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Technologies of reading: Humanism, cultural studies, and the disciplining of the social text

Ritchie, Susan Jean, Ph.D.
The Ohio State University, 1993
TECHNOLOGIES OF READING: HUMANISM, CULTURAL STUDIES, AND THE DISCIPLINING OF THE SOCIAL TEXT

DISSERTATION

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the Graduate School of The Ohio State University

By

Susan Jean Ritchie, B.A., M.A.

* * * * *

The Ohio State University
1993

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"... a special reading... exculpates itself as a reading by posing to every guilty reading the very question that unmasks its innocence, the mere question of innocence: what is it to read?" —Louis Althusser
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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This project began with a characteristically delightful germ planted by my adviser and mentor, Prof. Amy E. Shuman, and grew and flourished under her thoughtful guidance and encouragement. I am profoundly grateful. Many thanks are also due my committee, Profs. George Hartley, Judith Mayne, and Vassilis Lambropoulos, for their patience, insight, and inspiration. Katharine Young provided a reading of the material on the medical humanities which is gratefully acknowledged. The work benefited throughout by the feedback and enthusiasm proffered by Ms. Jean Gregorek and Prof. Victoria Holbrook.
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"Reading the Social Text: The Role of Marxism in the History of Literary Studies," Research and Society 3 (Fall 1990), 86-96.


FIELDS OF STUDY

Major Field: English
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This is a book about the technology of literary studies. It is about the specific, technical means by which literary studies achieves its purposes and complicities—ideological and institutional. As such, it is also necessarily about the theoretical knowledge that must be invented and continually revised for literary studies to maintain its status as a discipline. I am interested most of all here in the ways in which literary studies contributes to the modern interpellative process whereby subjects learn to invent themselves and their own subjection. My topic is the way we, the practitioners of literary studies, discipline ourselves and others.

Although I begin with the premise that literary studies, even in its more radical forms of cultural studies and poststructuralism, has been and remains complicit in the construction of modern oppressions, this is not a book about the impossibility of radical critique. Indeed, the rapid changes and methodological crises that mark literary studies should not fool us into confusing our eagerness to revolutionize the tools of critical production with actual revolution. Yet the discipline—and by extension, the
practicing literary intellectual—does not bear a necessary or singular relationship to the politics of the modern state. In fact, by specifying the technology by which literary studies performs its work and constitutes it subjects, I hope to show the contingent and even fragile ways in which the alliances between the discipline and the state are constructed and maintained.

My interest is in the disarticulation of reading from literary studies; in my own methodology I seek to enact such a disjuncture. My complaint is not that reading disguises some "real" that might come crashing through our discursive constructions to reveal its truth once we find an alternative critical technique. I am more interested in how the entire range of the thinkable and the doable within literary studies has been constrained to that which serves as support for the practice of performing readings. Hence, my methodology here will precisely not take the form of an historical study. I do not want to construct an actual history of reading as much as I wish to show how contemporary theories have themselves constructed a history of reading that continues to define the realm of the theoretically possible. My interest in the historical details presented here, then, is not because of anything they might testify to, but rather to point out the kind of historical details and constructions that have been of interest to contemporary theory.
The primary technology of literary studies is reading itself. Literary studies, as the institutionalization of reading, the most private bourgeois space, enacts a powerful yet slippery modern technology of the self. Foucault uses "technology of the self" to describe any process "which permits individuals to effect by their own means or with the help of others a certain number of operations on their own bodies and souls, thoughts, conduct and way of being, so as to transform themselves in order to attain a certain state of happiness, purity, wisdom, perfection, or immortality."¹ Reading is a two way ideological channel, insuring the interpellation and social control of the middle classes while doing the same for the intelligentsia. Reading is always the invention of a private act in service of what Habermas calls the public sphere, even as its masquerades behinds its own illusion of providing a space for the individual, the liberatory, and the democratic.² We should not separate reading from being read; the private space in which we read might indeed be our subjectivity, but that too is a fiction.³

Yet this single methodology that achieves the claims to transcendence on the part of both literary studies and its individual critics remains undiscussed even as it is omnipresent. The idea that reading is the means by which we are more or less connected to ideology--and hence, the means by which we might decode ideology and arrive, presumably, at
some mythical, politics-free real—prevails throughout the discipline’s discourse in the most traditional understandings of humanism as well as in the most radical poststructural formulations. Comments such as Frank Lentricchia’s that "the substance, the very ontology of ideology...is in a broad but fundamental sense revealed to us textually, and therefore must be grasped (read) and attacked (reread, rewritten) in that dimension" earn endorsement from literary scholars of a variety of methodological or political persuasions.4 Even Foucault argues that "one ought to read everything."5 Claims for reading and rereading persist; reading itself has not yet been understood as an interpellative process.6 Althusser came the closest to denouncing reading, citing the grand achievement of the later, scientific Marx as "the dissipation of the religious myth of reading."7 Yet Althusser finally calls us back to the ascetic discipline, promoting in the symptomatic or scientific reading a more advanced version of the same demanding technology: "... it is essential to read Capital to the letter. To read itself, complete, all four volumes, line by line, to return ten times to the first chapters....And it is essential to read Capital not only in its French translation, but also in the German original...."8

Ironically, Althusser confesses in his posthumous autobiography that he never read the later Marx, and only the first volume of Capital."
I do not identify reading as a technology in order to simply call for its end. Fleeing from ideological positions and interpellative dynamics is not only impossible, but of no use to the resistance, and I am interested in working towards a definition of the conditions under which a functional transformation of literary studies might be possible. Towards this end I mean to implicate both the physical act of reading and the more metaphoric understandings of the word as the act of performing a critique. My argument with reading is not with the production, or even policing, of individual readings, but with the very process. For reading, as interpellation, is the very bringing forth of the individual into subjectivity and subjectification. And as such it involves both a bodily register as well as a discursive one; indeed, one might say that it is only in the process of becoming a subject of ideology that the bodily and the ideological are forever made complicit. Only as a body-object can I take on the symbolic properties of the social; only as a transcendent subject can I imagine that there remains a rarefied part of me that has escaped inscription. The temptation of post-Enlightenment critique has been to bemoan the body as one the many constraints placed on subjectivity, an impulse which fails to understand that the body and the subject are equally symptomatic inventions. Hence the slippage between the various registers of "reading" is important to my argument. For if the notion of a reading
as critique invokes the ethereal heritage of the Enlightenment human, the second sense of "reading" belongs to the body whose eyes travel the page. It is the power of reading to establish the fantasy connection between the two that interests me as the definitive dynamic of bourgeois ideology.

In suggesting a relation between the invention of the body and the subject, I do not mean to suggest that moving one's eyes over a page results in immediate possession by alien ideological or authorial agency: to think so would be to grossly misunderstand and underestimate the subtlety of available models of interpellation. Perhaps the wide scale acceptance of Althusser's famous definition of ideology as an "actual hail which rings out" until a subject "turns around" has proven confusing. If subjectivity and ideology are mutually invented, the body (the body being just as much a fiction as subjectivity) cannot pre-exist them, and physical actions cannot precipitate interpellation. After all, Althusser himself reminds us that "in reality these things happen without any succession." But similarly, if we suppose that "hail" is simply a contrived way of understanding an entirely disembodied project, the bodily investment in ideology on which interpellation insists and relies remain unchallenged. And it is through ignoring the bodily investment in ideology that we suppose that reading is only critique. The reader--my example of the ultimate bourgeois subject--is not a body suddenly infused with text;
the reader embodies herself through the process of reading—she invents herself even as she is invented.

By arguing that the grounds of cultural legitimation lay not with class based privilege but with the universal human capacity for reasoned thought, critique seems to operate in a democratic public space—a space that supposedly allows all races, genders, and classes to equally achieve both political and discursive representation. It was not historically necessary that literary criticism should have come to insure the existence of such democracy as alibi rather than lived reality. Thus while my study of reading takes place in the context of an increasing despair and suspicion over the efficacy of all modes of literary practice and critique, even the explicitly politically interested, it is a mistake to assume that the bourgeois heritage of our discipline is a cause for only embarrassment. Political alignments are changeable and transitory: even the dominant paradigm is in flux, and today's subversions form tomorrow's oppressive apparatus. Reading is not evil in and of itself; it is merely a bit of outmoded technology. Gramsci wrote that "the 'organic' intellectuals which every new class creates alongside itself and elaborates in the course of its development are for the most part 'specializations' of partial aspects of the primitive activity of the new social type which the new class has brought into prominence." Thus while the literary intellectual who professes reading is a part of
today's establishment, she is also the result of some of the more daring, clever, and subversive institutional strategies enacted by the rising bourgeoisie of the eighteenth century. The largely German idealistic philosophy which has come to be known as modern critical thought, served by and large as a successful epistemological raid carried out by the bourgeoisie against the absolutist political and theological state. Again, though, my concern is not with that history, but with the question of what it means to align literary studies with that history in the present day.

When I refer to reading as the technology of the bourgeoisie or the result of bourgeois power, then, I do not mean to suggest that as a class the bourgeoisie has or had an unproblematically homogeneous and hegemonic existence. As tempting as it is to think otherwise, the "bourgeois individual" is not an actual, realized human being who might hunted down in a nearby humanities department. For to simply observe that conscious individualism is the prerogative of the bourgeoisie and move from there to a story of total bourgeois conquest is to participate in the construction of what Peter Gay has called "the most persuasive and durable of all folk tales: that of the rising bourgeoisie." The danger here, as Gay points out, is in erasing the very real differences that marked the bourgeoisie in order to invent a class agency that might be held responsible for everything from the Reformation to television situational comedies. Such
assumptions are exactly the assumptions which invent bourgeois power as an ideology. When I refer, then, to the bourgeoisie, I refer less to a class than to an ideology—an ideology that was not fully realized in the supposed triumph of a generic class. Here, "bourgeois" refers to the ideology that made it possible to think culture and class ascendancy together, an ideology that is inscribed on the scene of the postmodern as even poststructuralism and cultural studies rewrite and hence reenact this mythical history of the modern. It is in this sense that I wish to describe how the modern critical practice of reading continues to wage a bourgeois revolution that was realized a long time ago.

Bourgeois revolutions are most impressive in their ability to harness and indeed literally seize the sites of centralized power. And indeed, the bourgeois philosophers most often cited in contemporary theory are almost always critics of modernity who appropriated the idea of using culture as a means of ascendancy directly from the late seventeenth and early eighteenth century aristocrat-philosophers who argued a connection between social position and cultural capital precisely in order to fend off middle class claims to either. The function of Shaftesbury’s aesthetic was after all precisely to use philosophy to establish a fantasy link between high birth and artistic sensibility. Shaftesbury makes the nature of this connection explicit in "The Moralists," where he argues that "To
philosophize in a just Signification, is but to carry Good-breeding a step higher. For the accomplishment of Breeding is, to learn whatever is decent in Company, or beautiful in Arts; and the Sum of Philosophy is, to learn what is just in Society, and beautiful in Nature, and the Order of the World."²² Far from hindering the bourgeois use for aesthetics, this incongruity between the aristocratic origins of the discourse ("good breeding") and the use to which it was put by the middle classes (as a means of philosophizing precisely in the absence of "decent" company) comprised the subversive authority to which reference is still made today. Thus Terry Eagleton is able to call Shaftesbury "the central architect of the new bourgeois political hegemony."²³ Thus even characters like Adam Smith--economist, humanist, and champion of the bourgeoisie--remain radical in the discourse of contemporary theorists who cite his teaching of ambitious young capitalists as a revolutionary move. Smith did promote a modest and becoming prose style for the ascendent, and denounced Shaftesbury's aristocratic elegance as "unnatural."²⁴ Yet in so far as reading remains a textual search for liberatory possibility, and continues to enable the negotiation of will, authority and reason that allows for the continual reinvention of bourgeois power and subjects, we might suspect such advocacy of the middle classes has lost its subversive edge.
This fascinating discursive appropriation of aesthetic ideology by the bourgeois critics, this invention of "affirmative culture" in Marcuse’s terms, first came under suspicion in the twentieth century, when the horrors attendant to the bourgeois understanding of individualism had already manifested themselves and played themselves in the various guises of imperialism, capitalism, and fascism. Indeed, the members of the critical theory collective most victimized by the rise of fascism—the Frankfurt School—did some of their most valuable work on the connection between bourgeois society and this invention of the individual as self-agent. As Horkheimer and Adorno put it, "The social work of every individual in bourgeois society is mediated through the principle of self." The existence of the individual agent made for an excellent opportunity to study the pathology of Enlightenment culture in microcosm, especially in so far as this individual imagined himself (the gender of an unproblematized subject) as the very agent of history. If bourgeois individualism was the most obvious result of the Enlightenment invention, it was at least simultaneous to a number of other systems: democracy, humanism, and colonialism.

