? When people do read the history, the false equation between popular education and commercial culture will disappear for ever. Popular education came out of the other camp, and has had quite opposite effects.

The second false equation is this: that the observable badness of so much widely distributed popular culture is a true guide to the state of mind and feeling, the essential quality of living of its consumers. Too many good men have said this for me to treat it lightly, but I still, on evidence, can't accept it. It is easy to assemble, from print and cinema and television, a terrifying and fantastic congress of cheap feelings and moronic arguments. It is easy to go on from this and assume this deeply degrading version of the actual lives of our contemporaries. Yet do we find this confirmed, when we meet people? This is where 'masses' comes in again, of course: the people we meet aren't vulgar, but God, think of Bootle and Surbiton and Aston! I haven't lived in any of those places; have you? But a few weeks ago I was in a house with a commercial traveller, a lorry driver, a bricklayer, a shopgirl, a fitter, a signalman, a nylon operative, a domestic help (perhaps, dear, she is your very own treasure). I hate describing people like this, for in fact they were my family and family friends. Now they read, they watch, this work we are talking about; some of them quite critically, others with a good deal of pleasure. Very well, I read different things, watch different entertainments, and I am quite sure why they are better. But could I sit down in that house and make this equation we are offered? Not, you understand, that shame was stopping me; I've learned, thank you, how to behave. But talking to my family, to my friends, talking, as we were, about our own lives, about people, about feelings, could I in fact find this lack of quality we are discussing? I'll be honest – I looked; my training has done that for me. I can only say that I found as much natural fineness of feeling, as much quick discrimination, as much clear grasp of ideas within the range of experience as I have found anywhere. I don't altogether understand this, though I am not really surprised. Clearly there is something in the psychology of print and image that none of us has yet quite grasped. For the equation looks sensible, yet when you test it, in experience – and there's nowhere else you can test it – it's wrong. I can understand the protection of critical and intelligent reading: my father, for instance, a satisfied reader of the *Daily Herald*, got simply from reading the company reports a clear idea, based on names, of the rapid development of combine and interlocking ownership in British industry, which I had had made easy for me in two or three academic essays; and he had gone on to set these facts against the opinions in a number of articles in the paper on industrial ownership. That I understand; that is simply intelligence, however partly trained. But there is still this other surprising fact: that people whose quality of personal living is high are apparently satisfied by a low quality of printed feeling and opinion. Many of them still live, it is true, in a surprisingly enclosed personal world, much more so than mine, and some of their personal observations are the finer for it. Perhaps this is enough to explain it, but in any case, I submit, we need a new equation, to fit the observable facts.

Now the false analogy, that we must also reject. This is known, in discussions of culture, as a 'kind of Gresham's Law'. Just as bad money will drive out good, so bad culture will drive out good, and this, it is said, has in fact been happening. If you can't see, straight away, the defect of the analogy, your answer, equally effective, will have to be historical. For in fact, of course, it has not been happening. There is more, much more bad culture about; it is easier, now, to distribute it, and there is more leisure to receive it. But test this in any field you like, and see if this has been accompanied by a shrinking consumption of things we can all agree to be good. The editions of good literature are very much larger than they were; the listeners to good music are much more numerous than they were; the number of people who look at good visual art is larger than it has ever been. If bad newspapers drive out good newspapers, by a kind of Gresham's Law, why is it that, allowing for the rise in population, *The Times* sells nearly three times as many copies as in the days of its virtual monopoly of the press, in 1850? It is the law I am questioning, not the seriousness of the facts as a whole. Instead of a kind of Gresham's Law, keeping people awake at nights with the now orthodox putropian nightmare, let us put it another way, to fit the actual facts: we live in an expanding culture, and all the elements in this culture are themselves expanding. If we start from this, we can then ask real questions: about relative rates of expansion; about the social and economic problems raised by these; about the social and economic answers. I am working now on a book to follow my *Culture and Society*, trying to interpret, historically and theoretically, the nature and conditions of an expanding culture of our kind. I could not have begun this work if I had not learned from the Marxists and from Leavis; I cannot complete it unless I radically amend some of the ideas which they and others have left us.

Stephen Greenblatt CULTURE

The term ''culture'' has not always been used in literary studies, and indeed the very concept denoted by the term is fairly recent. ''Culture or Civilization,'' wrote the influential anthropologist Edward B. Tylor in 1871, ''taken in its wide ethnographic sense, is that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society.'' Why should such a concept be useful to students of literature?

The answer may be that it is not. After all, the term as Tylor uses it is almost impossibly vague and encompassing, and the few things that seem excluded from it are almost immediately reincorporated in the actual use of the word. Hence we may think with a certain relief that at least ''culture'' does not refer to material objects – tables, or gold, or grain, or spinning wheels – but of course those objects, as used by men and women, are close to the center of any particular society, and we may accordingly speak of such a society's ''material culture.'' Like ''ideology'' (to which, as a concept, it is closely allied), ''culture'' is a term that is repeatedly used without meaning much of anything at all, a vague gesture toward a dimly perceived ethos: aristocratic culture, youth culture, human culture. There is nothing especially wrong with such gestures – without them we wouldn't ordinarily be able to get through three consecutive sentences – but they are scarcely the backbone of an innovative critical practice.

How can we get the concept of culture to do more work for us? We might begin by reflecting on the fact that the concept gestures toward what appear to be opposite things: constraint and mobility. The ensemble of beliefs and practices that form a given culture function as a pervasive technology of control, a set of limits within which social behavior must be contained, a repertoire of models to which individuals must conform. The limits need not be narrow – in certain societies, such as that of the United States, they can seem quite vast – but they are not infinite, and the consequences for straying beyond them can be severe. The most effective disciplinary techniques practiced against those who stray beyond the limits of a given culture are probably not the spectacular punishments reserved for serious offenders – exile, imprisonment in an insane asylum, penal servitude, or execution – but seemingly innocuous responses: a condescending smile, laughter poised between the genial and the sarcastic, a small dose of indulgent pity laced with contempt, cool silence. And we should add that a culture's boundaries are enforced more positively as well: through the system of rewards that range again from the spectacular (grand public honors, glittering prizes) to the apparently modest (a gaze of admiration, a respectful nod, a few words of gratitude).

Here we can make our first tentative move toward the use of culture for the study of literature, for Western literature over a very long period of time has been one of the great institutions for the enforcement of cultural boundaries through praise and blame. This is most obvious in the kinds of literature that are explicity engaged in attack and celebration: satire and panegyric. Works in these genres often seem immensely

important when they first appear, but their power begins quickly to fade when the individuals to whom the works refer begin to fade, and the evaporation of literary power continues when the models and limits that the works articulated and enforced have themselves substantially changed. The footnotes in modern editions of these works can give us the names and dates that have been lost, but they cannot in themselves enable us to recover a sense of the stakes that once gave readers pleasure and pain. An awareness of culture as a complex whole can help us to recover that sense by leading us to reconstruct the boundaries upon whose existence the works were predicated.

We can begin to do so simply by a heightened attention to the beliefs and practices implicitly enforced by particular literary acts of praising or blaming. That is, we can ask ourselves a set of cultural questions about the work before us:

What kinds of behavior, what models of practice, does this work seem to enforce?

Why might readers at a particular time and place find this work compelling?

Are there differences between my values and the values implicit in the work I am reading?

Upon what social understandings does the work depend?

Whose freedom of thought or movement might be constrained implicitly or explicitly by this work?

What are the larger social structures with which these particular acts of praise or blame might be connected?

Such questions heighten our attention to features of the literary work that we might not have noticed, and, above all, to connections among elements within the work. Eventually, a full cultural analysis will need to push beyond the boundaries of the text, to establish links between the text and values, institutions, and practices elsewhere in the culture. But these links cannot be a substitute for close reading. Cultural analysis has much to learn from scrupulous formal analysis of literary texts because those texts are not merely cultural by virtue of reference to the world beyond themselves; they are cultural by virtue of social values and contexts that they have themselves successfully absorbed. The world is full of texts, most of which are virtually incomprehensible when they are removed from their immediate surroundings. To recover the meaning of such texts, to make any sense of them at all, we need to reconstruct the situation in which they were produced. Works of art by contrast contain directly or by implication much of this situation within themselves, and it is this sustained absorption that enables many literary works to survive the collapse of the conditions that led to their production.

Cultural analysis then is not by definition an extrinsic analysis, as opposed to an internal formal analysis of works of art. At the same time, cultural analysis must be opposed on principle to the rigid distinction between that which is within a text and that which lies outside. It is necessary to use whatever is available to construct a vision of the ''complex whole'' to which Tylor referred. And if an exploration of a particular culture will lead to a heightened understanding of a work of literature

produced within that culture, so too a careful reading of a work of literature will lead to a heightened understanding of the culture within which it was produced. The organization of this volume makes it appear that the analysis of culture is the servant of literary study, but in a liberal education broadly conceived it is literary study that is the servant of cultural understanding.

I will return to the question of extrinsic as opposed to intrinsic analysis, but first we must continue to pursue the idea of culture as a system of constraints. The functioning of such a system is obvious in poems like Pope's ''Epistle to Doctor Arbuthnot'' or Marvell's ''Horatian Ode'' on Cromwell, works that undertake to excoriate dullness as embodied in certain hated individuals and celebrate civic or military virtue as embodied in certain admired individuals. Indeed culture here is close to its earlier sense of ''cultivation'' – the internalization and practice of a code of manners. And this sense extends well beyond the limits of satire and panegyric, particularly for those periods in which manners were a crucial sign of status difference.