Only recently has critique focused on the possibility of countering this Enlightenment legacy. Foucault thus claims that "the political, ethical, social, philosophical problem of our days is not to try to liberate the individual from the
state and from the state's institutions but to liberate us both from the state and from the type of individualization which is linked to the state."²⁸ Yet criticizing the bourgeois individual is also a means of undermining the foundation of critique itself—a paradoxical situation that was very much at issue in the Frankfurt analysis of bourgeois culture and perhaps the single most important issue which informs Habermas' critique of that school. Horkheimer and Adorno understood the Enlightenment as an inherently dialectical critique that could result in nothing other than its own destruction. Habermas, though, is more interested in the paradox as it is manifested in Horkheimer and Adorno: "This critique of ideology describes the self-destruction of the critical faculty, however, in a paradoxical manner, because in performing the analysis it must make use of the same critique which it has declared false. It denounces the totalitarian development of Enlightenment with its own means—a performative contradiction of which Adorno was well aware."²⁹ Thus Habermas understands the only truly anti-Enlightenment position to be literally anti-rationality, and endorses himself a "radicalization" of the Enlightenment as the only resistance capable of literally making sense.

This obsession with finding a definitive means of resisting the Enlightenment characterizes poststructuralists such as Foucault, who look to a critique of the Enlightenment precisely to attempt a reversal of its epistemological
violences. He writes of Kant's article "What is Enlightenment" that "Kant indicated right away that the 'way out' that characterizes Enlightenment is a process that releases us from the status of 'immaturity.' ...Kant gives us three examples: we are in a state of immaturity when a book takes the place of understanding, when a spiritual director takes the place of our conscience, when a doctor decides for us what our diet is to be." Interestingly, Foucault credits Kant with a thinking that is as anti-Enlightenment as his own--as interested, at least in "ways out." Foucault suggests, in short, that Kant too was interested in finding a means of dissociating critique from its foundation in individualism. This anti-Enlightenment that Kant and Foucault share becomes inscribed as the search for an independence from those things and places where reason and authority are singularly incarnated in the kind of persons with whom Kant and Foucault were similarly obsessed: the author, the spiritual advisor, the doctor. Yet even for these prophets of the anti-Enlightenment, reading remains a textual search for liberatory possibility, and continues to enable the negotiation of will, authority and reason that allows for the continual reinvention of bourgeois power and subjects.

My first chapter reflects my interest in this nexus of powers and discourse that makes the intellectual the ideal bourgeois individual and modern criticism the ideal bourgeois discourse. In Chapter One, then, I develop in more detail the
exact nature of the relationship between the humanities, the bourgeoisie, and the emergence of reading as a social technology that allows for both modern critical intellectuals and modern critical work. I first discuss reading as a symptom of the larger interests of the German transcendental and idealist humanists, a move which requires an examination of the history institution of humanism in the form of the humanities. Of course the very same late eighteenth century German humanist intellectuals who provide much of the core of what is today understood as modern critical thought were also the founders of the modern university system, and responsible to a large degree for shaping the role the humanities would serve within that institution. In fact, they often deliberated over the best ways of raising the stock of the humanities in a system which valued professionalism in a manner as surprisingly contemporary as it is cynical and calculating. If reading had not existed, it would have had to have been invented to bridge the interests of these calculating idealists and thoroughly modern critics. The very opening and closing of Chapter One recalls these same uses of reading within the humanities even as institutionalized in the contemporary discipline of cultural studies.

Chapter Two focuses on the development of the technology of reading that emerged from the work of a later class of humanist intellectuals devoted exclusively to literary critique. Here I seek to define the specific nature of
"critical work" as it develops in the hands of these professional readers. Part of this chapter explores the strange case of Paul de Man, not in order to proffer one more defense or attack of his involvement with the Nazis, but to point out how the professional dilemmas of the literary critic and the nature of disciplined literary criticism necessitated that the "Paul de Man" crisis become itself a text for interpretation. The ideological work accomplished by that professional reading is no less horrible than de Man's own—and the effect that such critical work has on maintaining discipline and policing borders within literary studies is the focus of the chapter's conclusion.

The degree to which the seemingly political focus of poststructuralism has been both compromised, constructed and even fictionalized by the ever present disciplining and professional technology of reading provides the focus for my third chapter. The chapter opens with a description of the entwinement of poststructuralism's theoretical concerns with matters of professionalism from its start in the French sixties—for the history of literary studies (here explored in the institution of the English department) suggests that even an explicit interest in politics hardly marks the grounds of departure from a narrowly defined field of literary study so much as it constitutes it. In this sense, this chapter is also concerned with the strange and special relationship between literary studies and the political activities of the
middle classes which developed out of the nineteenth century only to erupt at the end of the twentieth. Thus I discuss the ways in which lodging the discussion of poststructuralism in the events of May '68 represents one more conflation of the professional critic's public and private concerns and responsibilities.

Chapter Four presents from various vantage points the institutional politics of the relatively recent interest in extending the applications of literary criticism's technology from the text to the social text and even to the body itself.

In this spirit Chapter Four discusses the new field of the "medical humanities" and the ways in which even seemingly radical challenges to empirical thought (such as the understanding by some scientists that even clinical medicine must invent the object of its discipline: bodies) recuperate the familiar dynamic established between reading, the humanities, and the invention of the subject. For it is after all my claim that reading as a humanistic technology differs from empiricism only in the nature of its alibis: that bodies of texts and bodies themselves are both invented in order to enable the notion that in excess of bodily limitations one might locate a transcendence, and from this transcendence, fashion a subject capable of individual and absolute agency. Thus discourses about the body provide the most powerful examples of how disciplined readings can rewrite social activism as academic critique.
Chapter Five provides a final assessment of the costs, dangers, and attempted disjunctures of reading by placing its technology within its larger, enabling ideology of representation. By noting how representation has functioned in the theoretical analysis of workers, women, and postcolonials, this conclusions seeks to outline the conditions and the promise of a methodology that supports the articulation various actors rather than the technology of reading and the invention of readers.

But with each chapter my focus remains on understanding the possibilities of a critique that fails to articulate a model of individual bourgeois agency—for bourgeois critique has always relied on such claims as the thinking mind can make on the body. Marcuse understood that the principle of critical autonomy relied first on what critical claims the bourgeois subject could lay on the essential. He wrote:

> According to the view characteristic of the dawning bourgeois era, the critical authority of rational subjectivity is to establish and justify the ultimate essential truths on which all theoretical practice depends. The essence of man and of things is contained in the freedom of the thinking individual, the ego cogito. At the close of this era, knowledge of essence has primarily the function of binding the critical freedom of the individual to pregiven, unconditionally valid necessities.\(^{32}\)

Marcuse might serve as this chapter’s final reminder, then, that my purpose here is the radical disarticulation of the individual, precisely through the disarticulation of the technology which unites and invents that individual’s freedoms.
and necessities. Likewise it might serve as a reminder that the articulation of resistance does not require that we literally give up reading. Resistance is not the result of an individual revolting against hegemonic control from an ideologically free space—for such a space is precisely the private space created by reading and bourgeois subjectivity.

Creative, insightful, or rigorous readings do not constitute revolution. Perhaps the only revolution worthy of the name is to be found in the moment in which we no longer make any claims for reading.
NOTES


2. Jurgen Habermas' notion of the "public sphere" is especially well suited to explaining the association between Enlightenment critique and the bourgeoisie. Peter Uwe Hohendahl has worked out the connection in The Institution of Criticism (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1982): esp. 52-56; 242-280. See also Jurgen Habermas, The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society, trans., Thomas Burger (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT University Press, 1984) and Jurgen Habermas, "The Public Sphere: An Encyclopedia Article," trans. Sara Lennox and Frank Lennox, New German Critique 1978 (originally published 1964): 49-55. Also, it is interesting to note how many of the bourgeoisie's public institutions required a prior idea of reading. Thus historians such as Noe Ricter have been drawn to reading as a way of explaining the development of the modern library. Noe Richter's work, La lecture & ses institutions: La lecture populair 1700-1918 (Paris and Maine: Editions Plein Chant and Bibliotheque de l'Université du Maine, 1984), traces the dual construction of reading and the modern public library.


6. Colin Mercer is one critic who has identified reading as an ideological and disciplinary process. He writes, "...the dominant mode of critical aesthetic reading is one practice among many others and holds no promise of interpretation except as in itself a specific resource historically endowed with an overbearing cultural capital" (72). While I agree with many of Mercer's
connections, I cannot agree that reading is one ideological technology among others. Rather, it is my argument that reading is the ideological practice of the bourgeois era. Mercer introduces his stimulating article by writing that "aesthetic knowledge, finely tuned through critique, also produces knowledge of other domains (politics, economics, technologies of power and domination) by way of techniques of social commentary deployed by expert reader-interpreters" (63).

While I applaud his impulse to connect aesthetic processes of such a reading with what he here refers to as "other domains" I insist on a stronger connection of complicity. Reading does not merely "produce knowledge" about other, pre-existent domains. Rather, reading is the process which defines these relationships within the bourgeois public sphere, and in so doing, creates each of these entities. Colin Mercer, "Neverending stories: The Problem of Reading in Cultural Studies," New formations: A Journal of Culture/ theory/ politics Number 13 (Spring 1991): 63-75.


8. Althusser, Reading Capital, 14.


10. I owe the first part of this formulation to Katharine Young: "Symbolic properties of the body can be seen in body symbols and in the symbolic body, in the ways in which the body is inscribed on culture and the way in which culture is inscribed on the body." Katharine Young, "Disembodiment: the Phenomenology of the Body in Medical Examinations" Semiotica 73-1/2 (1989): 43-66; 45.

11. "There are individuals walking along. Somewhere (usually behind them) the hail rings out: 'Hey, you there!' One individual (nine times out of ten it is the right one) turns around, believing/suspecting/ knowing that it is for him, i.e. recognizing that it is 'really he' who is meant by the hailing." Louis Althusser, "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses," Lenin and Philosophy, Ben Brewster, trans. (1970; New York: Monthly Review Press, 1971): 127-188; 174-175.


14. Pierre Bourdieu, in "The Academic Eye: From Nomos to the Institutionalization of Anomie," Art & Text 28 (March-May 1988): 4-19; 12, cites the definition of reading as critique, the definition that belongs to even as it invents the university. As Bourdieu himself adds in a footnote, this "metaphor of reading, which has enjoyed a comeback in the university world thanks to semiology, corresponds perfectly to the academic vision of the teacher as 'lector'" [reader] (12).

15. Gayatri Spivak has critiqued both Foucault and Deleuze and Guattari for conflating the political and aesthetic senses of representation—senses which she admits are related, but nonetheless as distinct as they are in German, where "vertreten" indicates representation of the political kind while "darstellen" is reserved for the aesthetic. Mira Kamdar has made an interesting criticism of Spivak's distinction by noting that with mimesis (which she traces to the philosophy of the French Enlightenment), "vertreten" and "darstellen" become "irretrievably continuous" (93). My argument is that the two senses are collapsed only in bourgeois liberal philosophy, where discourse itself is thought to comprise the public sphere. In this sense my argument is consistent with both Spivak's critique of Foucault and Deleuze and Guattari as bourgeois first-world intellectuals, and Kamdar's fascinating equation of this work of mimesis with the articulation of a bourgeois, intellectual and first world postmodern subjectivity at the very moment of the triumph of colonialist global capital (Diederot serves here as her first postmodern subject). See Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, "Can the Subaltern Speak?" Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture, Cary Nelson and Lawrence Grossberg, eds (Urbana, Illinois: University of Illinois Press, 1988): 271-313 and Mira Kamdar, "Subjectification and Mimesis: Colonizing History," The American Journal of Semiotics 7:3 (1990): 91-100.


18. Peter Gay, The Bourgeois Experience: Victoria to Freud, "Education of the Senses, Vol. I," (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984): 33. I do disagree, however, with Gay's formulation of "bourgeois." He writes that "To write the history of the bourgeois experience in the nineteenth century; to enter, as inquisitively as I can, into the mind of the middle class, is to
hazard risky generalizations. Only the individual loves and hates, develops tastes in painting and furniture, feels content in moments of consummation, anxious in times of peril, and furious at agents of deprivation; only the individual glories in mastery or revenges himself upon the world. The rest is metaphor" (15). To my mind, his eloquent defense of the individual experience which he regrets mitigating is as a precise reinscription of the bourgeois experience, which supposes persons to be unique individual agents, sensitive and confident in both bodily and personal singularity, as any.