Consider, for example, Shakespeare's As You Like It, where Orlando's bitter complaint is not that he has been excluded from his patrimony – Orlando accepts the custom of primogeniture by which his brother, as the eldest son, inherits virtually all the family property – but rather that he is being prevented from learning the manners of his class: ''My father charged you in his will to give me a good education: you have train'd me like a peasant, obscuring and hiding from me all gentleman-like qualities.'' Shakespeare characteristically suggests that Orlando has within him an innate gentility that enables him to rise naturally above his boorish upbringing, but he equally characteristically suggests that Orlando's gentility needs to be shaped and brought to fruition through a series of difficult trials. When in the Forest of Arden the young man roughly demands food for his aged servant Adam, he receives a lesson in courtesy: ''Your gentleness shall force/More than your force move us to gentleness.'' The lesson has a special authority conferred upon it by the fact that it is delivered by the exiled Duke, the figure at the pinnacle of the play's social order. But the entire world of As You Like It is engaged in articulating cultural codes of behavior, from the elaborate, ironic training in courtship presided over by Rosalind to the humble but dignified social order by which the shepherds live. Even the simple country wench Audrey receives a lesson in manners from the sophisticated clown Touchstone: ''bear your body more seeming, Audrey.'' This instruction in the management of the body, played no doubt for comic effect, is an enactment in miniature of a process of acculturation occurring everywhere in the play, and occurring most powerfully perhaps on an almost subliminal level, such as the distance we automatically keep from others or the way we position our legs when we sit down. Shakespeare wittily parodies this process – for example, in Touchstone's elaborate rule-book for insults – but he also participates in it, for even as his plays represent characters engaged in negotiating the boundaries of their culture, the plays also help to establish and maintain those boundaries for their audiences.

Art is an important agent then in the transmission of culture. It is one of the ways in which the roles by which men and women are expected to pattern their lives are communicated and passed from generation to generation. Certain artists have been highly self-conscious about this function. The purpose of his vast romance epic, The

Faerie Queene, writes the Renaissance poet Edmund Spenser, is ''to fashion a gentleman or noble person in virtuous and gentle discipline.'' The depth of our understanding of such a project, extended over a complex plot involving hundreds of allegorical figures, depends upon the extent of our grasp of Spenser's entire culture, from its nuanced Aristotelian conception of moral hierarchies to its apocalyptic fantasies, from exquisite refinement at court to colonial violence in Ireland. More precisely, we need to grasp the way in which this culture of mixed motives and conflicting desires seemed to Spenser to generate an interlocking series of models, a moral order, a set of ethical constraints ranged against the threat of anarchy, rebellion, and chaos.

To speak of The Faerie Queene only in terms of the constraints imposed by culture is obviously inadequate, since the poem itself, with its knights and ladies endlessly roaming an imaginary landscape, is so insistent upon mobility. We return to the paradox with which we started: if culture functions as a structure of limits, it also functions as the regulator and guarantor of movement. Indeed the limits are virtually meaningless without movement; it is only through improvisation, experiment, and exchange that cultural boundaries can be established. Obviously, among different cultures there will be a great diversity in the ratio between mobility and constraint. Some cultures dream of imposing an absolute order, a perfect stasis, but even these, if they are to reproduce themselves from one generation to the next, will have to commit themselves, however tentatively or unwillingly, to some minimal measure of movement; conversely, some cultures dream of an absolute mobility, a perfect freedom, but these too have always been compelled, in the interest of survival, to accept some limits.

What is set up, under wildly varying circumstances and with radically divergent consequences, is a structure of improvisation, a set of patterns that have enough elasticity, enough scope for variation, to accommodate most of the participants in a given culture. A life that fails to conform at all, that violates absolutely all the available patterns, will have to be dealt with as an emergency – hence exiled, or killed, or declared a god. But most individuals are content to improvise, and, in the West at least, a great many works of art are centrally concerned with these improvisations. The novel has been particularly sensitive to the diverse ways in which individuals come to terms with the governing patterns of culture; works like Dickens' Great Expectations and Eliot's Middlemarch brilliantly explore the ironies and pain, as well as the inventiveness, of particular adjustments.

In representing this adjustment as a social, emotional, and intellectual education, these novels in effect thematize their own place in culture, for works of art are themselves educational tools. They do not merely passively reflect the prevailing ratio of mobility and constraint; they help to shape, articulate, and reproduce it through their own improvisatory intelligence. This means that, despite our romantic cult of originality, most artists are themselves gifted creators of variations upon received themes. Even those great writers whom we regard with special awe, and whom we celebrate for their refusal to parrot the clichés of their culture, tend to be particularly brilliant improvisers rather than absolute violaters or pure inventors. Thus Dickens crafted cunning adaptations of the melodramatic potboilers of his times; Shakespeare

borrowed most of his plots, and many of his characters, from familiar tales or well-rehearsed historical narratives; and Spenser revised for his own culture stories first told, and told wonderfully, by the Italian poets Ariosto and Tasso.

Such borrowing is not evidence of imaginative parsimony, still less a symptom of creative exhaustion – I am using Dickens, Shakespeare, and Spenser precisely because they are among the most exuberant, generous, and creative literary imaginations in our language. It signals rather a further aspect of the cultural mobility to which I have already pointed. This mobility is not the expression of random motion but of exchange. A culture is a particular network of negotiations for the exchange of material goods, ideas, and – through institutions like enslavement, adoption, or marriage – people. Anthropologists are centrally concerned with a culture's kinship system – its conception of family relationships, its prohibitions of certain couplings, its marriage rules – and with its narratives – its myths, folktales, and sacred stories. The two concerns are linked, for a culture's narratives, like its kinship arrangements, are crucial indices of the prevailing codes governing human mobility and constraint. Great writers are precisely masters of these codes, specialists in cultural exchange. The works they create are structures for the accumulation, transformation, representation, and communication of social energies and practices.

In any culture there is a general symbolic economy made up of the myriad signs that excite human desire, fear, and aggression. Through their ability to construct resonant stories, their command of effective imagery, and above all their sensitivity to the greatest collective creation of any culture – language –

literary artists are skilled at manipulating this economy. They take symbolic materials from one zone of the culture and move them to another, augmenting their emotional force, altering their significance, linking them with other materials taken from a different zone, changing their place in a larger social design.

Take, for example, Shakespeare's King Lear: the dramatist borrows an often-told pseudo-historical account of an ancient British king, associates with it his society's most severe anxieties about kinship relations on the one hand and civil strife on the other, infuses a measure of apocalyptic religious expectation mingled paradoxically with an acute skepticism, and returns these materials to his audience, transformed into what is perhaps the most intense experience of tragic pleasure ever created. A nuanced cultural analysis will be concerned with the various matrices from which Shakespeare derives his materials, and hence will be drawn outside the formal boundary of the play – toward the legal arrangements, for example, that elderly parents in the Renaissance made with their children, or toward child-rearing practices in the period, or toward political debates about when, if ever, disobeying a legitimate ruler was justified, or toward predictions of the imminent end of the world.

The current structure of liberal arts education often places obstacles in the way of such an analysis by separating the study of history from the study of literature, as if the two were entirely distinct enterprises, but historians have become increasingly sensitive to the symbolic dimensions of social practice, while literary critics have in recent years turned with growing interest to the social and historical dimensions of symbolic practice. Hence it is more possible, both in terms of individual courses and

of overall programs of study, for students to reach toward a sense of the complex whole of a particular culture. But there is much to be done in the way of cultural analysis even without an integrated structure of courses, much that depends primarily on asking fresh questions about the possible social functions of works of art. Indeed even if one begins to achieve a sophisticated historical sense of the cultural materials out of which a literary text is constructed, it remains essential to study the ways in which these materials are formally put together and articulated in order to understand the cultural work that the text accomplishes.

For great works of art are not neural relay stations in the circulation of cultural materials. Something happens to objects, beliefs, and practices when they are represented, reimagined, and performed in literary texts, something often unpredictable and disturbing. That ''something'' is the sign both of the power of art and of the embeddedness of culture in the contingencies of history. I have written at moments as if art always reinforces the dominant beliefs and social structures of its culture, as if culture is always harmonious rather than shifting and conflict-ridden, and as if there necessarily is a mutually affirmative relation between artistic production and the other modes of production and reproduction that make up a society. At times there is precisely such an easy and comfortable conjunction, but it is by no means necessary. The ability of artists to assemble and shape the forces of their culture in novel ways so that elements powerfully interact that rarely have commerce with one another in the general economy has the potential to unsettle this affirmative relation. Indeed in our own time most students of literature reserve their highest admiration for those works that situate themselves on the very edges of what can be said at a particular place and time, that batter against the boundaries of their own culture.

Near the end of his career Shakespeare decided to take advantage of his contemporaries' lively interest in New World exploration. His play The Tempest contains many details drawn from the writings of adventurers and colonists, details that are skillfully displaced onto a mysterious Mediterranean island and interwoven with echoes from Virgil's Aeneid, from other art forms such as the court masque and pastoral tragicomedy, and from the lore of white magic. The play reiterates the arguments that Europeans made about the legitimacy and civilizing force of their presence in the newly discovered lands; indeed it intensifies those arguments by conferring upon Prospero the power not only of a great prince who has the right to command the forces of this world but of a wizard who has the ability – the ''Art'' as the play terms it – to command supernatural forces as well. But the intensification has an oddly discordant effect: the magical power is clearly impressive but its legitimacy is less clear.

As magician Prospero resembles no one in the play so much as Sycorax, the hated witch who had preceded him as the island's ruler. The play, to be sure, does not endorse a challenge to Prospero's rule, any more than Shakespeare's culture ever encouraged challenges to legitimate monarchs. And yet out of the uneasy matrix formed by the skillful interweaving of cultural materials comes an odd, discordant voice, the voice of the ''savage and deformed slave'' Caliban:

This island's mine, by Sycorax my mother,

Which thou tak'st from me. When thou cam'st first

Thou strok'st me, and made much of me; wouldst give me

Water with berries in't; and teach me how

To name the bigger light, and how the less,

That burn by day and night: and then I lov'd thee,

And show'd thee all the qualities o'th'isle,

The fresh springs, brine-pits, barren place and fertile:

Curs'd be I that did so! All the charms

Of Sycorax, toads, beetles, bats, light on you!

For I am all the subjects that you have,

Which first was mine own King: and here you sty me

In this hard rock, whiles you do keep from me

The rest o'th'island.

Caliban, of course, does not triumph: it would take different artists from different cultures – the postcolonial Caribbean and African cultures of our own times – to rewrite Shakespeare's play and make good on Caliban's claim. But even within the powerful constraints of Shakespeare's Jacobean culture, the artist's imaginative mobility enables him to display cracks in the glacial front of princely power and to record a voice, the voice of the displaced and oppressed, that is heard scarcely anywhere else in his own time. If it is the task of cultural criticism to decipher the power of Prospero, it is equally its task to hear the accents of Caliban.

Literary Studies in an Age of Environmental Crisis
Cheryll Glotfelty

An avid reader, nature lover, and concerned planetary citizen, Cheryll Glotfelty was hired by the University of Nevada, Reno, in 1990, as America's first professor of literature and environment.

In 1996, she and Harold Fromm co-edited *The Ecocriticism Reader: Landmarks in Literary Ecology*, a critical anthology that helped green the field of literary studies. She is co-founder and past president of the Association for the Study of Literature and Environment. Glotfelty has offered graduate seminars on ecocriticism and theory; regionalism and bioregionalism; literature of the wild; representing the other--animals in literature; environmental justice literature and theory; and ecofeminism.

Falling instantly in love with the Great Basin, and influenced by theories of bioregionalism and reinhabitation, Glotfelty has dedicated herself in recent years to "digging in" and "giving back" to the region. Her edited collection, *Literary Nevada: Writings from the Silver State* is the first comprehensive anthology of Nevada literature. Its goal is to showcase the state's rich literary heritage and to cultivate a love of place among residents. Her most recent book, co-edited with Tom Lynch and Karla Armbruster, is *The Bioregional Imagination: Literature, Ecology, and Place* (2012), which aims to think about place and planet from an ecological perspective.

At the beginning of the essay, Cherryl Glotfelty notes that English literary studies are in a constant flux. Race, class and gender were the hot topics of the twentieth century. There was very little about the earth's life systems which were under stress. On the other hand news paper reports during the same period mentions oil spills, lead and asbestos poisoning, toxic waste contamination, extinction of species, growing hole in the ozone layer, predictions of global warming, acid rain, nuclear reactor disaster in

Chernobyl, illegal dumping in the East, droughts, floods, hurricanes etc.

Literary criticism has not responded to the events mentioned above. The institution of literary studies was not aware of the environmental crisis. There were no journals, no professional societies or discussion groups, and no conferences on literature and the environment. While related disciplines, like history, philosophy, law, sociology, and religion have been 'greening' since the 1970s, literary studies have remained indifferent to environmental concerns. Social movements like the Civil Rights and Women's Liberation have transformed literary studies, but environmental movement of the same period had little impact.

However, individual literary and cultural scholars have been developing ecological criticism and theory since the seventies though they did not organize themselves into an identifiable group. Each critic during this time was inventing an environmental approach to literature in isolation. As a result ecocriticism did not become a presence in institutions of power like the Modern Language Association (MLA).

<u>Birth of Environmental Literary Studies</u>

In the eighties, scholars began to undertake collaborative projects in the field of environmental literary studies. In 1985 F.O.Wagge edited *Teaching Environmental Literature: Materials, Methods, Resources* which included outputs from nineteen different scholars. In 1989 Alicia Nitecki founded *The American Nature Writing Newsletter*. At the same time American Universities began to include literature courses in their environmental studies curricula, and some English departments began to offer a minor in environmental literature.

In 1991 MLA organized a special session entitled "Ecocriticism: The Greening of Literary Studies". In 1992 a new Association for the Study of Literature and Environment (ASLE) was formed. Its mission was "to promote the exchange of ideas and information pertaining to literature that considers the relationship between human beings and the natural world" and to encourage "new nature writing, traditional and innovative scholarly approaches to environmental literature, and interdisciplinary environmental research". ASLE's membership topped 750 by 1995 and the group held its first conference, in Fort Collins, Colorado. In 1993, Patrick Murphy established a new journal, *ISLE: Interdisciplinary Studies in Literature and*

Environment. Thus by 1993, ecological literary study had emerged as a recognizable critical school. The formerly disconnected scholars joined forces with younger scholars and graduate students to become a strong interest group with aspirations to change the profession.

Definition of Ecocriticism

Ecocriticism is the relationship between literature and the physical e nvironment. It takes an earth-centered approach to literary studies.
Ecocriticism asks questions like the following:-How is nature represented in this sonnet? What is the role of the physical setting in this novel? Are the values expressed in a work consistent with ecological wisdom? Do men write about nature differently than women do? What cross fertilization is possible between literary studies and environmental discourse in related disciplines such as history, philosophy, psychology, art history and ethics?

Ecocriticism takes as its subject the interconnections between nature and culture, specifically the cultural artifacts of language and literature. 'As a critical stance, it has one foot in literature and the other on land; as a theoretical discourse, it negotiates between the human and the nonhuman'. In most literary theory 'the world' is considered equal to society--the social sphere. If we agree with Barry Commoner's first law of ecology, "Everything is connected to everything else', we must admit that literature does not float above the material world in some aesthetic ether, but is part of an immensely complex global system in which energy, matter, and ideas interact.

Taxonomy

The taxonomic name of this green branch of literary study is still discussed. J.W. Meeker called it 'literary ecology'. The term, 'ecocriticism', was suggested by William Rueckert. By ecocriticism he meant "the application of ecology and ecological concepts to the study of literature". Other terms in circulation include ecopoetics, environmental literary criticism, and green cultural studies. But the

term 'ecocriticism' is preferred by most scholars. It implies interdependent communities, integrated systems, and strong connections among constituent parts.

The Humanities and the Environmental Crisis

Most ecocritical works share a common motivation. It is the troubling awareness that we have reached the age of environmental limits. 'We are there. Either we change our ways or we face global catastrophe, destroying much beauty and exterminating countless fellow species in our headlong race to apocalypse'. English departments cannot work as usual forgetting the looming environmental crisis. 'If we're not part of the solution, we're part of the problem'.

How can the English departments contribute to environmental restoration? The answer lies in recognizing that current environmental problems are largely of our own making. It is a by-product of culture. Scholars in humanities are finding ways to add an environmental dimension to their respective disciplines.

The Future of Ecocriticism

An ecologically focused criticism takes us to matters that need our urgent attention. 'Consciousness raising' is its most important task. We can solve environmental problems only by thinking about them. Glotfelty feels that ecocriticism would redraw the boundaries of literary studies. Strong voice in the profession will enable ecocritics to bring about important changes in the canon, the curriculum, and university policy. Aldo Leopold's *A Sand County Almanac* and Edward Abbey's *Desert Solitaire* must become standard text books. Students taking literature will be encouraged to think seriously about the relationship of humans to nature, about the ethical and aesthetic dilemmas posed by the environmental crisis, and about how language and literature transmit values with profound ecological implications. Colleges and Universities will require that all students complete at least one interdisciplinary course in environmental studies.

Glotfelty feels that ecocriticism has been predominantly a white movement. It will become a multi-ethnic movement when stronger connections are made between the environment and issues of social justice, and when divergent views are encouraged to contribute to the discussion. She

concludes her arguments in this section with the words of Loren Acton, a Montana ranch boy who flew on the Challenger Eight space shuttle as a payload specialist. Glotfelty feels that the boy's observations will remind us of the global context of ecocritical work:

Below was a welcoming planet. There, contained in the thin, moving, incredibly fragile shell of the biosphere is everything that is dear to you, all the human drama and comedy. That's where life is; that's where all the good stuff is.

A Phenomenological Approach

HE PHENOMENOLOGICAL THEORY of art lays full stress on the idea that, in considering a literary work, one must take into account not only the actual text but also, and in equal measure, the actions involved in responding to that text. Thus Roman Ingarden confronts the structure of the literary text with the ways in which it can be konkretisiert (realized) . [1] The text as such offers different "schematised views" [2] through which the subject matter of the work can come to light, but the actual bringing to light is an action of Konkretisation. If this is so, then the literary work has two poles, which we might call the artistic and the aesthetic: the artistic refers to the text created by the author, and the aesthetic to the realization accomplished by the reader. From this polarity it follows that the literary work cannot be completely identical with the text, or with the realization of the text, but in fact must lie halfway between the two. The work is more than the text, for the text only takes on life when it is realized, and furthermore the realization is by no means independent of the individual disposition of the reader— though this in turn is acted upon by the different patterns of the text. The convergence of text and reader brings the literary work into existence, and this convergence can never be precisely pinpointed, but must always remain virtual, as it is not to be identified either with the reality of the text or with the individual disposition of the reader.

1   Cf. Roman Ingarden, Vom Erkennen des literarischen Kunstwerks (Tübingen, 1968), pp. 49 ff.

2   For a detailed discussion of this terrn see Roman Ingarden, Das literarische Kunstwerk (Tübingen, 1960), pp. 270 ff.

It is the virtuality of the work that gives rise to its dynamic nature, and this in turn is the precondition for the effects that the work calls forth. As the reader uses the various perspectives offered him by the text in order to relate the patterns and the "schematised views" to one another, he sets the work in motion, and this very process results ultimately in the awakening of responses within himself. Thus, reading causes the literary work to unfold its inherently dynamic character. That this is no new discovery is apparent from references made even in the early days of the novel. Laurence Sterne remarks in Tristram Shandy : . . . no author, who understands the just boundaries of decorum and good-breeding, would presume to think all: The truest respect which you can

pay to the reader's understanding, is to halve this matter amicably, and leave him something to imagine, in his turn, as well as yourself. For my own part, I am eternally paying him compliments of this kind, and do all that lies in my power to keep his imagination as busy as my own."3 Sterne's conception of a literary text is that it is something like an arena in which reader and author participate in a game of the imagination. If the reader were given the whole story, and there were nothing left for him to do, then his imagination would never enter the field, the result would be the boredom which inevitably arises when everything is laid out cut and dried before us. A literary text must therefore be conceived in such a way that it will engage the reader's imagination in the task of working things out for himself, for reading is only a pleasure when it is active and creative. In this process of creativity, the text may either not go far enough, or may go too far, so we may say that boredom and overstrain form the boundaries beyond which the reader will leave the field of play.