20. As Eric Hobsbawm has pointed out, this seizure need not be anything as literal and complete, anything so seemingly indicative of a bourgeois class of one mind, as often supposed (especially in the analysis of the French Revolution). Eric Hobsbawm, "The Making of a Bourgeois Revolution," Social Research 56:1 (Spring 1989).


25. Herbert Marcuse named the bourgeois epoch "affirmative culture" for this reason, writing that its "decisive characteristic is the assertion of a universally obligatory, eternally better and more valuable world that must be unconditionally affirmed: a world that essentially different from the factual world...yet realizable by


27. One of the few studies to explore the degree to which liberal democracy required rather than simply fostered the development of reading is Michael Warner's The Letters of the Republic: Publication and the Public Sphere in Eighteenth Century America (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1990), where he argued that writing and criticism were necessary to the development of the new American government.


32. Marcuse, Negations, 95.
CHAPTER I
TEXTUALIZING THE SOCIAL:
CULTURAL STUDIES AND THE INVENTION OF MODERN READING

The Science of Cultural Studies
"culture is something you swim in, like a fish." -- Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak

Even given the profound disagreements that mark contemporary literary studies, it would be difficult to find many professors of literature who would argue very strenuously with the view that individuals are ideological subjects who take in and spew forth largely unrecognized cultural relations as unthinkingly as oxygen. Nor would many be likely to think that this dynamic is none of their business. After all, stressing the omnipresence of unrecognized participation in a larger culture is the argument for the importance of the humanities: the humanities provide the means of examining this unexamined life. How then can we characterize the supposedly new and critical stance towards the "social text" adopted by cultural studies? If the task of cultural studies is to find a way to make the complexity of the cultural medium through which we swim visible, it is in many ways a familiar, hardly radical mission.

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Is it really possible that cultural studies is the institutionalization of a genuinely oppositional academic autocritique? Such is the story that we practitioners of cultural studies like to tell; a story, I argue, that is only possible within an understanding of ideology from which I distance myself. Yet despite myself, when asked to explain cultural studies, I know that I generally make a grand case for the radicality of the epistemological and institutional breaks executed by the Center for Cultural Studies, the interdisciplinary unit established at the University of Birmingham to study change in post-World War II Britain.² I explain that the Center produced some of the more interesting and radical scholarship of the century, including E.P. Thompson's *The Making of the English Working Class* (1963), Richard Hoggart's *The Uses of Literacy* (1961), and Raymond Williams's *Culture and Society* (1958). I make much of the Center's marginal institutional stance (many of the original members—Thompson, Williams, and Stuart Hall, were not traditional faculty members, but taught alternative students at community extension centers, and the Center itself was first located in a few quonset huts on the periphery of the Birmingham campus) as well as the members' sympathy with the goals of the European New Left. For it seems as if these conditions at least in part dictated the line of scholarship that is perhaps unique to cultural studies: the critique of
the liberal humanistic ideology lurking behind the structure of the university and its traditional disciplines.³

Yet in so defining cultural studies, I deny the history of cultural studies that would suggest that it is something other than interdisciplinary, innovative or progressive. And there is a fair amount to repulse. After all, the center was originally conceived of as a part of the English department (one of the university's largest and most traditional powers); its first students were trained in literature to the exclusion of other cultural disciplines; some of its earliest efforts were marked by a most painful classism; feminism was, for a while, actively resisted by even progressive center members.⁴ But even such accounts of failure do not lie only outside the institutional discourse of cultural studies. Indeed, in more simplistic accounts, cultural studies is often represented as a moment and place of radical potential whose political efficacy is always threatened by its encasement within in the university; a place where radical impulse becomes thwarted as it seeks institutional manifestation. And despite the vast differences between the Birmingham school's often deliberately shabby methodology and cultural studies in the United States with all its pyrotechnical poststructuralism, what both seem to share is the rather amazing understanding that their mission is at least in part to shock their bourgeois colleagues down the hall.
So while it has been fashionable to critique cultural studies by identifying its vestigial, foundational humanisms as that which limits its progressive promise, I aspire to do no such thing. While such efforts do a great deal to expose some of the complicities of cultural politics, they also suggest that cultural studies is capable of making an absolute departure from its institutional past. It is my argument that institutionalization is a phenomenon better understood through its enabling effects rather than its confinements: again, I understand my own interest, love and absolute abhorrence of academic discourse to lie precisely in the range of things it enables me to say. The enabling discourse of institutionalized critical authority, then, although changeable, must still exist in so far as cultural studies is identifiable as a field, and in so far as we can still make claims for or against its name. For institutions do not enforce discourse as much as discourse is itself an "instituting process" by which entire systems of links and separations are narrated, and the space of structure in which the institution can come into being is created.

I identify the persistent, obsessional discourse of cultural studies in the claim it continues to make for the conflation between professional critique and political emancipation. I believe that this discourse is still primarily a literary one: and that literary studies, far from being something we have escaped as students of cultural
studies, still allows for our power. That even self-proclaimed politically oppositional forms of cultural studies participate in this common discourse would help explain their firmly entrenched—although sometimes uncomfortable—residence in the discipline of literary study. But my concern is not just with this body of discourse as such, but with the daily practices of institutions which police and maintain the discourse. And we might locate that practice as precisely as that which the institution resists most. As Althusser writes of philosophy, "What philosophy cannot bear is the idea of a theory of philosophy capable of changing its traditional practice. Such a theory may be fatal for philosophy, since it lives by denegation." In literary studies, the only acceptable professional mode is that of reading. And what literary studies has been unable to tolerate, even in its manifestation as cultural studies, is a critique of reading.

If the claims for critique constitute the discourse of literary studies, the practice of reading constitutes its technology, and comprises its work. Reading insures the quotidian production of the persons, discourses, and texts of institutionalized literary studies. Reading is the means by which we police ourselves and our students; reading is our discipline. For what better technology than critical reading to define the boundaries of the autonomous text from its other—the pragmatic, ideologically contaminated social text—which it claims to transcend and consequently only legitimizes
and aestheticizes? And what better way to elevate the critical task? Using its offer of a critique of ideology as a kind of alibi, criticism, both past and present, describes its enterprise as emancipation. Criticism at once invents oppression and offers itself as liberation. This strange, aestheteticized and finally Romantic moment which made reading the means by which personal insight and liberation might be seemingly united with the power of critique and clearheadedness has not been interrogated within disciplinary boundaries. Zavarzadeh and Morton have pointed out the cost of this failure: "this injunction against interrogating the transcendental aesthetic moment points up the anti-intellectualism of the dominant curriculum. In this curriculum, professionalism ("analysis") and not intellectual inquiry is the privileged mode of activity." My task here will be to specify the moment in which aesthetic ideology is privileged within our discipline. I turn now to a brief history of this moment; towards a brief history of reading.

In doing so I locate cultural studies’ inaugural moment not with the Birmingham school, but in Kant’s 18th century Germany. For more or less explicitly, cultural studies continues to grounds its understanding of criticism’s work in german idealism. Foucault has noted in The Order of Things that Kant provides the first modern moment in so far as his work is marked by "the retreat of knowledge and cognition out of the space of representation." Retreats are not
disappearances, and Foucault hardly means to suggest that modernity brought about an end to empiricism's knowable world. Rather, modernity for Foucault is characterized by a series of strange displacements which do not deny empirical reality, but obscure it in a more particular yet mystical site (frequently the body, often a text). Thus the age of modern criticism becomes characterized by the need for an exacting critical science. This era's impossible claim: that only reading—with its painstaking sorting out of signifiers and signifieds—can restore the real. Cultural studies, in all of its forms, remains a refinement of that same science.

On the Invention of Reading

In his "Letters Upon the Aesthetic Education of Man" (1795) J.C. Fredrich Von Schiller states the a priori of the modern critical authority that defines, enables, and limits literary study: "to arrive at a solution even in the political problem, the road of aesthetics must be pursued, because it is through beauty that we arrive at freedom." In some senses Schiller was simply repeating the traditional claim of the humanities, already some three hundred years old: that an aesthetic sense, cultivated by liberal education, would improve the moral virtues of the elite and the elite's chosen men of public affairs. Schiller, though, writes after a very peculiar revolution and reorganization in the structure of institutionalized humanism: the Kantian. Schiller wrote after
the invention of reading after the modern, critical-aesthetic model we still employ today; and just as Schiller was only able to make aesthetic education thinkable through Kantian aesthetics, aesthetics today remain mired in the terms and restrictions of such an aesthetic education.

While reading today comprises a bit of outmoded technology, the invention of reading and aesthetic education comprised a kind of revolution at the time. As Schelling noted in his obituary for Kant, there had been two revolutions at the end of the eighteenth century: the French, and the Kantian. Yet if the French was dramatic, physical, and to an extent proletarian, the Kantian revolution was a bourgeois critical revolution: a difference the vast majority of German intellectuals found painful. As Johann Christoph Schwab complained, "Whilst in a neighboring great state the most remarkable Revolution goes on which has perhaps ever taken place on the scene of the Earth,...we are wandering around in the labrinyth of Metaphysics, squabbling about things which are a trouble to understand...." In hindsight, the absence of philosophy became German idealism's explanation for the atrocities of that grand revolution. Schelling, for instance, claimed that:

France, the very nation which, save for a few individuals in former times (who will surely be accused of influencing the political events of a latter time) had no philosophers at any epoch--least of all in the years proceeding the revolution--this was the nation that set the example of a revolution characterized by atrocities as criminal as those perpetrated afterward, when it introduced
And while Kant himself praised the French Revolution as that under which the whole human race might have united, he also felt compelled to justify the importance of his own philosophical revolution, which might otherwise seem effete and irrelevently intellectual in comparison to the French. So Kant praised not the French revolution itself, but the sign of that revolution. Kant argued that historical revolutions are forever contaminated by their atrocities, and that the promise of the French revolution was to be found in its idealistic vision, not in its historical manifestation.

So Schiller, as first heir of the Kantian revolution and the founder of aesthetic education, is disdainful of the immediate and the unruly; against the undisciplined hordes he describes only a bourgeois revolution of acculturation—a revolution which eventually takes that other Revolution as its object. Even in Schiller's first book, On the Sublime, both world history and the French Revolution serve more as objects for sublime aesthetics than as socially dynamic forces.

Given that for Schiller the sublime serves its most noble purpose in the development and refinement of a whole human spirit, any sense of immediacy regarding political change strikes Schiller only as the disruption and disordering of contemplation. Concerned about the "moral anarchy" of his time, Schiller declares "we must have the power to reform by superior art this totality of our being," "all this in order
that future generations, in happy leisure, might consecrate themselves to the cure of their moral health, and develop the whole of human nature by their free culture" (239). Thus by the time of this fifth letter in the Aesthetic Education of Man, the distance between the ideal human spirit and its manifestations in existing political and historical situations is so vast as to be unbridgeable, even unimaginable, except by means of the Kantian sublime. For the accomplishment of the monumental Kantian third critique was to wrestle judgement away from its grounding in the senses and to locate judgement in an impossibly aesthetic and ideal place within the critical mind.

Kant began his project by imagining a criticism that could transcend the limitations of mere literary accomplishment. The pleasures of the sublime are not to be had from texts or autonomous art works themselves, but from critical reflection, from "the disposition of soul evoked by a particular representation engaging the attention of the reflective judgement" (321). Criticism, just like the sublime itself, is thus the bridge between the material and the ideal. Kant constructs the necessity for this new understanding of judgement in such a way that hands the determination of taste over to the discernment of the bourgeois individual who appears as the reincarnation of some Hellenic, golden age—only incarnated this time as a protective median between culture and crude masses:
There was an age and there were nations in which the active impulse towards a social life regulated by laws—what converts a people into a permanent community—grappled with the huge difficulties presenting by the trying problem of bringing freedom (and therefore equality also) into union with constraining force (more that of respect and dutiful submission than of fear). And such must have been the age, and such the nation, that first discovered the art of reciprocal communication of ideas between the more cultured and ruder sections of the community, and how to bridge the difference between the amplitude and refinement of the former and the natural simplicity of the latter—in this way hitting upon that mean between higher culture and modest worth of nature, that forms for taste also, as a sense common to all mankind, that true standard which no rules can supply.  

If no rules can supply the criterion of aesthetic taste which defines high culture, the unique sensitivity of the educated and discerning individual can. Kant sold the aristocracy on the idea of professional aestheticians; professionals who could be relied on to patrol the boundaries of culture against even cruder barbarians—the people. And while access to political and social privilege was no longer a matter of being a person of breeding (good birth) but of being able to represent oneself as a person of good taste (the result of education), the cost was the denial of representation to those without access to educational capital.