The extent to which the "unwritten" part of a text stimulates the reader's creative participation is brought out by an observation of Virginia Woolf's in her study of 7ane Austen : "Jane Austen is thus a mistress of much deeper emotion than appears upon the surface. She stimulates us to supply what is not there. What she offers is, apparently, a trifle, yet is composed of something that expands in the reader's mind and endows with the most enduring form of life scenes which are outwardly trivial. Always the stress is laid upon character. . . . The turns and twists of the dialogue keep us on the tenterhooks of suspense. Our attention is half upon the present moment, half upon the future. . . . Here, indeed, in this unfinished and in the main inferior story, are all the elements of Jane Austen's greatness." [4] The unwritten aspects of apparently trivial scenes, and the unspoken dialogue

3   Laurence Sterne, Tristram Shandy (London, 1956), Il, chap. 1 1, 79.
4   Virginia Woolf, The Common Reader, First Series (London, 1957), p. 174.

within the "turns and twists," not only draw the reader into the action, but also lead him to shade in the many outlines suggested by the given situations, so that these take on a reality of their own. But as the reader's imagination animates these "outlines," they in turn will influence the effect of the written part of the text. Thus begins a whole dynamic process: the written text imposes certain limits on its unwritten implications in order to prevent these from becoming too blurred and hazy, but at the same time these implications, worked out by the reader's imagination, set the given situation against a background which endows it with far greater significance than it might have seemed to possess on

its own. In this way, trivial scenes suddenly take on the shape of an "enduring form of life." What constitutes this form is never named, let alone explained, in the text, although in fact it is the end product of the interaction between text and reader.

The question now arises as to how far such a process can be adequately described. For this purpose a phenomenological analysis recommends itself, especially since the somewhat sparse observations hitherto made of the psychology of reading tend mainly to be psychoanalytical, and so are restricted to the illustration of predetermined ideas concerning the unconscious. We shall, however, take a closer look later at some worthwhile psychological observations.

As a starting point for a phenomenological analysis we might examine the way in which sequent sentences act upon one another. This is of especial importance in literary texts in view of the fact that they do not correspond to any objective reality outside themselves. The world presented by literary texts is constructed out of what Ingarden has called intentionale Satzkorrelate (intentional sentence correlatives) :

Sentences link up in different ways to forrn more complex units of meaning that reveal a very varied structure giving rise to such entities as a short story, a novel, a dialogue, a drama, a scientific theory. . In the final analysis, there arises a particular world, with component parts determined in this way or that, and with all the variations that may occur within these parts—all this as a purely intentional correlative of a complex of sentences. If this complex finally forms a literary work, I call the whole sum of sequent intentional sentence correlatives the 'world presented' in the work.[5]

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This world, however, does not pas before the
reader's eyes like a film. The sentences are
"component     parts"   insofar    as    they   make
statements, claims, or observations, or convey
information,     and    so    establish    various
perspectives in the text. But they remain only
"component parts" __they are not the sum total
of   the   text   itself.   For   the   intentional
correlatives disclose subtle connections which
individually    are    less    concrete    than    the
statements,   claims,   and   observations,   even
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though these only take on their real meaningfulness through the interaction of their correlatives.

How is one to conceive the connection between the correlatives? It marks those points at which the reader is able to "climb aboard" the text. He has to accept certain given perspectives, but in doing so he inevitably causes them to interact. When Ingarden speaks of intentional sentence correlatives in literature, the statements made, or information conveyed in the sentence are already in a certain sense qualified: the sentence does not consist solely of a statement—which, after all, would be absurd, as one can only make statements about things that exist—but aims at something beyond what it actually says. This is true of all sentences in literary works, and it is through the interaction of these sentences that their common aim is fulfilled. This is what gives them their own special quality in literary texts. In their capacity as statements, observations, purveyors of information, etc., they are always indications of something that is to come, the structure of which is foreshadowed by their specific content.

They set in motion a process out of which emerges the actual content of the text itself. In describing man's inner consciousness of time, Husserl once remarked: "Every originally constructive process is inspired by pre-intentions, which construct and collect the seed of what is to come, as such, and bring it to fruition." [6] For this bringing to fruition, the literary text needs the reader's imagination, which gives shape to the interaction of correlatives foreshadowed in structure by the sequence of the sentences. Husserl's observation draws our attention to a point that plays a not insignificant part in the process of reading. The individual sentences not only work together to shade in what is to come; they also forrn an expectation in this regard. Husserl calls this

expectation "pre-intentions." As this structure
is characteristic of all sentence correlatives,
the interaction of these correlatives will not
be a fulfilment of the expectation so much as a
continual modification of it.

For this reason, expectations are scarcely ever fulfilled in truly literary texts. If they were, then such texts would be confined to the individualization of a given expectation, and one would inevitably ask what such an intention was supposed to achieve. Strangely enough, we feel that any confirmative effect—such as we implicitly demand of expository texts, as we refer to the objects they are meant to present— is a defect in a literary text. For the more a text individualizes or confirms an expectation it has initially aroused, the more aware we become of its didactic purpose, so that at best we can only accept or reject the thesis forced upon us. More often than not, the very clarity of such texts will make us want to free ourselves from their clutches. But generally the sentence correlatives of literary texts do not develop in this rigid way, for the expectations they evoke tend to encroach on one another in such a manner that they are continually modified as one reads. One might simplify by saying that each intentional sentence correlative opens up a particular horizon, which is modified, if not completely changed, by succeeding sentences. While these expectations arouse interest in what is to come, the subsequent modification of them will also have a retrospective effect on what has already been read. This may now take on a different significance from that which it had at the moment of reading.

Whatever we have read sinks into our memory and is foreshortened. It may later be evoked again and set against a different background with the result that the reader is enabled to develop hitherto unforeseeable connections. The memory evoked, however, can never reassume its original shape, for this would mean that memory and perception were identical, which is manifestly not so. The new background brings to light new aspects of what we had committed to memory; conversely these, in turn, shed their light on the new background, thus arousing more complex anticipations. Thus, the reader, in establishing these interrelations between past, present and future, actually causes the text to reveal its potential multiplicity of connections. These connections are the product of the reader's mind working on the raw material of the text, though they are not the text itself—for this consists just of sentences, statements, information, etc.

This is why the reader often feels involved in events which, at the time of reading, seem real to him, even though in fact they are very far from his own reality. The fact that completely different readers can be differently affected by the "reality" of a particular text is ample evidence of the degree to which literary texts transform reading into a creative process that is far above mere perception of what is written.

The literary text activates our own faculties, enabling us to recreate the world it presents. The product of this creative activity is what we might call the virtual dimension of the text, which endows it with its reality. This virtual dimension is not the text itself, nor is it the imagination of the reader: it is the coming together of text and imagination.

As we have seen, the activity of reading can be characterized as a sort of kaleidoscope of perspectives, preintentions, recollections. Every sentence contains a preview of the next and forms a kind of viewfinder for what is to come; and this in turn changes the "preview" and so becomes a "viewfinder" for what has been read. This whole process represents the fulfilment of the potential, unexpressed reality of the text, but it is to be seen only as a framework for a great variety of means by which the virtual dimension may be brought into being. The process of anticipation and retrospection itself does not by any means develop in a smooth flow. Ingarden has already drawn attention to this fact, and ascribes a quite remarkable significance to it :

Once we are immersed in the flow of Satzdenken (sentence-thought) , we are ready, after completing the thought of one sentence, to think out the 'continuation,' also in the form of a sentence—and that is, in the form of a sentence that connects up with the sentence we have just thought through. In this way the process of reading goes effortlessly forward. But if by chance the following sentence has no tangible connection whatever with the sentence we have just thought through, there then comes a blockage in the stream of thought. This hiatus is linked with a more or less active surprise, or with indignation. This blockage must be overcome if the reading is to flow once more.7

The hiatus that blocks the flow of sentences is, in Ingarden's eyes, the product of chance, and is to be regarded as a flaw; this is typical of his adherence to the classical idea of art. If one regards the sentence sequence as a continual flow, this implies that the anticipation aroused by one sentence will generally be realized by the next, and the frustration of one's expectations will arouse feelings of exasperation. And yet literary texts are full of unexpected twists and turns, and frustration of expectations. Even in the simplest story there is bound to be some kind of blockage, if only for the fact that no tale can ever be told in its entirety. Indeed, it is only through inevitable omissions that a

story will gain its dynamism. Thus whenever the flow is interrupted and we are led off in unexpected directions, the opportunity is given to us to

bring into play our own faculty for establishing connections—for filling in the gaps left by the text itself.[8]

These gaps have a different effect on the process of anticipation and retrospection, and thus on the "gestalt" of the virtual dimension, for they may be filled in different ways. For this reason, one text is potentially capable of several different realizations, and no reading can ever exhaust the full potential, for each individual reader will fill in the gaps in his own way, thereby excluding the various other possibilities; as he reads, he will make his own decision as to how the gap is to be filled. In this very act the dynamics of reading are revealed. By making his decision he implicitly acknowledges the inexhaustibility of the text; at the same time it is this very inexhaustibility that forces him to make his decision. With "traditional" texts this process was more or less unconscious, but modern texts frequently exploit it quite deliberately. They are often so fragmentary that one's attention is almost exclusively occupied with the search for connections between the fragments; the object of this is not to complicate the "spectrum" of connections, so much as to make us aware of the nature of our own capacity for providing links. In such cases, the text refers back directly to our own preconceptions—which are revealed by the act of interpretation that is a basic element of the reading process. With all literary texts, then, we may say that the reading process is selective, and the potential text is infinitely richer than any of its individual realizations. This is borne out by the fact that a second reading of a piece of literature often produces a different impression from the first. The reasons for this may lie in the reader's own change of circumstances, still, the text must be such as to allow this variation. On a second reading familiar occurrences now tend to appear in a new light and seem to be at times corrected, at times enriched.

In every text there is a potential time-sequence which the reader must inevitably realize, as it is impossible to absorb even a short text in a single moment. Thus the reading process always involves viewing the text through a perspective that is continually on the move, linking up the different phases, and so constructing what we have called the virtual dimension. This dimension, of course, varies all the time we are reading. However, when we have finished the text, and read it again, clearly our extra knowledge will result in a different time

we shall tend to establish connections by referring to our awareness of what is to come, and so certain aspects of the text will assume a significance we did not attach to them on a first reading, while others will recede into the background. It is a common enough experience for a person to say that on a second reading he noticed things he had missed when he read the book for the first time, but this is scarcely surprising in view of the fact that the second time he is looking at the text through a different perspective. The time-sequence that he realized on his first reading cannot possibly be repeated on a second reading and this unrepeatability is bound to result in modifications of his reading experience. This is not to say that the second reading is "truer" than the first—they are, quite simply, different: the reader establishes the virtual dimension of the text by realizing a new time-sequence. Thus even on repeated viewings a text allows and, indeed, induces innovative reading.

In whatever way, and under whatever circumstances, the reader may link the different phases of the text together, it will always be the process of anticipation and retrospection that leads to the formation of the virtual dimension, which in turn transforms the text into an experience for the reader. The way in which this experience comes about through a process of continual modification is closely akin to the way in which we gather experience in life. And thus the "reality" of the reading experience can illuminate basic patterns of real experience :

We have the experience of a world, not understood as a system of relations which wholly deterrnine each event, but as an open totality the synthesis of which is inexhaustible. From the moment that experience—that is, the opening on to our de facto world—is recognized as the beginning of knowledge, there is no longer any way of distinguishing a level of a priori truths and one of factual ones, what the world must necessarily be and what it actually is.[9]

The manner in which the reader experiences the text will reflect his own disposition, and in this respect the literary text acts as a kind of mirror; but at the same time, the reality which this process helps to create is one that will be different from his own (since, normally, we tend to be bored by texts that present us with things we already know perfectly well ourselves) . Thus we have the apparently paradoxical situation in which the reader is forced to reveal aspects of himself in

order to experience a reality which is different from his own. The impact this reality makes on him will depend largely on the extent to which he himself actively provides the unwritten part of the text, and yet in supplying all the missing links, he must think in terms of experiences

different from his own; indeed, it is only by leaving behind the familiar world of his own experience that the reader can truly participate in the adventure the literary text offers him.

We have seen that, during the process of reading, there is an active interweaving of anticipation and retrospection, which on a second reading may turn into a kind of advance retrospection. The impressions that arise as a result of this process will vary from individual to individual, but only within the limits imposed by the written as opposed to the unwritten text. In the same way, two people gazing at the night sky may both be looking at the same collection of stars, but one will see the image of a plough, and the other will make out a dipper. The "stars" in a literary text are fixed; the lines that join them are variable. The author of the text may, of course, exert plenty of influence on the reader's imagination—he has the whole panoply of narrative techniques at his disposal—but no author worth his salt will ever attempt to set the whole picture before his reader's eyes. If he does, he will very quickly lose his reader, for it is only by activating the reader's imagination that the author can hope to involve him and so realize the intentions of his text.

Gilbert Ryle, in his analysis of imagination, asks: "How can a person fancy that he sees something, without realizing that he is not seeing it?" He answers as follows:

Seeing Helvellyn (the name of a mountain) in one's mind's eye does not entail, what seeing Helvellyn and seeing snapshots of Helvellyn entail, the having of visual sensations. It does involve the thought of having a view of Helvellyn and it is therefore a more sophisticated operation than that of having a view of Helvellyn. It is one utilization among others of the knowledge of how Helvellyn should look, or, in one sense of the verb, it is thinking how it should look. The expectations which are fulfilled in the recognition at sight of Helvellyn are not indeed fulfilled in picturing it, but the picturing of it is something like a rehearsal of getting them fulfilled. So far from picturing involving the having of faint sensations, or

wraiths of sensations, it involves missing just what one would be due to get, if one were seeing the mountain.[10]

If one sees the mountain, then of course one can no longer imagine it, and so the act of picturing the mountain presupposes its absence. Similarly, with a literary text we can only picture things which are not there; the written part of the text gives us the knowledge, but it is the unwritten part that gives us the opportunity to picture things; indeed without the elements of indeterminacy, the gaps in the text, we should

not be able to use our imagination. [11]

    The truth of this observation is borne out by the experience many people have on seeing, for instance, the film of a novel. While reading Tom Jones, they may never have had a clear conception of what the hero actually looks like, but on seeing the film, some may say, "That's not how I imagined him." The point here is that the reader of Tom jones is able to visualize the hero virtually for himself, and so his imagination senses the vast number of possibilities; the moment these possibilities are narrowed down to one complete and immutable picture, the imagination is put out of action, and we feel we have somehow been cheated. This may perhaps be an oversimplification of the process, but it does illustrate plainly the vital richness of potential that arises out of the fact that the hero in the novel must be pictured and cannot be seen. With the novel the reader must use his imagination to synthesize the information given him, and so his perception is simultaneously richer and more private; with the film he is confined merely to physical perception, and so whatever he remembers of the world he had pictured is brutally cancelled out.

The "picturing" that is done by our imagination is only one of the activities through which we form the "gestalt" of a literary text. We have already discussed the process of anticipation and retrospection, and to this we must add the process of grouping together all the different aspects of a text to form the consistency that the reader will always be in search of. While expectations may be continually modified, and images continually expanded, the reader will still strive, even if unconsciously, to fit everything together in a consistent pattem. "In

the reading of images, as in the hearing of speech, it is always hard to distinguish what is given to us from what we supplement in the process of projection which is triggered off by recognition . . . it is the guess of the beholder that tests the medley of forms and colours for coherent meaning, crystallizing it into shape when a consistent interpretation has been found." [12] By grouping together the written parts of the text, we enable them to interact, we observe the direction in which they are leading us, and we project onto them the consistency which we, as readers, require. This "gestalt" must inevitably be colored by our own characteristic selection process. For it is not given by the text itself; it arises from the meeting between the written text and the individual mind of the reader with its own particular history of experience, its own consciousness, its own outlook. The "gestalt" is not the true meaning of the text; at best it is a configurative meaning; ". . . comprehension is an individual act of seeing-things-together, and only that." [13] With a literary text such comprehension is inseparable from the reader's expectations, and where we have expectations, there too we have one of the most potent weapons in the writer's armory—illusion.

Whenever "consistent reading suggests itself . . . illusion takes over." Illusion, says Northrop Frye, is "fixed or definable, and reality is at best understood as its negation." [15] The "gestalt" of a text normally takes on (or, rather, is given) this fixed or definable outline, as this is essential to our own understanding, but on the other hand, if reading were to consist of nothing but an uninterrupted building up of illusions, it would be a suspect, if not downright dangerous, process: instead of bringing us into contact with reality, it would wean us away from realities. Of course, there is an element of "escapism" in all literature, resulting from this very creation of illusion, but there are some texts which offer nothing but a harmonious world, purified of all contradiction and deliberately excluding anything that might disturb the illusion once established, and these are the texts that we generally do not like to classify as literary. Women's magazines and the brasher forms of detective story might be cited as examples.

However, even if an overdose of illusion may lead to triviality, this does not mean that the process of illusion-building should ideally be dispensed with altogether. On the contrary, even in texts that appear to resist the formation of illusion, thus drawing our attention to the

cause of this resistance, we still need the abiding illusion that the resistance itself is the consistent pattern underlying the text. This is especially true of modern texts, in which it is the very precision of the written details which increases the proportion of indeterminacy; one detail appears to contradict another, and so simultaneously stimulates and frustrates our desire to "picture," thus continually causing our imposed "gestalt" of the text to disintegrate. Without the formation of illusions, the unfamiliar world of the text would remain unfamiliar; through the illusions, the experience offered by the text becomes accessible to us, for it is only the illusion, on its different levels of consistency, that makes the experience "readable." If we cannot find (or impose) this consistency, sooner or later we will put the text down. The process is virtually hermeneutic. The text provokes certain expectations which in turn we project onto the text in such a way that we reduce the polysemantic possibilities to a single interpretation in keeping with the expectations aroused, thus extracting an individual, configurative meaning. The polysemantic nature of the text and the illusion-making of the reader are opposed factors. If the illusion were complete, the polysemantic nature would vanish; if the polysemantic nature were all-powerful, the illusion would be totally destroyed. Both extremes are conceivable, but in the individual literary text we always find some form of balance between the two conflicting tendencies. The formation of illusions, therefore, can never be total, but it is this very incompleteness that in fact gives it its productive value.