It would be a mistake to take this history of representation too seriously, as if the history of representation involved a recording of the people who were or were not included in the embrace of representation, rather than a history of the concept itself. The first might lead us to suppose that inclusion within representation the ideal goal
for all disenfranchised people: while the latter allows us to wonder about this conflation of all the dispossessed into a single category. It is interesting to note, however, how Enlightenment epistemology was capable of serving as revolution, however bourgeois, in certain social contexts—a social context in which the political and symbolic absolutism of the aristocracy was swept away by the swelling ranks of the bourgeois who democratized the very concept of representation itself. Yet the very concept of representation as invented by the bourgeoisie was necessarily exclusionary. The bourgeoisie cultural sphere operated on the basis of providing all men the chance (quite different, as Benjamin notes, from the right\textsuperscript{16}) to represent themselves, both political and discursively.

The public sphere became the logical place in which the bourgeoisie could use what they had the most of—educational capital—to suppress the proletariat. That the enlightenment created an underclass of those who lacked cultural and economic capital, that it made the lower classes invisible altogether as it colonized those at the furthest outreaches of its empire, was then, was the unfortunate but inevitable consequence of a Habermasian public sphere that understood representation as the fair reward for those who emerged at the top in discursive competition. The barricades of 1848 arose just as the chance and the enabling myth of proletarian representation collapsed; the actions of the proletariat from this point on were understood only as
disordered and vulgar expressions of unthinking action— their expressions had been effectively categorized as taking place somewhere in the newly invented "outside" of the public sphere.

The seemingly democratic notion of representation, then, depended upon the conflation of political representation and the ability of citizens to represent themselves rationally in the discursive field, a conflation that allowed the bourgeoisie to regulate public participation through the establishment of seemingly objective gatekeeping mechanisms such as rational and symbolic competence. The public sphere was not a place for free and rational discourse so much as a marketplace where the bourgeoisie traded educational capital for discursive representation in what Habermas himself calls an "institution regulated according to competence." Every marketplace requires regulation and the establishment of a value system; the determination of the worthiness of symbolic discourse to enter the "public" sphere fell to the regulatory practices of aesthetics and literary criticism.

Indeed, Kant's description of the sublime and of the critical act are almost indistinguishable from each other. What is the sublime, or judgement, after all, to Kant but the result of the "free play of the power of imagination and understanding" and "the awakening of feeling of a supersensible faculty within us." Aesthetic judgement (outside of death) became the only realizable sublimity; the
importance of criticism and its practitioners was firmly established. The sublime could only be housed within a powerful, individual intelligence: the Critic. The fine mind was the home of the sublime more than the forests, waterwalls or dazzling landscapes of Romantic art: "All we can say," writes the nonetheless prolific Kant, "is that the object is fit for the presentation of a sublimity which can be found in the mind, for nonsensible form can contain the sublime properly so-called" (83-84). Kant articulated the powerful Romantic subject in form of the single and singular mind, thus inventing man after the image of the Critic. The mark of Romantic individuality was, after all, the ability to transcend vulgar or material categories of judgement or taste; hence taste, individuality and a citizen's participation in public discourse all intersect under the Kantian sign: "If we admit the impulse to society as natural to man, and his fitness for it, and his propension toward it, i.e., sociability, as a requisite for man destined for society, and so as a property belonging to humanity, we cannot escape from regarding taste as a faculty for judging everything in respect of which we can communicate our feeling to all other men, as so as a means of furthering that which everyone's natural inclination desires" (139). Hence the secular priest of modernity, the critic, comes to have unique access and control of the only mechanism by which the material, historical, public world and the ideal might be bridged: clear-headed
readings become synonymous with judgement and individuality. The *Critique of Judgement*, then, might best be described as the ontotheological bible of this new secular faith in critical reading with Kant as its prophet (Kant did himself explicitly call for a "clerisy" within the university).  

Kant remains most famous for having made the claim for philosophy's status as a kind of meta-criticism—for his legitimation of the aesthetic judgement as an act that transcends the limitations of empiricism. In the *Critique of Judgement* the idea of using aesthetics to achieve a "meta" level of criticism makes an early and powerful appearance. In recognition of its importance, then, I quote the relevant passage from Kant at length, where he describes the principle that allows for an aesthetic judgement to be made:

> The principle can be no other than the following: As universal laws of nature have their ground in our understanding, which prescribes them to nature (although only according to the universal concept of it as nature), so particular empirical laws, in respect of what is in them left undetermined by these universal laws, must be considered in accordance with such a unity as they would have if understanding (although not our understanding) had furnished them to our cognitive faculties so as to make possible a system of experience according to the particular laws of nature. Not as if, in this way, such an understanding really had to be assumed (for it is only our reflective judgement to which this idea serves as a principle—for reflecting, not determining); but this faculty thus gives a law only to itself, and not to nature.  

The most obvious features of this passage—the insistence on the value of assuming an intentionality that is itself a
fiction in order to make an aesthetic judgment—does much to recollect the modern insistence of this aesthetic ideology: that the ideology of the text might be assumed, but precisely in so far as it is its most superficial fiction.

The fiction of ideological coherency— the assumption that ideology, as a narrative process, bridges gaps and contradictions in order to present itself as a coherent fiction of totality— is usually not understood as a result of the textualization of the social. Althusser is usually credited with the most famous articulation of ideology, as in *For Marx* where he writes, "In ideology men do indeed express, not the relation between them and their conditions of existence, but the ways they live the relation between them and their condition of existence. This presupposes both a real relation and an 'imaginary,' lived relation." Yet it is precisely this assumption that has inflated the market for critical power by understanding the task of criticism as the stripping away of ideology, or in its Kantian articulation, an acknowledgment of the necessary fictionality of purposefulness. In what might be understood as a kind of mainstream Marxism, critical authority has been widely regarded in modernity as the agent which restores the real, and hence restores to the people their own voice and rightful historical position—while erasing the tracks of its own theoretical intervention. Reading, as the constructed connection between a reader and a text, enacts a link between
aesthetics and political freedom. Yet as critique promises political emancipation by stripping away ideology in favor of the real and the true (while establishing a transcendental subject), it can do no more. For if critique promises political emancipation it is also the case that at the same time, political participation becomes contingent on reading.

Critique, then, while in some senses the property of all literate and educated citizens, was also the means by which those without the educational capital of the bourgeoisie might be excluded from political participation and "public" discourse. Indeed, with Kant, the very possibility of action in politics and history, even, became an explicit matter of performing correct readings. "The people" lost their own agency: it was Kantian aesthetics that enabled philosophers like Schwab to argue, for the first time, that the dramatic historical events of which they were originally so jealous were just the results of the people acting out the ideas of philosophers (Morgan 25). As Jurgen Habermas has noted, the Enlightenment was marked by the institution of the public sphere—that specifically discursive space in which persons might seek (or be excluded from) both political and discursive representation. In this sense, Kant might be regarded as the prophet of the final and complete institutionalization of the Enlightenment. While the early humanities achieved a "final secularization of humanism" by establishing humanism within various academies, places of
study, and the new civil institutions, the Kantian moment was marked by the institution of secular humanism as a civil religion with its own transcendental moment: the unification of the sublime with aesthetic judgment, and the establishment of the critic as its priest.\textsuperscript{26}

Yet this historical moment would hardly have been so thoroughly and successfully institutionalized if Kantian idealism had not been in a unique position to construct its influence both within and without the university. And it is the success of German idealism in the radical restructuring of the German university—a success which at the same time convinced German politicians of the importance of scholarship and cultural capital for a strong nation-state—that insured the longievity of the Kantian critical idea by guaranteeing that the precepts of reading would inhere within the very structure of the university. King Fredrich William III of Prussia, who gave Alexandar von Humboldt the nod to establish the modern university system after Napoleon’s resounding defeat of the Germans in Jena in 1806, gave the mandate: "the state must replace through intellectual power what has been lost in material power." \textsuperscript{27}

The effect of German idealism on the modern university system is impossible to overestimate. Recent studies have indicated that the secular threat that German Idealism represented to the traditional religious hierarchy had little to do with any orthodox fear of actual political revolution.
Rather, the religious orthodoxy was alarmed by the way idealisms seemed to be so easily effecting university reform. Indeed, the same short period of time saw the publication of Schelling's On University Studies (1803), Schleirmacher's Occasional Thoughts on the German Idea of a University (1808), Kant's The Conflict of the Faculties (1798), Johann Fichte's Ideas for the Internal Organization of the University (1807) and Wilhem von Humboldt's own On the Spirit and the Organizational Framework of Intellectual Institutions in Berlin (1809): each interested in how the restructuring of the university might be articulated into a Kantian universe. Yet these works were not ethereal treatises: The Conflict of the Faculties was itself resultant of a specific historical "crisis"—Kant's quarrel with the great prestige of the theological faculties in contrast to that of the "lower" philosophical faculties—and thus reflects an immediate institutional motive for the Kantian division of theory and practice that appears to leave metaphysics free of the ideological involvement and governmental intervention which contaminate the practices of the "higher" faculties.

There is much in these works to remind us of the extent to which the contemporary university is still very much understood on the model of this modern German academy: each of which betray a debt to the Kantian modern idea of reading as aesthetic and critique. The German idealists insisted on the
right and responsibilities of the nation's foremost thinkers to educate their own disciples (a model Bourdieu argues is dependent on the idea of the lector—or reader/teacher); in their plans for the university one finds the ordering of disciplines taking place around a very self-conscious attention to the nature of the thinking self—a thinking self that could only achieve its full moral dimensions by pursuing each of the liberal and scientific arts (I discuss the role that reading plays in the seeming division and unification of the disciplines in Chapter Three). But of most interest to the current day practitioner of cultural studies is the degree to which these thinkers troubled over the relationship between the University and the State. Alexander von Humboldt's own plan for the university included an elaborate working out of the precise relationships that the State, the academies, and the university would bear to each other. Again, though, Kant excels as the reader of the university; teasing out the means and methods by which governmental interests were served by the teachings of the "higher" (theological, law and medical) faculties of the university.

And as with any political move within an institutionalized system based on reading, the development of the Kantian university (the same thing as the Kantian reading of the university—thus establishing the university well within the paradoxes of critique) was of necessity based on a
challenge to the existing canon of established texts. Those who think the discussion of the "canon" is a hysterical product of the 1980's might be surprised to find in The Conflict of the Faculties this discussion of the politics of canon formation: ³²

All three higher faculties base the teachings which the government entrusts to them on writings, as is necessary for a people governed by learning, since otherwise there would be no fixed and universally accessible norm for their guidance. It is self-evident that such a text (or book) must comprise statues, that is, teachings that proceed from an act of choice on the part of an authority (that do not issue directly from reason); for otherwise it could not demand obedience simply, as something the government has sanctioned. And this holds true of the entire code of laws, even those of its teachings, to expounded to the public, which could also be derived from reason: the code takes no notice of their rational ground, but bases itself on the command of an external legislator. The code of laws is the canon.... (33)

Nowhere does Kant, otherwise so canny in his ability to aestheticize, claim that the canon is based on the intrinsic worth of its texts. The Conflict of the Faculties is his bid for power—and intrinsic worth is an argument available only to those who already own the university. ³³

So while Kant critiques the university, he is at the same time carving out institutional space for his own "lower faculties"—for the theoreticians interested in global explanation and "the free play of reason" (35)—"reason" here being defined as "the power to judge autonomously—that is freely" (43). Kant is famous for his strict division of
theory and practice; and indeed in The Conflict of The Faculties he attempts to free the lower faculty not only from practice but anything institutional, social or economic that might influence its free play. Tellingly, Kant cannot help at the same time attempting to sell this freedom-based authority to the authorities themselves. And thus Kant predicts

that it could well happen that the last would some day be the first (the lower faculty would be the higher)—not indeed, in authority, but in counseling the authority (the government). For the government may find in the freedom of the philosophy faculty, and the increased insight gained from this freedom, a better means for achieving its ends than its own absolute authority. (59)

Kant here markets the consul of the lower faculties as the means to a restoration of diversity to authority: the replacement of "absolute" authority with indirect authority. It is precisely Kant's description of such a non-coercive power that have caused many--Foucault among them--to point to Kant as a kind of "zero point" for modernity. 34