With regard to the experience of reading, Walter Pater once observed: "For to the grave reader words too are grave; and the ornamental word, the figure, the accessory form or colour or reference, is rarely content to die to thought precisely at the right moment, but will inevitably linger awhile, stirring a long 'brainwave' behind it of perhaps quite alien associations." [16] Even while the reader is seeking a consistent pattern in the text, he is also uncovering other impulses which cannot be immediately integrated or will even resist final integration. Thus the semantic possibilities of the text will always remain far richer than any configurative meaning formed while reading. But this impression is, of course, only to be gained through reading the text. Thus the configurative meaning can be nothing but a pars pro toto fulfilment of the text, and yet this fulfilment gives rise to the very richness which it seeks to restrict, and indeed in some modern texts, our

12   Walter Pater, Appreciations (London,   18.

awareness of this richness precedence over any configurative meaning.

This fact has several consequences which, for the purpose of analysis, may be dealt with separately, though in the reading process

they will all be working together. As we have seen, a consistent, configurative meaning is essential for the apprehension of an unfamiliar experience, which through the process of illusion-building we can incorporate in our own imaginative world. At the same time, this consistency conflicts with the many other possibilities of fulfillment it seeks to exclude, with the result that the configurative meaning is always accompanied by "alien associations" that do not fit in with the illusions formed. The first consequence, then, is the fact that in forming our illusions, we also produce at the same time a latent disturbance of these illusions. Strangely enough, this also applies to texts in which our expectations are actually fulfilled—though one would have thought that the fulfilment of expectations would help to complete the illusion. "Illusion wears off once the expectation is stepped up; we take it for granted and want more. 17

The experiments in "gestalt" psychology referred to by Gombrich in Art and Illusion make one thing clear: . . . though we may be intellectually aware of the fact that any given experience must be an illusion, we cannot, strictly speaking, watch ourselves having an illusion. 18 Now, if illusion were not a transitory state, this would mean that we could be, as it were, permanently caught up in it. And if reading were exclusively a matter of producing illusion—necessary though this is for the understanding of an unfamiliar experience—we should run the risk of falling victim to a gross deception. But it is precisely during our reading that the transitory nature of the illusion is revealed to the full.

As the formation of illusions is constantly accompanied by "alien associations" which cannot be made consistent with the illusions, the reader constantly has to lift the restrictions he places on the "meaning" of the text. Since it is he who builds the illusions, he oscillates between involvement in and observation of those illusions; he opens himself to the unfamiliar world without being imprisoned in it. Through this process the reader moves into the presence of the fictional world and so experiences the realities of the text as they happen.

In the oscillation between consistency and "alien associations," between involvement in and observation of the illusion, the reader is bound to conduct his own balancing operation, and it is this that forms the aesthetic experience offered by the literary text. However,

if the reader were to achieve a balance, obviously he would then no longer be engaged in the process of establishing and disrupting consistency. And since it is this very process that gives rise to the

balancing operation, we may say that the inherent non-achievement of balance is a prerequisite for the very dynamism of the operation. In seeking the balance we inevitably have to start out with certain expectations, the shattering of which is integral to the aesthetic experience.

Furthermore, to say merely that "our expectations are satisfied" is to be guilty of another serious ambiguity. At first sight such a statement seems to deny the obvious fact that much of our enjoyment is derived from surprises, from betrayals of our expectations. The solution of this paradox is to find some ground for a distinction between "surprise" and "frustration." Roughly, the distinction can be made in terrns of the effects which the two kinds of experiences have upon us. Frustration blocks or checks activity. It necessitates new orientation for our activity, if we are to escape the cul de sac. Consequently, we abandon the frustrating object and return to blind impulsive activity. On the other hand, surprise merely causes a temporary cessation of the exploratory phase of the experience, and a recourse to intense contemplation and scrutiny. In the latter phase the surprising elements are seen in their connection with what has gone before, with the whole drift of the experience, and the enjoyment of these values is then extremely intense. Finally, it appears that there must always be some degree of novelty or surprise in all these values if there is a progressive specification of the direction of the total act . . . and any aesthetic experience tends to exhibit a continuous interplay between "deductive" and "inductive" operation. [19]

It is this interplay between "deduction" and "induction" that gives rise to the configurative meaning of the text, and not the individual expectations, surprises, or frustrations arising from the different perspectives. Since this interplay obviously does not take place in the text itself, but can only come into being through the process of reading, we may conclude that this process formulates something that is unformulated in the text, and yet represents its "intention." Thus, by reading, we uncover the unformulated part of the text, and this very indeterminacy is the force that drives us to work out a configurative meaning while at the same time giving us the necessary degree of freedom to do so.

     As we work out a consistent pattern in the text, we will find our

19 B. Ritchie, "The Forrnal Structure of the Aesthetic Object," The Problems of Aesthetics, ed. by Eliseo Vivas and Murray Krieger (New York, 230.

"interpretation" threatened, as it were, by the presence of other possibilities of "interpretation," and so there arise new areas of indeterminacy (though we may only be dimly aware of them, if at all, as we are continually making "decisions" which will exclude them). In the course of a novel, for instance, we sometimes find that characters,

events, and backgrounds seem to change their significance; what really happens is that the other "possibilities" begin to emerge more strongly, so that we become more directly aware of them. Indeed, it is this very shifting of perspectives that makes us feel a novel is that much more "true-to-life." Since it is we ourselves who establish the levels of interpretation and switch from one to another as we conduct our balancing operation, we ourselves impart to the text the dynamic lifelikeness which, in turn, enables us to absorb an unfamiliar experience into our personal world.

As we read, we oscillate to a greater or lesser degree between the building and the breaking of illusions. In a process of trial and error, we organize and reorganize the various data offered us by the text. These are the given factors, the fixed points on which we base our "interpretation," trying to fit them together in the way we think the author meant them to be fitted. "For to perceive, a beholder must create his own experience. And his creation must include relations comparable to those which the original producer underwent. They are not the same in any literal sense. But with the perceiver, as with the artist, there must be an ordering of the elements of the whole that is in form, although not in details, the same as the process of organization the creator of the work consciously experienced. Without an act of recreation the object is not perceived as a work of art." [20]

The act of recreation is not a smooth or continuous process, but one which, in its essence, relies on interruptions of the flow to render it effcacious. We look forward, we look back, we decide, we change our decisions, we form expectations, we are shocked by their nonfulfilment, we question, we muse, we accept, we reject; this is the dynamic process of recreation. This process is steered by two main structural components within the text: first, a repertoire of familiar literary patterns and recurrent literary themes, together with allusions to familiar social and historical contexts ; second, techniques or strategies used to set the familiar against the unfamiliar. Elements of the repertoire are continually backgrounded or foregrounded with a resultant strategic overmagnification, trivialization, or even annihilation of the allusion. This defamiliarization of what the reader thought he

[20]   John Dewey, Art as Experience (New York, 1958), p. 54.

recognized is bound to create a tension that will intensify his expectations as well as his distrust of those expectations. Similarly, we may be confronted by narrative techniques that establish links between things we find diffcult to connect, so that we are forced to reconsider data we at first held to be perfectly straightforward. One need only

mention the very simple trick, so often employed by novelists, whereby the author himself takes part in the narrative, thus establishing perspectives which would not have arisen out of the mere narration of the events described. Wayne Booth once called this the technique of the "unreliable narrator, 21 to show the extent to which a literary device can counter expectations arising out of the literary text. The figure of the narrator may act in permanent opposition to the impressions we might otherwise form. The question then arises as to whether this strategy, opposing the formation of illusions, may be integrated into a consistent pattern, lying, as it were, a level deeper than our original impressions. We may find that our narrator, by opposing us, in fact turns us against him and thereby strengthens the illusion he appears to be out to destroy; alternatively, we may be so much in doubt that we begin to question all the processes that lead us to make interpretative decisions. Whatever the cause may be, we will find ourselves subjected to this same interplay of illusion-forming and illusion-breaking that makes reading essentially a recreative process.

We might take, as a simple illustration of this complex process, the incident in Joyce's Ulysses in which Bloom's cigar alludes to Ulysses's spear. The context (Bloom's cigar) summons up a particular element of the repertoire (Ulysses's spear) ; the narrative technique relates them to one another as if they were identical. How are we to "organize" these divergent elements, which, through the very fact that they are put together, separate one element so clearly from the other? What are the prospects here for a consistent pattern? We might say that it is ironic— at least that is how many renowned Joyce readers have understood it.[22] In this case, irony would be the form of organization that integrates the material. But if this is so, what is the object of the irony? Ulysses's spear, or Bloom's cigar? The uncertainty surrounding this simple question already puts a strain on the consistency we have established, and indeed begins to puncture it, especially when other problems make themselves felt as regards the remarkable conjunction

21   Cf. Wayne C. Booth, The Rhetoric of Fiction (Chicago, 1963), pp. 211 ff., 339 ff.
22   Richard Ellmann, "Ulysses. The Divine Nobody," Twelve Original Essays on Great English Novels, ed. by Charles Shapiro (Detroit 247, classified this particular allusion as "mock-heroic."

of spear and cigar. Various alternatives come to mind, but the variety alone is sumcient to leave one with the impression that the consistent pattern has been shattered. And even if, after all, one can still believe that irony holds the key to the mystery, this irony must be of a very strange nature; for the formulated text does not merely mean the opposite of what has been formulated. It may even mean something that

cannot be formulated at all. The moment we try to impose a consistent pattern on the text, discrepancies are bound to arise. These are, as it were, the revene side of the interpretative coin, an involuntary product of the process that creates discrepancies by trying to avoid them. And it is their very presence that draws us into the text, compelling us to conduct a creative examination not only of the text, but also of ourselves.

This entanglement of the reader is, of course, vital to any kind of text, but in the literary text we have the strange situation that the reader cannot know what his participation actually entails. We know that we share in certain experiences, but we do not know what happens to us in the course of this process. This is why, when we have been particularly impressed by a book, we feel the need to talk about it; we do not want to get away from it by talking about it—we simply want to understand more clearly what it is that we have been entangled in. We have undergone an experience, and now we want to know consciously what we have experienced. Perhaps this is the prime usefulness of literary criticism—it helps to make conscious those aspects of the text which would otherwise remain concealed in the subconscious; it satisfies (or helps to satisfy) our desire to talk about what we have read.