It is in this sense that Kant marks the moment in which critical authority recognizes and establishes the kind of privileges it enjoys today. Indeed, it might be impossible to escape the Kantian inscription of the modern critic within the discourse of aesthetics. Lukacs wrote that "the Critique of Judgement contains the seeds of a reply to every problem of structure in the sphere of aesthetics; aesthetics need thus only clarify and think through to the end that which is implicitly there to hand." 35 Perhaps aesthetics can do no
more. There have been earnest and famous attempts, of course, to escape from Kant's ruthless aestheticization of the social. I think especially of Paul de Man's painful attempt to argue for the existence of two separate varieties of the sublime—the "mathematical" and the "dynamic." The "dynamic sublime" was supposed to be marked by the disintegration of aesthetic ideology in the face of some inescapable, impossible-to-incorporate materiality (which de Man often located in language itself). Both theory and anti-theory, then, have enacted this legacy of the recovery of the real in the name of emancipation—the speaking of silences, the impossible promise that uses textuality to postpone a diversification of the cultural to some future that exists after the task of writing has been completed. This is the praise that De Man had for Kant: "The critical power of a transcendental philosophy undoes the very project of such a philosophy leaving us, certainly not with an ideology—for transcendental and ideological (metaphysical) principles are part of the same system—but with a materialism that Kant's posterity has not yet begun to face up to." 36 Is critical power the process by which material truth is extracted from a power-based ideology, or as Foucault would say, isn't "truth" already a condition established by power? 37 Yet an examination of the examples of this "dynamic sublime" reveals the imposition of aesthetics in the form of heliotropic metaphors as the "other" Kant (Freinkel 46-47); and even
should one grant de Man that this "other" Kant really did exist, it is hard to notice that this move, strategic though it seems, hardly relieves de Man of the burden of reading. If anything, de Man makes reading as the excavation of an extant material world supposedly buried beneath layers of ideology all the more urgent a mission. In a different expression of the same impulse, David Llyod hopes that there will remain within the Kantian system a build up of its repressed and excessive materiality; a materiality that he can only hope will erupt in the "anti-representational forms of barricades and guerilla warfare." 38

By removing the historical into the realm of aesthetic judgement, it might be said that Kant invented the idea of applying aesthetic judgments to make culture itself one more interpretable commodity; it might even be said that Kant, by inventing reading, invented the "social text." 39 Thus Derrida and Bourdieu have been able, in their own ways, to make Kantian aesthetics synonymous with our entire modern value economy.40 Thus Schiller made this Kantian aestheticization of the social manifest in the form of an aesthetic education that continues to inform critical theory today, and to present this particular representation of the social in the place and guise of social action. Even the politically committed Frankfurt School, almost a century and a half after Schiller, in the person of Herbert Marcuse, cites Schiller's Letters as the strongest possible connection of what Theodor Adorno
described as the potential of art to act as "a force of protest of the humane against the pressure of domineering institutions." 41 My third section, here, then, concerns itself with the persistence of this, reading's alibi.

Reading in the Twentieth Century and Beyond: Alibis

The order of the world, now, is read; and reading, under the sign of liberty, operates and enacts this very displacement from political revolution to cultural revolution, from speech to writing, from the masses to the bourgeoisie. Our understanding of culture is forever colored by this dynamic, for as Matthew Arnold put it, "culture is reading."42 Our notions of agency are also forever restricted to those models that are thinkable when the subject is first of all a reader. The assumption of a subject-position within the hegemony and the act of reading are identical. This single dynamic is as apparent in contemporary poststructuralism as it was in Kant. Here is a passage by Gayatri Spivak, describing the properties of a text: "for this is supposed to be the signal characteristic of writing. Any 'reader' can fill it with her 'consciousness.'" 43 Is she not also describing the signal characteristic of the subject-position? Like ideology, writing in Spivak's Derridean-inspired deconstructionism is present everywhere as a kind of pan-textualism, but only because of the omnipotent and diffused authority of a statement that is not empirically
connected to a single individual. Only, in other words, because writing is ideology; reading, interpellation. Again, the mark of identity, here in Derrida: "A written sign ...is...a mark which remains, which is not exhausted in the present of its inscription and which can give rise to an iteration both in the absence and beyond the presence of the empirically determined subject...." Picture here in place of the Derridean reader the Althusserian subject being hailed by an omnipotent verbal text, for there is no distance between the two: "There are individuals walking along. Somewhere (usually behind them) the hail rings out: 'Hey, you there!' One individual (nine times out of ten it is the right one) turns around believing/ suspecting/ knowing that it is for him...."

The interests of the bourgeoisie lay entirely within this chain of value-inscription which insures a comfortable subject-position, and often, even the illusion of Subjectivity or Agency. So speech, as the other of writing (it is a shame that Derrida ignored the reception of writing in the world: reading), must always be deferred. To speak is to end displacement and postponement, and thus sacrifice the modern state, for the bourgeois world always speaks of the traces of presence, but would vanish if that presence were even enacted. Speech, in short, is the disordered revolution of the immediate, and stands in stark contrast to the gentlemanly politics of the written word. Inscribed as the Other to
bourgeois politics, speech becomes valorized for its inaccessibility. The cost—the need to depict contemporary culture under siege and the bourgeois man incomplete—is well recovered by re-enforces the wholeness of the state-entity. Schiller again:

Why could the individual Greek be qualified as the type of his time? and why can no modern dare offer himself as such? It was culture itself that gave these wounds to modern humanity....an enlarged experience and a more distinct thinking necessitated a sharper separation of the sciences, while...the complicated machinery of states necessitated a stricter sundering of ranks and occupations. 46

Thus the responsibility for history comes to be placed on the proletariat, the unmediated, the oppressed, the simple—all representative men, and in this age of valorizing and consequently legitimizing female oppression, increasingly these representative men are women. The alibi of the bourgeois liberal is the claim to clear the text away long enough for these hidden voices to be revealed; the accomplishment of the bourgeoisie is the narrativization of the burden of speech to its remote others.

This inherited duty of the critic to prepare for the articulation of silence is hardly unfamiliar to us today. In her article "Can the Subaltern Speak?" Gayatri Spivak criticizes Foucault's assertion in discussion with Giles Deleuze, "Intellectuals and Power," that the goal of theory is to reach a point from which the oppressed may speak for themselves. 47 Spivak does an outstanding job of displaying
how such a strategy fails to account for its own institutionalization in material power, and how it serves to erase post-colonial positions of marginality in favor of oppressed groups living in "reality," which comes to be the same thing as the prisons and asylums of the West. Indeed, no other single claim than the claim of bringing forth speech from silence does so much to both the valorize and naturalize the oppressed as well as maintain the categories of logocentrism which create that oppression as a bourgeois occupation. 48 And before logocentrism could exist, there had to be a technology of reading.49 Given this, I would like to examine for this same dynamic a less unguarded remark of Foucault's that is nonetheless problematic (as well shall see, given the luxury of a considered response, Foucault laces his description of the oppressed voice with various disclaimers).

In his Preface to Serge Livrozet's *De la prison à la revolte: essai-termoignage*—a testimonial of a prisoner-activist, a book with the strongest claim to the privilege of first person speech—Foucault writes:

A ceux-ci (les condamnes), nous posons une seule condition: qu'ils racontent leur vie. *Il faut* qu'ils racontent leur vie. Règle rigoureuse sous son allure de tolérance. Ce qui imposé par cette règle?50
Foucault is perfectly aware here that the valorization of the convicts' personal experience is a most horrible requirement, one which can only be made with the bourgeois alibi of tolerance towards diverse experiences and authentic, "free" speech. Yet while Foucault stresses that Livroz's thought is not totally representative of that of all prisoners even if it is seen as playing that role, he nonetheless concludes by crediting Livroz with expressing "a philosophy of the people." What Foucault does here is invent Livroz as an organic intellectual in the Gramscian fashion—an intellectual who even while taking advantage of the privileges of the intellectual subject position, remains representative of his social class. By inadvertently establishing Livroz as complete representative of his class, Foucault deprives him of the use of "writing"—he deprives him of the advantages of Foucault's invisible role as theorist—and imposes on Livroz the role of the activist. Livroz can do nothing else than give direct testimony as to his experience. This colonization of experience is familiar, certainly, to anyone who has attended a conference eager to prove it political correctness through its interest in Third World or women participants—who are surprised to find themselves playing "the Real" to the first world "Symbolic." The modern culture of logocentrism is at action—working to help the bourgeois retain their distinction.
What is perhaps most peculiar about the culture of logocentrism is that this work of bourgeois ideology—the policing of the constant slippage between speech and writing—should come to be associated with freedoms both enormous and personal. When Catherine Clement writes of Lacan that "He was not only a master of the truth but also, in a more mundane sense, a scrivener, a scribe, a clerk, a witness, that is to the talking of his patient's words," I am tempted to cross out the "not only" and the "but also." Lacan was a master of truth because he wrote down the speech of his patients, punctuated it, noted the slippages that were apparent only as writing. cluesThus Lacan invents himself through the speech of paranoid patients, writing the speech by making it a text—no longer a simple immediate representation of the madness itself, but rich with clues and traces that can be read. I quote Derrida on the second characteristic of writing in the general sense:

By the same token, a written sign carries with it a force of breaking with its context, that is, the set of presences which organize the moment of its inscription. This force of rupture is due to the spacing which constitutes the written sign: the spacing which separates it from other elements of the internal contextual chain...but also from all forms of a present referent that is objective or subjective. This spacing is not the simple negativity of a lack, but the emergence of a mark.

The mark that emerges from this writing is more the Subject Lacan than patient, who by definition remains mad until she too might use her speech as writing, and thus invent herself.
This powerful and seemingly positive action, the break with context, would seem an act of freedom. It is an act of freedom which simply invents more subjection, however—an act of freedom that releases demands satisfied only through further readings and further interpellations. Lacan writes of his analysis: "I have succeeded in doing something that people would like to be able to do as readily in the ordinary course of business: with supply I have created demand." In fact, Lacan was merely describing what people in business already do, what bourgeois ideology does, and what the literary theorist, blinded by the excitement that "breaking with the context" entails, would like to do: establish a continuum of value and identity arranged in narrative space; and then proclaim an escape from this chain to an island of the ideologically-free Real.

Such moves always involve on some level a confusion of a sign and its signifier, and certainly the "written sign" as it appears as marks on a page is especially vulnerable to such a mistake. For the mark, in its reproducability, would seem to stand for a kind of free access. Certainly, at least since the proliferation of newspapers and journals during the era of the French Revolution, the availability of the written word has added an air of democracy to the act of writing. Yet this is more because of a confusion of the sign and signifier, more a result of the hegemonic power that Benedict Anderson has labelled "print capitalism," than of actual democracy at work.
A postmodern analogy might be made to the interesting argument that has surfaced lately about the wide-spread use of hand held video cameras. As the argument goes, the use that network news shows have made of video tapes filmed by amateurs who happen to find themselves on a disaster sight with camera in hand represents a kind of democratization of the news media. Yet what results is the further interpellation of the audience into the existing hegemonic structure—a forging of a new link of complicity.

The confusion about the potential for a democracy of reading and writing based on the unique properties of the sign is widespread. Consider the following statement by Paul Ricouer, who sees textualizing the social as a promising way of creating a social space that escapes hegemonic control:

Is it not a fundamental trait of the great works of culture to overcome the conditions of their social production, in the same way as a text develops new references and constitutes new 'worlds'? ...this way of overcoming one's own conditions of production is key to a puzzling problem raised by Marxism: concerning the status of the 'superstructures.' The autonomy of superstructures as regards their relation to their own infrastructures has its paradigm in the non-ostensive references of a text.

Ricouer has a flawless understanding of Althusser's one provision for escaping from the infrastructure: if the cultural superstructure has "relative autonomy" to the economic base, that play in the system allows for a possibility for escaping the conditions of social production. And Ricouer is also correct that often such
conceptions of relative autonomy are framed as if social conditions were text. Yet Ricouer accepts the various presuppositions of understanding the social as if it were a text, without ever questioning the status of that assumption as a metaphor.

Metaphor, at least metaphor after Derrida, is most helpful in establishing a continualism between elements with no such natural relation, and hence helps constitute traditional value systems—metaphor, after all is the basic unit of bourgeois self-identity. Indeed, Ricouer's most suspicious assumption: that textuality can create its own escape from "real" social conditions just as—or perhaps even because—great authors transcend the conditions of their times, follows this pattern. Ricouer himself spins out the exclusionary consequences of these assumptions:

...like a text, human action is an open work, the meaning of which is "in suspense." ...All significant events and deeds are, in this way, opened to this kind of practical interpretation through present praxis. Human action, too, is opened to anybody who can read. (Ricouer's emphasis) (208)

If the text that one reads is the social text, availability becomes a matter of literal exclusion. E.D. Hirsch has argued in Cultural Literacy the necessity of possessing a certain knowledge of high culture in order to read high culture. Ricouer has re-inscribed this privilege of cultural capital, and in the process he has failed to account for a model of resistance that has much to do with anything except a
bourgeois, individual achievement. In short, Ricouer has failed to account for how this theoretical gesture serves to consolidate his own subject, and reifies the Analyst in order to make the institution invisible.

Thus as we teach cultural studies we continue to grade and evaluate students, making our own contribution to the process by which the appropriately educated gain positions in professional schools, civil service, and business. We continue to certify their right to participate in the public sphere as literate citizens. And as we write and pursue our own scholarship in cultural studies, we continue to enjoy the protection of the university system. Like the old British Army system, which assumed that those with the most wealth would have the greatest investment in defending the nation; our continued reliance and demonstrations of cultural literacy (whether Milton or Derrida) has earned us high rank within the public sphere. We demonstrate our investment, and are left alone by way of thanks. And, obediently, we forget the cost of that protection: for the good of our own self esteem we forget our place.

Reading, as the textual search for ideal, aesthetic liberation, enables the negotiation of will, authority and reason that allows for the continual reinvention of critical power. We have no reason to believe cultural studies exempt from this dynamic. Cary Nelson has written that "if we may have cultural studies so long as we do not criticize the
government in our classrooms, we should reject it. Cultural studies does not need to render unto Caesar what is Caesar's."

Our task now, then, it seems, is to learn to make cultural studies dangerous even though, perhaps even precisely because, it has been Caesar's all along. 63
NOTES


2. This assumption itself—that cultural studies as established in Britain is equivalent to theory as practiced in the states—is an odd, but widely held one. Richard Bratlingher makes an argument for their equivalence in Crusoe's Footsteps: Cultural Studies in Britain and America. New York: Routledge, 1990. Vincent Leitch, on the other hand, has made a strong case for considering the differences between poststructuralist theory and what he calls "culturalism." For Leitch, the radicality of poststructuralism is compromised by its return to the study-of-culture interests of the Birmingham school. Vincent B. Leitch, "Birmingham Cultural Studies: Popular Arts. Poststructuralism, Radical Critique," Journal of the Midwestern Modern Language Association 24:1 (Spring 1991): 74-86. Those who support tradition of the Birmingham school, on the contrary, see poststructuralism as the dangerous erasure of cultural studies' original debt and commitment to Marxism. Angela McRobbie articulates this position in "New Times in Cultural Studies," New Formations 13 (Spring 1991): 1-18.


6. Samuel Weber's definition of institution: "...the notion of institution...is one in which instituted organization and instituting process are joined in the ambivalent relation of every determinate structure to that which it excludes, and yet which, qua excluded, allowed that structure to set itself apart." Institution and Interpretation (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987): xv.


9. Les mots et les chose, 255.


12. For Schwab, this was, of course, a matter of national pride. He continues, "Without looking into the causes of this characteristic by which we distinguish ourselves from other nations, and without deciding whether it redounds to our advantage or disadvantage, I will only remark, that that was also the case for the Greeks." Johann Christoph Schwab, in Preisschriften über die Frage, 1796. Quoted and translated in Morgan, p. 25. For a description of the German reaction to the French Revolution, see T.C.W. Blanning, The French Revolution in Germany: Occupation and Resistance in the Rhineland 1792-1802 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983).

13. Kant declared "this revolution has aroused in the hearts and desires of all spectators who are not themselves caught up in it a sympathy which borders almost on enthusiasm, although the very utterance of this sympathy was fraught with danger. It cannot therefore have been caused by anything other than a moral disposition within the human race." Immanuel Kant, The Conflict of the Faculties Mary J. Gregor, trans (1798; New York: Araxis Books, 1979): 153.


19. Death, for us on this side, absolutely crumbles the distinction between matter and form—the distinction without which any substitutuion, any comparison, in short, any judgement is unthinkable. The assumption which grounds formalization will be that we know what matter is, and we know what it means to leave it behind. The burden of Kant's Third Critique will be to secure this assumption. And this is also the burden of mourning." Lisa Freinkel, "The Analogy of Form: Mourning and Kant's Third Critique," Qui Parle 4:2 (Spring 1991): 43-74; 51.


23. A mainstream Marxism which serves, however, only to re-enforce the class system. Consider I.A. Richard's remark, "...it is not true that criticism is a luxury trade. The rearguard of

24. See R.R. Bolgar for an account of how the unique demands of the bourgeoisie changed how the humanities were taught in the 18th and 19th centuries. "From Humanism to the Humanities," Twentieth Century Studies 9 (1973): 8-21.

25. Jurgen Habermas' notion of the "public sphere" is especially well suited to explaining the association between Enlightenment critique and the bourgeoisie practice of criticism. Peter Uwe Hohendahl has worked out the connection in The Institution of Criticism (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1982) especially 52-56; 242-280. For discussion of the "public sphere," see Habermas, The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into A Category of Bourgeois Society, trans. Thomas Burger (Cambridge: MIT University Press, 1984) and the discussion of the same in the introduction of this manuscript.

26. Anthony Grafton and Lisa Jardine have described "the final secularization" of the humanities as the point in which a community, in response to some crisis (usually industrial or national decline or injury), successfully markets the "profitability" of the humanities. They locate this moment in the mid-sixteenth century, when Petrus Ramus reformed the humanities by institutionalizing standardized texts, pedantic methodologies, and by deliberately talking about education as a means to social position rather than preparation for a life of scholarship. Grafton and Jardine thus understand the institutionalization of humanism as the humanities to mark the beginning of humanism's corruption, where its lofty goals for the generalized, universal knowledge of mankind are gradually replaced by minute studies of textual excerpts. On the contrary, I argue that humanism, as the discourse that articulates the very idea of the public sphere, has never existed outside of institutionalization. Indeed, the rhetoric of humanism is necessary to make public institutions thinkable. Lisa Jardine and Anthony Grafton, From Humanism to the Humanities: Education and the Liberal Arts in 15th and 16th Century Europe (London: Duckworth, 1986): esp. 168.


31. English translations of his plan are hard to come by; a French edition exists in Ferry, Pesron, and Renault, eds., *Philosophies de l'université*.

32. Roger Shattuck, author of the pamphlet, "Perplexing Dreams: Is There a Core Tradition in the Humanities?" had this to say about canon debates in 1989: "In forty years of working in publishing and teaching, I've never heard the word canon except in theology, and then only describe the authority of books on the Bible or canon law. The word has been introduced in the past ten years by those who consider themselves the enemies of a traditional curriculum. It is a term of opprobrium, suggesting something imposed, authoritative, reactionary." See "Who Needs The Great Works: A Debate of the Canon, Core Curricula, and Culture," *Harper's Magazine* Vol. 279 No. 1672 (September 1989): 49.

33. As another reminder of the necessity of the canon debate, to those who argue either liberalism or interpretation, I quote Sainte-Beuve, writing approximately a century and a half ago: "I believe that the temple of taste is to be rebuilt; but its reconstruction is merely a matter of enlargement, so that it may become the home of all noble human beings, or all who permanently increased the sum of the mind's delights and possession.... Homer, as always and everywhere, should be first, likest a god; but behind him, like the procession of the three wise kings of the East, would be seen the three great poets, the three Homers, so long ignored by us, who wrote epics for the use of the old people of Asia, the poets Valmiki, Vyas of the Hindoos, and Firdousi of the Persians: in the domain of taste it is well to know that such men exist, and not to divide the human race. Saint-Beuve, Charles Augustin, "What is a Classic?" *Literary and Philosophical Essays, The Harvard Classics* Vol 23., Ed. Charles W. Eliot, (1837 (?)); New York: P.F. Collier and Son, 1910).

34. See the beginning of Chapter Two for a more extensive discussion of Kant's relationship to modernity.


37. It's not a question of emancipating truth from every system of power—which would be a chimera, because truth is already itself a power—but of detaching the power of truth from the forms of hegemony (social, economic, and cultural) within which it operates at the present time." Michel Foucault, "The Political Function of the Intellectual," Radical Philosophy 17 (1977): 12-14.


39. Of course those who find the "social text" an unproblematic way of understanding the relations between culture and politics praise this as one of Kant's most political efficacious dynamics. Yet even those critics eventually have to apologize for Kant's rejection of democracy in favor of a rather rigid republicanism. One such thinker is Dick Howard, Politics of Critique (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1988).


46. *Aesthetic Education*, 234.


48. Dominick La Capra throws an amusing wrench into the way reading suggests way of recovering silenced voices: "Could a different approach to reading make room for the excluded perspective of the cat and thereby attenuate the species imperialism and methodological scapegoating of the 'other' that even the most generous and latitudianarian of humanistic or anthropological perspectives seem to entail? ... The cat might even be said to have...a glance that neither fully transcends language nor remains totally within its problematic borders." *Soundings in Critical Theory* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1989): 68, 89.

49. One does not ordinarily think of Althusser and logocentrism at once, however, in *Reading Capital*, Althusser mas to my mind a most persuasive connection between logocentrism and its actual practice in reading and writing--the actual practice abour Derrida is himself so often silent about. He writes, "It is no accident that when we turn the thin sheet of theory of expression and that we discover this beneath the theory expressive totality (in which each part is pars totalis, immediately expressing the whole that it inhabits in person) to be a theory which, in Hegel, for the last time and on the terrain of history itself, assembled all the complementary religious myths of the voice (the Logos) speaking in the sequences of discourse, in order to discover in it (if they are pure) the speech of Truth which inhabits each of its Words in person. Need I add that once we have broken with the religious complicity between Logos and Being; between the Great Book that was, in its very beginning the word, and the discourse of the knowlege of this world; between essence of things and its reading;--once we have broken those tacit pacts in which the men of a still fragile era secured themselves with magical alliances against the precariousness of history and the trembling of their own daring--need I add that, once we have broken these ties, a new conceptio of discourse at last becomes possible?" Louis Althusser, *Reading Capital*, Ben Brester, trans. (1968; London, Verso, 1979): 17.

51. Je ne veux pas dire qu’il 'représente' ce que pensent les détenus dans leur totalité ou même forçément dans leur majorité. Je dis qu’il est un élément de cette lutte, qu’il est né d’elle, qu’il y jouera un rôle. Il est expression individuelle et forte d’une certaine expérience et d’une certaine pensée populaires de la loi et de l'illegalité. Une philosophie du peuple." "Préface," 14.

52. I am grateful to an unpublished paper by Horace Newsum for this point, by the title of "Marxism and the Petty-bourgeoisie: The 1983 Summer Institute on Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture." He writes: "The Eurocentrism which permeated the five week-long activities revealed itself when this point arose in casual conversation: 'Third World Marxists were regarded as activists and not theorists--and this was a theoretical event.' However, one only would need to spend a day at the University of Dar es Salaam to find out how important Marxist theory is to Tanzanian intellectuals and this is probably the case in erudite communities throughout the Third World. As one example, one might recall that in the 1950's and the 1960's Kwame Nkrumah's ideological Institute problematized Marxist theories and the Ghanian predicament" (2).


54. Here are the first three of Lacan's six rules for the analytic contract: "(1) All the power in therapy belongs to speech. (2) Rules are not much help in directing the subject towards full speech or coherent discourse. He should be left free to find his own way. (3) This freedom is what he finds most difficult to tolerate." Jacques Lacan, Écrits: A Selection, trans. Alan Sheridan, (New York: Norton, 1977): 275.


56. Écrits, 254.


60. "...the Ideological State Apparatuses are multiple, distinct, 'relatively autonomous' and capable of providing an objective field to contradictions which express, in forms which may be limited or extreme, the effects of the clashes between the capitalist class struggle and the proletarian class struggle, as well as their subordinate forms." Louis Althusser, "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses," Lenin and Philosophy, trans. Ben Brewster, (1970; New York and London: Monthly Review Press of New Left Books, 1971): 149.


62. Foucault writes that the achievement of Kant's Enlightenment was "defined by a modification of the pre-existing relation linking will, authority and the use of reason." Michel Foucault, "What is Enlightenment?" The Foucault Reader, Paul Rabinow, ed. (New York: Pantheon, 1984): 32-50; 35.

CHAPTER II
THE DISCIPLINARY ANATOMY OF CRITICAL AUTONOMY:
BOOKS BODIES NAZIS

I. Texts and Persons

The peculiar ontology of the social text--its existence both as discourse and as regulator of lived reality--is less an epistemological break with previous thought than it is a symptom of modernity's division of representational practices into disciplines. One way of understanding the peculiar manner in which modern critical thought encourages this opposition between the "theoretical" and the "anti-theoretical" would be to return to the eighteenth century, and trace there the escalating tension between the aggressive empiricisms (Hume, perhaps Compte) and the later, Kantian inspired idealisms found in the aesthetic interests of Schiller or in the ontotheological critical practice of Fichte. Or given that often contemporary theorists are accused of an interest in methodology that is considered unseemly in the humanities, we could just as easily return to the nineteenth century's fascinating oppositions of science and the humanities, starting with a reading of Arnold's "Literature and Science," and then advancing to the middle
twentieth century to analyze the energetic exchanges between the popular physicist C.P. Snow and the critic F.R. Leavis, on the relative merits of their chosen disciplines.