The emcacy of a literary text is brought about by the apparent evocation and subsequent negation of the familiar. What at first seemed to be an affrmation of our assumptions leads to our own rejection of them, thus tending to prepare us for a re-orientation. And it is only when we have outstripped our preconceptions and left the shelter of the familiar that we are in a position to gather new experiences. As the literary text involves the reader in the formation of illusion and the simultaneous formation of the means whereby the illusion is punctured, reading reflects the process by which we gain experience. Once the reader is entangled, his own preconceptions are continually overtaken, so that the text becomes his "present" whilst his own ideas fade into the "past;" as soon as this happens he is open to the immediate experience of the text, which was impossible so long as his preconceptions were his "present."

In our analysis of the reading process so far, we have observed three important aspects that form the basis of the relationship between reader and text: the process of anticipation and retrospection, the consequent unfolding of the text as a living event, and the resultant imprBsion of lifelikeness.

Any "living event" must, to a greater or lesser degree, remain open. In reading, this obliges the reader to seek continually for consistency,

because only then can he close up situations and comprehend the unfamiliar. But consistency-building is itself a living process, in which one is constantly forced to make selective decisions—and these decisions in their turn give a reality to the possibilities which they exclude, insofar as they may take effect as a latent disturbance of the consistency established. This is what causes the reader to be entangled in the text "gestalt" that he himself has produced.

Through this entanglement the reader is bound to open himself up to the workings of the text, and so leave behind his own preconceptions. This gives him the chance to have an experience in the way George Bernard Shaw once described it: "You have learnt something. That always feels at first as if you had lost something." [23] Reading reflects the structure of experience to the extent that we must suspend the ideas and attitudes that shape our own personality before we can experience the unfamiliar world of the literary text. But during this process, something happens to us.

This "something" needs to be looked at in detail, especially as the incorporation of the unfamiliar into our own range of experience has been to a certain extent obscured by an idea very common in literary discussion: namely, that the process of absorbing the unfamiliar is labelled as the identification of the reader with what he reads. Often the term "identification" is used as if it were an explanation, whereas in actual fact it is nothing more than a description. What is normally meant by "identification" is the establishment of amnities between oneself and someone outside oneself—a familiar ground on which we are able to experience the unfamiliar. The author's aim, though, is to convey the experience and, above all, an attitude towards that experience. Consequently, "identification" is not an end in itself, but a stratagem by means of which the author stimulates attitudes in the reader.

This of course is not to deny that there does arise a form of partici23

pation as one reads; one is certainly drawn into the text in such a way

that one has the feeling that there is no distance between oneself and the

events described. This involvement is well summed up by the reaction

of a critic to reading Charlotte Brontë's Jane Eyre: "We took up Jane

Eyre one winter's evening, somewhat piqued at the extravagant

commendations we had heard, and sternly resolved to be as critical as

Croker. But as we read on we forgot both commendations and criticism, identified ourselves with Jane in all her troubles, and finally married Mr. Rochester about four in the morning." [24] The question is how and why did the critic identify himself with Jane?

In order to understand this "experience," it is well worth considering Georges Poulet's observations on the reading process. He says that books only take on their full existence in the reader.[25] It is true that they consist of ideas thought out by someone else, but in reading the reader becomes the subject that does the thinking. Thus there disappears the subject-object division that otherwise is a prerequisite for all knowledge and all observation, and the removal of this division puts reading in an apparently unique position as regards the possible absorption of new experiences. This may well be the reason why relations with the world of the literary text have so often been misinterpreted as identification. From the idea that in reading we must think the thoughts of someone else, Poulet draws the following conclusion : "Whatever I think is a part of my mental world. And yet here I am thinking a thought which manifestly belongs to another mental world, which is being thought in me just as though I did not exist. Already the notion is inconceivable and seems even more so if I reflect that, since every thought must have a subject to think it, this thought which is alien to me and yet in me, must also have in me a subject which is alien to me Whenever I read, I mentally pronounce an I, and yet the I which I pronounce is not myself."

But for Poulet this idea is only part of the story. The strange subject that thinks the strange thought in the reader indicates the potential presence of the author, whose ideas can be "internalized" by the reader •. "Such is the characteristic condition of every work which I summon back into existence by placing my consciousness at its disposal. I give it not only existence, but awareness of existence." [27] This would

mean that consciousness forms the point at which author and reader converge, and at the same time it would result in the cessation of the temporary self-alienation that occurs to the reader when his consciousness brings to life the ideas formulated by the author. This process gives rise to a form of communication which, however, according to Poulet, is dependent on two conditions: the life-story of the author must be shut out of the work, and the individual disposition of the reader must be shut out of the act of reading. Only then can the thoughts of the author take place subjectively in the reader, who thinks what he is not. It follows that the work itself must be thought of as a consciousness, because only in this way is there an adequate basis for the author-reader relationship—a relationship that can only come about through the negation of the author's own life-story and the reader's own disposition. This conclusion is actually drawn by Poulet when he describes the work as the self-presentation or materialization of consciousness: "And so I ought not to hesitate to recognize that so long as it is animated by this vital inbreathing inspired by the act of reading, a work of literature becomes (at the expense of the reader whose own life it suspends) a sort of human being, that it is a mind conscious of itself and constituting itself in me as the subject of its own objects.„ 28 Even though it is difficult to follow such a substantialist conception of the consciousness that constitutes itself in the literary work, there are, nevertheless, certain points in Poulet's argument that are worth holding onto. But they should be developed along somewhat different lines.

If reading removes the subject-object division that constitutes all perception, it follows that the reader will be "occupied" by the thoughts of the author, and these in their turn will cause the drawing of new "boundaries." Text and reader no longer confront each other as object and subject, but instead the "division" takes place within the reader himself. In thinking the thoughts of another, his own individuality temporarily recedes into the background since it is supplanted by these alien thoughts, which now become the theme on which his attention is focussed. As we read, there occurs an artificial division of our personality because we take as a theme for ourselves something that we are not. Consequently when reading we operate on different levels. For although we may be thinking the thoughts of someone else, what we are will not disappear completely—it will merely remain a more or less powerful virtual force. Thus, in reading there are these two levels— the alien "me" and the real, virtual "me"—which are never completely cut off from each other. Indeed, we can only make someone else's

24   Ibid., p. 5 thoughts into an absorbing theme for ourselves, provided the virtual background of our own personality can adapt to it. Every text we read draws a different boundary within our personality, so that the virtual background (the real "me") will take on a different form, according to the theme of the text concerned. This is inevitable, if only for the fact that the relationship between alien theme and virtual background is what makes it possible for the unfamiliar to be understood.

In this context there is a revealing remark made by D. W. Harding, arguing against the idea of identification with what is read: "What is sometimes called wish-fulfilment in novels and plays can . . . more plausibly be described as wish-formulation or the definition of desires. The cultural levels at which it works may vary widely; the process is the same It seems nearer the truth . . . to say that fictions contribute to defining the reader's or spectator's values, and perhaps stimulating his desires, rather than to suppose that they gratify desire by some mechanism of vicarious experience." [29] In the act of reading, having to think something that we have not yet experienced does not mean only being in a position to conceive or even understand it; it also means that such acts of conception are possible and successful to the degree that they lead to something being formulated in us. For someone else's thoughts can only take a form in our consciousness if, in the process, our unformulated faculty for deciphering those thoughts is brought into play—a faculty which, in the act of deciphering, also formulates itself. Now since this formulation is carried out on terms set by someone else, whose thoughts are the theme of our reading, it follows that the formulation of our faculty for deciphering cannot be along our own lines of orientation.

Herein lies the dialectical structure of reading. The need to decipher gives us the chance to formulate our own deciphering capacity—i.e., we bring to the fore an element of our being of which we are not directly conscious. The production of the meaning of literary texts— which we discussed in connection with forming the "gestalt" of the text—does not merely entail the discovery of the unformulated, which can then be taken over by the active imagination of the reader; it also entails the possibility that we may formulate ourselves and so discover what had previously seemed to elude our consciousness. These are the ways in which reading literature gives us the chance to formulate the unformulated.

MIKHAIL BAKHTIN, "DISCOURSE IN THE NOVEL"

Found Notes from Lorin Jessenberger
Problematic

- Bakhtin, in his *Discourse in the Novel*, appeals for a fundamentally different approach to analyzing the novelistic style
- The reason why the traditional stylistics could not be applied to the novel lies in the fact that it considered the novel as a poetic genre and, therefore, as not fundamentally different in style from, for example, poetry

Bakhtin, on the other hand, insists on a fundamental stylistic difference between the poetic genres and the novel

- The former are single languaged and single styled, while the latter is composed of several heterogeneous stylistic unities that combine to form the stylistic system of the novel

Five basic compositional-stylistic unities that are integrated in the novel are the following:

- 1) Direct authorial literary-artistic narration (in all its divers variants)
- 2) Stylization of the various forms of oral everyday narration
- 3) Stylization of the various forms of written semiliterary everyday narration (e.g. the letter, the diary, etc.)
- 4) Various forms of literary but extra-artistic authorial speech (e.g. moral, philosophical or scientific statements)
- 5) The stylistically individualized speech of characters

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Heteroglossia

- Heteroglossia denotes the different stratas (Social, professional, dialects, jargons etc) in the same language
  - Thus, heteroglossia is opposed to unitary language and what makes its uniqueness is this diversity
- In the novel, heteroglossia introduces a re-organization of all the levels of a language current at the time described in there
  - First of all, in a novel (especially in an English comic novel) one will identify the "common language" of a given social group, used by the author as "a common view" in order to approach the reader
  - Secondly, the author will take distance from this "common view", by objectifying it
    - Sometimes he will exaggerate, sometimes he will agree; he will not be static, but in a perpetual movement
  - Finally, "the common view" will be linked to other languages or in a gradual way or abruptly
    - In order to do so, the style of the novel will move from epic to journalistic, poetic and so on