Yet such a history of ideas poses its own methodological difficulty. The assertions of the autonomy of art and persons and the development of scientific empiricisms hardly make their first appearance in the eighteenth century, and it is not necessarily very revealing to speculate about their prospective "zero points." Nothing, though, is as peculiar as their curious symbiotic relationship as it emerges in post-Enlightenment aesthetic and critical thought—a symbiotic relationship whose symptoms Terry Eagleton identified when he noted the eighteenth century critical habit of describing art not only as autonomous, but as a kind of subject.¹ The humanist might be tempted to point to this subject-like autonomy in order to assert the absolute difference between the sciences and humanities, the latter serving as a reflection on autonomy as a unique and irreducibly human quality. Yet I would argue that the constitution of this subject is not altogether much different from the constitution of the clinical subject as has been recently described by Foucault and others, and that both are motivated by the pressures and ambitions of a bourgeois culture that necessarily invents then privileges notions of autonomy. Post-Cartesian thought is not peculiar for constructing the body and the human subject in a similar fashion, but for
obscurring the nature of the similiarity in order to fashion and valorize a transcendental bourgeois identity for the latter. The much appropriated ancient demand "know thyself" no longer served as it did in the 17th Century—as an emblem for the medical study of gross human anatomy, and as a grim reminder of human mortality—but became instead the mark of the cultural promise that aesthetics held for the ambitious bourgeoisie. Bourgeois aesthetics was able to both invent the autonomous human agent necessary to capitalism as well as provide a certificate of the cultivation which served as the justification for the purchase of political power. It will be my argument that it is this traditional aesthetic autonomy that contemporary literary studies, in its encouragement of the critical reading of valued texts, is still largely concerned to maintain.

My argument extends Eagleton's understanding of the political ramifications of an alliance between the category of the aesthetic and the political milieu. Eagleton describes the relationship in interestingly weak terms:

My argument, broadly speaking, is that the category of the aesthetic assumes the importance it does in modern Europe because speaking of art it speaks of these other matters too [freedom and legality, spontaneity and necessity, self-determination, autonomy, particularity and universality], which are at the heart of the middle class's struggle for political hegemony. The relationship between the middle class's struggle for political hegemony and the discourses of aesthetic criticism
do more than speak of each other (the privilege of speech being itself a suspicious category), but are responsible for one another's invention and continued health. In short, each discourse makes it possible to speak the other, and each insures the seemingly autonomous character of the other—that character being the most impressive illusion of a liberal bourgeois politics. It is this dynamic, as it is maintained through the disciplined process of critical reading, that I will explore.

In *Les mots et les choses* Foucault chooses Kant to represent the most privileged moment of modernity, the pivotal point in the development of enlightened critical thought. He describes Kant's works as those that mark for the first time "the retreat of cognition and of knowledge out of the space of recognition." Retreats are not disappearances, and Foucault hardly means to suggest that modernity brought about an end to empiricism's knowable world. Rather, modernity for Foucault is characterized by a series of strange displacements which do not deny empirical reality, but obscure its seemingly previous, visible and omnipresent character in a more particular yet mystified site (frequently the body, often a text)—thus re-inventing in one gesture both empiricism and the bourgeois individual (that particular historical creation for whom individuality and agency were one) who might at first have appeared to be empiricism's opposite. Thus the age of modern criticism becomes characterized by the need for an
exacting critical science (to trace the displacements)—the modern critical paradigm as we have inherited it—and the reification of autonomy in art and in persons.

The notion of autonomous enclosures that define either the beginning or end of a language-free space is of course problematic in the study of either bodies or books. Post-Enlightenment science and literary studies thus both serve as negative examples of one of those concise Derridean maxims: "There is no outside the text." For it is only through the displacement of some invented presence to the "outside" that the boundaries of a text or body are drawn, and it is this process that in turn naturalizes the idea of presence. Consider the displacement Foucault describes as marking the development of modern medicine. He writes:

Not all the powers of a visionary space through which doctors and patients, physiologists and practitioners communicated...have disappeared; it is rather, as if they had been displaced, enclosed within the singularity of the patient, in that region of "subjective symptoms" that --for the doctor--defines not the mode of knowledge, but the world of objects to be known.

Although such empiricism as that evident in medical science would seem to objectify the body, it is through this objectification that the presence of a darker, lingering identity deep within but not of the body--the presence of a bourgeois personality sure of its uniqueness and power--is invented. Critical empiricism and idealistic humanism are thus not the oppositional categories that bourgeois philosophy
often constructs them to be, nor do the humanities and sciences operate or promote vastly different social technologies. And it is for this reason that within the discipline of literary studies, we might be suspicious of the modern insistence on the importance of reading in this particular critical tradition—enclosing as it does within the singularity of the text the world of objects to be known, reified, and pursued.

For what better technology than critical reading to define the boundaries of the autonomous text from its other—the pragmatic, ideologically contaminated context (the long ignored social text) which it claims to transcend and consequently legitimizes? And what better way to elevate the critical task? For the "retreat of knowledge and cognition out of the space of representation" hardly denies the possibility of criticism accounting for the knowledge it seems to locate beyond its methodological reach—rather it simply raises the stakes of the pursuit. What has changed with modernity then, according to this particular narrative (whose emergence Foucault chronicles), is not the concurrent invention of critical science and bourgeois notions of autonomy, but the introduction of ideology—an obscurification of lived, real and symbolic relations—a threat to autonomy which only criticism can mitigate through its pain-staking sorting out of signifiers and signifieds, as if the real were existent and simply ideologically obscured by a sloppy use of
language. Many Enlightenment thinkers attributed this supposedly new obscurification of reality to the increasing political power and influence of the church, leading many contemporary scholars to understand the emergence of ideology as a direct result of critical humanism's noble opposition to "priestly deceit." The critical task in such a formulation is not necessarily a sad one, simply intent on bemoaning the losses or confusion attributed to modernity. On the contrary, education remains over-valued as a critical corrective to rather than cause of mystifications, and criticism assumes (although in a definitively secular way) the ontotheological status of the religious thought it would replace. Using freedom from ideology as a kind of alibi, criticism, both past and present, can offer its project as the joyous enterprise of liberating entire peoples. Criticism at once invents oppression and a means of liberation. For under such a narrative the restoration of the autonomy of a text becomes the same thing as the restoration of the possibility of human autonomy, and the two become closest when that individual is reading. Schlegel writes in On Incomprehensibility (1800), a treatise interestingly enough defending his own works against charges of inaccessibility, of the grand democratic possibilities that are presented by the critical imperative, democratic possibilities that

(I note) with sincere pleasure the progress of our country—not to speak of our age! The same age in which we too have the honour to live; the age that, to wrap it all up in a
Schlegel's equation of criticism with the act of reading suggests some of the limitations placed on these masses of new readers—or rather some of the limitations placed on a citizen when her role is defined as that of a reader. For as long as criticism and reading are the same thing, a critique of reading is impossible. Or, in other words, what would it mean in Schlegel's term to criticize the "age itself?"

That this German Enlightenment of Kant's milieu and Schlegel's inheritance should be referred to variously as the age of "criticism," "philosophy," "pedagogy," and "the century of newspapers" (not to mention "enlightenment")—suggests immediately the confusion between the supposed goals of this kind of criticism (democratic freedom) and its specifically capitalistic technologies (the invention of a market for various institutional products—education, newspapers and criticism, for instance). This confusion between reading and freedom remains in the contemporary critical imperative and often it too markets criticism as a corrective to that which enslaves individuals—a program almost invariably couched in liberal rhetoric. Robert Scholes, for instance, has been most vocal about promoting what he calls a pedagogy of textual power: the ways in which
teacher can help students to recognize the power of texts over them and assist the same students in obtaining a measure of control over textual processes, a share of textual power for themselves. In working through the stages of reading, interpretation and criticism, we move from a submission to textual authority in reading through a sharing of power in interpretation, toward an assertion of power through opposition in criticism.  

Thus reading—or in Scholes’ term, the strongest form of reading, criticism—would seem to offer students a kind of literal power over their worlds. Scholes is quite explicit on this point, and he seeks among other things to save his students from the textual power of advertising by providing them with semiotics. But the critique of advertising hardly delivers one from capitalism, and the "oppositional" discussion of textuality hardly liberates one from a world nonetheless continually inscribed through the privileging of decoding as liberation.

Indeed, the enthusiasm of the critical project for casting its justification within a narrative that seeks to recover a world where representation, cognition, and knowledge amount to the same thing is sufficient cause to suspect that such critical empiricism does not correct the ravages of ideology, but invents it. For enlightenment is only possible as an idea when held in contrast to an unenlightened connection to necessity. Derrida asks of Kant, then

Is it merely an accident of construction, a chance of composition that the whole Kantian theory of mimesis is set forth between these two remarks on salary...the definition of free
Indeed, this contrast of an ever expanding market-oriented mercenary art to the redemptive and emancipatory virtues of autonomous high art deserving of critical reflection marks much of philosophy of the age (Scholes, despite his liberal interest in paying lip service to entire ranges of texts unsurprisingly spends most of Textual Power performing a close reading of Hemingway). And here we have one of the great ironies of modern critical thought: in order to justify the critical mission, it is necessary to posit a deplorable gap between cognition, representation and knowledge (hence the creation of ideology as an idea). In order to maintain the autonomy of the texts, critical thought must deplore those texts that might seem to retain a direct relationship between representation and represented (there are, of course, no such texts—they too must be invented, and are often then displaced as "popular culture"). In other words, it is the critical act of reading that liberates insights from valuable texts—an act which only retains its value at the cost of a corresponding disgust for "invaluable" texts. Bourdieu comments on "disgust" as the equivalent to the Kantian notion of "pure" taste:

Disgust is the paradoxical experience of enjoyment extorted by violence, an enjoyment which arouses horror. This horror, unknown to those who surrender to sensation, results
fundamentally from removal of the distance, in which freedom is asserted, between the representation and the thing represented, in short, from alienation, the loss of the subject in the object, immediate submission to the immediate present under the enslaving violence of the "agreeable." 13

As important as it is to recognize the danger posed by the long half-life of self-serving critical distinctions drawn between a high and low culture, even these recognitions tend to take on face value the notion that modern critical practice’s motive is to dispell and demystify ideology—the danger of which is the preservation of criticism’s emancipatory task whether in negative or positive formulation. 14

In Bourdieu’s statement the distance between the thing represented and representation is described both as the space of freedom and as the definition of alienation—a comparison which only makes sense if criticism is understood as enacting or claiming to enact a kind of freedom from alienation. The danger of continuing to understand the critical task as such is that it focuses on the empirical tasks of criticism while overlooking the responsibility of the empirical for inventing autonomous bodies and consciousnesses of all types—autonomies that remain repressed in modern critical thought. Schlegel, for one, felt the function of poetical criticism to be not the recovery of objectivity in the modern world, but instead the uncovering of strands of a "central intellectual perspective" in the text. Not surprisingly, this central intellectual perspective often begins to behave like an individual and an
author—and as an autonomy, begins to take precedence over the purely social or materialistic. Schlegal writes, again compulsively classifying his age, this time marked by various Tendencies:

The French Revolution, Fichte's philosophy, and Goethe's Meister are the greatest tendencies of the age. Whoever is offended by this juxaposition, whoever cannot take any revolution seriously that isn't noisy and materialistic, hasn't yet yet acheived a lofty, broad perspective on the history of mankind. Even our shabby histories of civilization, which usually resemble a collection of variants accompanied by a running commentary for which the original classical text has been lost; even there many a little book, almost unnoticed by the noisy rabble at the time, plays a greater role than anything they did.

In this particular description, textual influence and personal agency are conflated—thus the critical act arranges the text around a non-human autonomous agency, thus enacting more than a simple empirical desire for ideologically free space.