- This inter-action between languages is made through dialogisation. The languages will not fuse together and this permits us to identify them.
  - Bakhtin mentioned two distinct features of heteroglossia in the novel:
    - 1) A combination of different languages and verbal-ideological belief systems, which means that the character's perception of the world (his ideological world) is expressed through his discourse.
    - 2) These languages and socio-belief systems that they denote, are incorporated in the novel for author's intentions. They are tested, unmasked, and then destroyed as they were false and hypocritical.
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Double-voiced Discourse

- Definition: It's "another's speech in another's language", which means: there are two voices, two meanings and two expressions
  - These two voices are dialogically interrelated, it is as if they actually hold a conversation with each other; examples would be comic, ironic or parodic discourse
- Double-voiced discourse expresses authorial intentions but in a refracted way
  - It serves two speakers at the same time and expresses simultaneously two different intentions: the direct intention of the character who is speaking and the refracted intention of the author.
    - The author takes someone else's direct discourse and infuses it with authorial intentions and consciousness keeping at the same time the original speaker's intention
    - Someone else's words introduced into our own speech assume a new interpretation and become a subject to our evaluation of them
  - Bakhtin mentions that double-voiced discourse helps to speak indirectly, conditionally, in a refracted way, to introduce more expressive intentions and to develop idea of heteroglossia
  - Bakhtin says that double-voiced ness in prose is prefigured in language itself, in language as a social phenomenon that is becoming in history, socially stratified and weathered in this process of becoming
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Orientation and internal dialogisation

- The concept of "orientation" relates to the fact that an author necessarily orients the words he is using in a certain direction
  - Indeed, everyone apprehends reality in one's own peculiar way, depending on one's cultural, religious, political, social, etc. background, and consequently uses a certain type of language to describe the surrounding world
  - So does the author: when he (or she) has to represent an object, he has to choose between many words or expressions that could define this object, all of which are directly or indirectly related to other concepts / objects, thus finally weaving an immense web of meanings and (ideological) implications
  - The author's choice, the *orientation* he gives his words, is therefore never innocent, but always loaded with possible consequences and specific connotations, according to the kind of speech that is being used.
- Yet in the novel, the discourse never remains strictly within the frame of the narrative
  - On the contrary, it requires an answer, the virtual answer a reader could make

- In that sense, the "orientation" extends to the reader, and does not remain focused on the text itself: the choice is made in order to anticipate the reader's reactions, and to lead the dialogue that is being initiated between him and the author in a certain direction
- The "virtual answer" can thus be said to determine more or less the discourse, through the process of dialogisation
- However this dialogisation can be either external (directly expressed in the text) or internal (integrated in the text, without salient signs of its presence)
- The first method is often used in rhetorical forms, whereas the second one is more common in novels, where the "heteroglossia" favours its development
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Polyphony

- Another important notion in Bakhtin's work, is the concept of *polyphony*
  - It is to voices what *heteroglossia* is to linguistics
  - The word comes from the Greek "*poly*" meaning plural + "*phonus*", translated as sound
  - In Bakhtin's sense of the word, he means the use of many voices, especially in the epic novel
  - In the glossary provided with Bakhtin's book, it is written that the voice "is the speaking personality, the speaking consciousness. A voice always has a will or desire behind it, its own timbre and overtones." (P. 434).
- The first voice the reader encounters is the one of the narrator
  - At this point there is already a subtlety: in the novel, as opposed to poetry (which has only one voice), the narrator always has two voices
    - It can be either literary, as in a description, or oral, for instance when the narrator addresses the reader
    - A relevant fact is that these two voices can interact
  - However, the narrator is not the only one entitled to have a voice, since all of the characters also have one
    - The voices of the different characters are like stereotypes and are probably inspired by people met by the author, they have their own language
    - Their purpose is to give information about the social and cultural background of the personas in the novel
    - Another interesting fact is that the voice of the narrator can interact with the voices of the characters.
  - Finally, there is one last type of voice, which is presented under the shape of quotes
    - The voice of the narrator uses the voices of different authors, thus relating to their background, from a source which is totally exterior to the novel
    - This way, the narrator appropriates himself the work of others, making it his own voices, because it gives information about his milieu.
  - *Polyphony* then poses the question of the author's position in the novel
    - Well, to complete the musical metaphor, we could say that, according to Bakhtin, the author orchestrates all the other voices and directs the interactions
      - That's the authorial voice.
      - Bakhtin writes in his Discourse In The Novel that "the novel can be defined as a diversity of social speech types […] and a diversity of individual voices, artistically organised." (P.262)
      - It is precisely the author who is organising this diversity of voices

- The last remaining aspect to be discussed in order to complete the whole scheme, is the position of the reader
  - If we consider the definition of a voice, we could say that the reader vocalises during his reading, in the sense that every reader has a different background, thus a different way of approaching a novel, giving it his own voice
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Found Notes Online

- Heteroglossia: The co-existence of many languages in one social language
  - "Dialogism describes the way languages interact, while heteroglossia describes the languages themselves"
  - "The base condition governing the operation of meaning in any utterance. It is that which insures the primacy of context over text. At any given time, in any given place, there will be a set of conditions that will insure that a word uttered in that place and at that time will have a meaning different than it would have under any other conditions; all utterances are heteroglot . . . "
  - Language in the context of time and space: The historical meanings of the same word in one language is given in different times and spaces
- Dialogism & Utterance:
  - Performance of speaking tone: One word or utterance with different tones bring different significance of intention
  - Juxtaposition of language: The various conditions of juxtaposing different languages, which will converse with one another
  - Over-determination and dynamic interaction:"Language is not a neutral medium that passes freely and easily into the private property of the speaker's intentions; it is populated — overpopulated–with the intentions of others. Expropriating it, forcing it to submit to one's own intentions and accents, is a difficult and complicated process"
- Three aspects of the speaking person
  - 1) The speaking person and his discourse in the novel is an object of verbal artistic representation
  - 2) Individual character and individual fates–and the individual discourse that is determined by these and only these–are in themselves of no concern for the novel
  - 3) The speaking person in the novel is always, to one degree or another, an ideologue, and his words are always ideologemes
    - A particular language in a novel is always a particular way of viewing the world.
  - Psychological impact concerning the speaking location: public sphere: in real life, people give speeches in public occasions and received other people's speeches too
  - The Uniqueness of individual voice: each individual is unique, and each person's voice is certainly unique in historical context
  - Socio-ideological consciousness: Double-voiced: "reciting by heart" and "retelling in one's own words"
  - The authoritative discourses have been implanted in people through education to become internally persuasive discourses later underlining people's behaviors and speeches
  - Authoritative language is surrounded by many other languages
    - Authoritative discourse may organize around itself great masses of other types of discourses . . . but the authoritative discourse itself does not merge with these

- People undoubtedly do not have choice to choose the authoritative discourse inasmuch as it is authoritative discourse, it is inoscillatory
- "Authoritative discourse cannot be represented–it is only transmitted"
- The language, the culture, the history: According to the idea of uniqueness, each word in any languagewill be given and bring different meanings in different space and time based on the speaker's socio-ideological consciousness
- There is never a world of unitary voice
- Socio-ideological consciousness
  - "Consciousness finds itself inevitably facing the necessity of having to choose a language"
  - "Our ideological development is just such an intense struggle within us for hegemony among various available verbal and ideological points of view, approaches, directions, and values"
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More Found Notes

- Bakhtin suggests that criticism reconsider the place of rhetoric, which could be used along with principals of poetics to explain the novel
  - He posits that a thorough study of rhetoric would show how important it is to linguistics and the philosophy of language
    - These suppositions are a response to critics who have called the novel "rhetoric" instead of art, and therefore marking the novel as didactic
  - But Bakhtin feels that the is not only an insufficient view of the novel, but of rhetoric
  - But he shows that the art of the novel intersects with both the traditions of rhetoric and of poetics and so should be placed in its own category for consideration
- He defines language as a system that is marked by ideology and presents a world view the tries to promote a maximum of understanding between people who share ideologies
  - It is more than just a system of signs that "guarantee and minimum level of comprehension in practical communication"
- Prose writing is different in that it relies not on the achievement of a unitary language but on the use of heteroglossia
  - It doesn't strip all the other meanings from words but uses meaning to create irony, humor, parody, etc
  - The poet speaks in his own language, the prose writer speaks through language at his disposal
  - In this way, novels have developed a more "dialogic essence" and so is more sociological

Notes from Martin Irvine

- Utterance or Word: In Bakhtin's view, an*expression* in a living context of exchange–termed a "word" or "utterance"–is the main unit of meaning (not abstract sentences out of context), and is formed through a speaker's relation to Otherness (other people, others' words and expressions, and the lived cultural world in time and place)
  - A "word" is therefore always already embedded in a history of expressions by others in a chain of ongoing cultural and political moments

- Anutterance/word is marked by what Bakhtin terms "Addressivity" and "Answerability" (it is always addressed *to someone* and anticipates, can generate, a *response*, anticipates an *answer*)
- Discourse (chains or strings of utterances) is thus fundamentally *dialogic* and historically *contingent* (positioned within, and inseparable from, a community, a history, a place)
- Heteroblossia and Polyphony: Speech and complex cultural discourse in all our genres is mixed through and through with *heteroglossia* (another's speech, and many others' words, appropriated expressions) and are necessarily *polyphonic* ("many-voiced," incorporating many voices, styles, references, and assumptions not a speaker's "own")

  Dialogism/dialogic/dialogue: Every level of expression from live conversational dialog to complex cultural expression in other genres and art works is an ongoing chain or network of statements and responses, repetitions and quotations, in which new statements presuppose earlier statements and anticipate future responses