Surprisingly, there seems to be an increasing recognition of how the critical act, wielding narrative, might be used to invent agency and subjectivity on the part of some contemporary historians who nonetheless define themselves as vehemently anti-theory. Consider the usefulness of the insight that narrative constructed at the service of criticism allows for the construction of bourgeois agency to Simon Schama, the conservative historian-author of Citizens: A Chronicle of the French Revolution—a revisionist history of the revolution that seeks to simultaneously mitigate the revolutionary character of that event (he argues that the
upper classes of Louis XVI's society created a "culture of citizenship" that was the cause rather than the product of the revolution) and replace the Marxist study of economic structure and classist institutions with the study of the Great Men whose personal initiative, he argues, made it all possible. 17

He finds his justification in an article in History and Theory by David Carr, which argues, according to Schama, that "As artificial as written narratives might be, they often correspond to ways in which historical actors construct events."18 Thus he arrives at a startling way of justifying his romantic narrative about great historical actors—an assertion made all the more alarming by its resemblance to remarks issuing from the Marxist tradition he criticizes so sharply. He writes, "it is not in the least fortuitous that the creation of the modern political world coincided precisely with the birth of the modern novel" (6). What is amazing is that Schama should be so interested in re-inscribing these conditions of the modern political world as a stage for the games of great men acting as perfect and all powerful historical agents—although it is hard to deny that he has found the appropriate means of doing so. This strategy, though, is not particular to conservatives nostalgic for an aristocracy. Indeed, the strategy abounds in liberal historians with a more or less direct relationship to the Annales school of historiography and an interest in mentalités.19 Carlo Ginzberg, in his much praised The Cheese
and the Worms: The Cosmos of a Sixteenth Century Miller, is clearly interested in the liberal possibilities when an almost identical project is used to empower historical individuals denied agency by a trickle-down theory of subjectivity. He states unproblematically, "To extend the historic concept of 'individual' in the direction of the lower classes is a worthwhile objective."  

It is hardly coincidental that Ginzberg proceeds to do so through a characterization of the peasant Menocchio as a reader.

Perversely, then (given the dependence of ideology on narrative coherence), freedom (in the historical bourgeois sense of the extension of powers to individuals) in modernity becomes associated with that which builds narrative by a variety of critics with seemingly differing political agendas.

Fredric Jameson has referred to this narrative-establishing function upon which Schama relies positively as a Marxist recovery of the "political unconscious." He describes its manifestation, the secret Hegelian narrative that is recovered through his own critical work:

These matters [of history] can recover their original urgency for us only if they are retold within the unity of a single great collective story...for Marxism, the collective struggle to wrest a realm of Freedom from a realm of Necessity. ...It is in detecting the traces of that uninterrupted narrative, in restoring to the surface of the text that repressed and buried the reality of this fundamental history, that the doctrine of a political unconscious finds its function and its necessity."

Here Jameson does for the social text what countless critics have accomplished for the literary text--isolate a particular
text (here the social, historical text); detect subtleties and penetrate surfaces to reach a buried reality; then attribute the product to a transcendent (un)consciousness carefully placed within a history of other such authorial (un)consciousnesses. To return to Foucault, what hasn't been accomplished is an investigatory switch from the world of objects to be known to modes of knowledge (Birth x). The investigation is still undertaken on the level of reading, or in Foucauldian terms, "commentary." Nor, however, would I subscribe to the belief that it is Jameson's Marxism that requires that his criticism aspire to the representational strategy he calls "cognitive mapping." It seems just as faithful to Marx's paradigm to understand the historical and material process as a series of ruptures, as a breaking down of the narrative thrust of early capitalism, and indeed, as the end of narrative than as the result of careful reading.

This alternative to reading would necessarily involve the complete re-structuring of the cultural institution. Within a technology of reading, it is inevitable that writing and materiality appear as villians to the seeming autonomy and unmediated characteristics of speech. Critical reading has served culture well, first by establishing the autonomy of the text (in doing so it strives to establish for texts the status usually ascribed to supposedly "unmediated" speech--self-containment, and distinct personality) at the cost of banishing the "social" to the contexts of that work, where it
is reinvented and re-subjected to a "primary text" as the social text; second, through encouraging the equation of agency with strong autonomous individuals—individuals unmediated by textual ambiguity—at the cost of subjecting textual productivity to personality. Julia Kristeva explains:

> Writing is revealed, for him who thinks of himself as "author" as a function that ossifies, petrifies, and blocks. For the phonetic consciousness—from the Renaissance to our time—writing is an artificial limit, and arbitrary law, a subjective finitude.²³

It is the virtuous task of the reader in a phonocentric culture (here I use Derrida's term) to reactivate the word from its prison on materiality and make it speak again—and thus the bourgeois world re-invents the categories which favor its expression. For reading accomplishes not the work of the revolution, not the elevation of the proletariat, but simultaneously works to invent and protect the culture of the bourgeoisie: the understanding is that paradigmatic shifts are accomplished by polite and exclusive exercises in critical culture, not revolution or anarachy; and the reinvention of autonomous subjectivity out of the very science that humanism pretends to despise. In this sense I would suggest a Marxist understanding of the technologies of reading might extend rather beyond the rather pat notion that reading serves to colonize leisure time. That it does, but it also serves to construct the very system in which it is possible to think about leisure, and whether through self-growth or decadence,
associate that leisure with the autonomous self. Reading remains the technology of the bourgeoisie, and as the study of diseases and narratives continue to remove its object ever deeper within the subject of study, it is perhaps not surprising that the result of this radical contextualizing is the professionalization of its specialists. But more on the development of the discipline follows with the conclusion of this chapter. My question for the time being is how often this technology—reading—names a name—a name that is borne by the body of the text that is under investigation and comes to mark the agency of the critical impulse as it is displaced and denied in the object of investigation. A name, in other words, for the autonomous body animated in criticism’s laboratory.

I will now explore one such case, one such name.

II. Difficult Reading and Illegal Conflicts: de Man Among the Nazis

During his lifetime, before the "crisis" that now marks his name, Paul de Man wrote of the "distressing commonplaces" of Kant’s Observations on the Sentiment of the Beautiful and the Sublime: the aesthetic taxonomies that seem to promote nationalism and sexism; the moments that "make for...difficult reading"—moments which de Man argued still inform, if only under erasure, the vastly different intentions of Kant’s Third
The necessity of performing difficult reading is of course a familiar call to duty in the often ascetic discipline of literary studies. In the case of de Man, and in the crisis which surrounds his recently exposed participation in the Nazi collaborationist journal Le Soir, the call to reading—painful reading—has been the single categorical imperative agreed upon by the hundreds of supporters and detractors of Paul de Man who have publically commented on the "news." Exactly what kind of institutionalizing process does all this reading—all this discipline—indicate? What would it mean to step into this debate and actually disagree—to argue against this insistence on reading?

As a crisis, the Paul de Man affair involved and continues to involve the entire discipline of literary studies, not merely through direct or indirect implications about one's stand towards deconstruction (as when Jeffrey Mehlman was quoted by Newsweek as saying there are even "grounds for viewing the whole of deconstruction as a vast amnesty project for the politics of collaboration during World War II") or through the unique opportunity to make declarations ("as one Ivy league professor gleefully exclaimed, 'deconstruction turned out to be the thousand year reich that lasted 12 years'"), but as the creation of an area of work. More than anything else the de Man Crisis represents the continued existence of grist for the
hermeneutical mill—grist not yet fully assimilated by the workings of the discipline. Thus the call issues from all sides: the crisis must be read, de Man must be re-read. Now, predictably, there are even essays on the importance of reading the readings of the de Man affair. Nor have the unusually frenzied professional activities—the conference called immediately after the news broke, the nearly 500 pages that make up Responses: On Paul de Man’s Wartime Journalism, or the dozens of articles published since then—diminished the sense that there is still a lot of work to do. Even the prolific Derrida, in response to the responses his response to the Paul de Man crisis evoked, is a little surprised and clearly fatigued by the amount of writing left to do, by the necessity for repetition. He writes from exhaustion, "Where to begin? Is it really necessary to waste all this time and so much paper, even if it is recyclable?"

Part of the unease and air or frenzied productivity surrounding the Paul de Man affair is certainly due to a disciplinary abhorrence of contamination. Contamination is, after all, primarily an academic category—which is not to say that it is of no practical import—but rather that it is a matter usually left to academics to police. In short, contamination must be disciplined. Consider Mary Douglas’ outstanding work on the topic of contamination, Purity and Danger: An Analysis of the Concepts of Pollution and Taboo, which remains the principle scholarly reference on the topic.
Douglas explores with great patience and erudition the construction of the categories of the defiled, the dirty and their opposite—purity—and the interests promoted and defined by such categories. In the process, of course, Douglas promotes a live-and-let-live attitude and a healthy respect for the Other. But there is a contamination that even Douglas cannot face unflinchingly—the impurity that she spends most of the first chapter attempting to purge—the defilement of anthropology itself by Frazer. She complains:

Frazer's influence has been a baneful one. He took from Robertson Smith that scholar's most peripheral teaching, and perpetuated an ill-considered division between religion and magic. He disseminated a false assumption about the primitive view of the universe worked by mechanical symbols, and another false assumption that ethics are strange to primitive religion. Before we can approach the subject of ritual defilement these assumptions need to be corrected. The more intractable puzzles in comparative religion arise because human experience has been thus wrongly divided.\(^{29}\)

Her disgust of Frazer's work is hardly incidental to the work, or to the career that Douglas defined for herself with this book. Douglas is after all only playing a necessary part of the academic game—the vigourous positioning of oneself in context to other, established thinkers, and the articulation of a "better" alternative.\(^{30}\)

The overt content of the de Man crisis, then, the supposed infiltration of Nazism into Yale deconstruction, works in an almost allegorical way to reflect a discipline-wide concern with a contamination with less clear cut moral
options—the kind of contamination that one is required to participate in as a member of the academy. Yet the Paul de Man Crisis is riddled with the contamination least tolerated by the academy: the crossing of genres—the shortening of the distance between the political and the critical; the violation of the divide between the university and the public sphere. The most immediate violation of that distance was the media event itself rather than de Man's historical transgressions, and as news magazines struggled to contextualize the problem through the capsule summaries that created deconstruction in the image of the public's worse imaginings of the indulgent and extravagant nihilism of the university life, shocked professors looked on with loathing and glee to find themselves quoted on the front page of national, public magazines. There are, after all, certain rules to the academic game, and they preclude, de facto, the appeal to public judgement. Kant explains the illegality of such methods of conflict resolution within the well-mannered university:

...the teaching and the views that the faculties, as theorists, have to settle with one another are directed to...a learned community devoted to the sciences; and since the people are resigned to understanding nothing about this, the government does not see fit to intervene in scholarly discussions. On the other hand, if the businessmen of the faculty, in their role as practitioners, bring the conflict before the civil community...they drag it illegitimately before the seat of the people, and it ceases to be a scholarly debate...And then begins the state of illegal conflict, in which doctrines in keeping with the people's inclinations are set forth, the seeds of insurrection and factions are sown, and the government is thereby endangered.
The skirmishes of the de Man "crisis" have clearly somehow gone beyond—or at least elsewhere than—the usual grounds of the scholarly debate. For the returning repressed that marks this crisis is not what it has been imagined to be—the return of the political involvement de Man himself repressed—but rather the reappearance of the social upon the scene of the critical. The de Man crisis has become an event—an event that seems random or singular in its eruption, but somehow inevitable in so far as it involved an effacement of history. And more than anything else it is this terroristic unnarrativized appearance of the material that criticism seeks to discipline..."it is what the aesthetic seeks to efface, by naturalizing meaning's production. Such naturalization can only occur in a violent obsessional gesture..." That the above words used by Marc Redfield to describe De Man’s notion of history as meaning-event work to describe the crisis that marks de Man’s name is only one of the minor paradoxes of this irony-rich affair. Yet I hope to show that the larger irony—indeed what has enabled some many lesser ironies—is the fact that the only possible name for this "violent obsessional gesture" is reading, and that if the concept of the "social text" were not already available to provide an alibi for this representational violence, it would have to be invented. For the call to "read" the de Man affair is justified in a typically liberal way: as a return to the subtle complexities of a "social text," a return that is essential to justice.
Yet what reading accomplishes—the separation of a text from the social, and the patrolling of those borders—seems more a police matter.

In order to perform the violent, obsessional gesture of reading, the presence of a text must of course first be affirmed. Andzej Warminski establishes the nature of the de Man affair as text:

The point, as always, is the necessity of reading. As such, it is obvious enough. That the "de Man case" in its complexities, self-divisions, heterogeneity, is a text in need of being read (in its heterogeneity) -- rather than a case in a court of law where it is a question of trying, judging, sentencing, and executing--is even more obvious.33

If the qualities of a text are as Warminski indicates—namely ambiguity and self-contradiction--clearly no one would deny the status of the de Man case as text. Yet Warminksi does deny an entire class of discourse, the "court case," the privileges that are accorded a text as such. To take a single example--the case of the Cleveland auto worker accused of being the Nazi war criminal "Ivan the Terrible"--it is pretty obvious that court cases are hardly without their own complexities and self-divisions. As a dead deconstructionist, de Man is read and not judged (like a Cleveland auto worker/live Nazi), and one has only to measure the distance between de Man's case and Ivan's to understand that reading is a form of resistance that is only available to those operating within a certain institutional space, and that reading as a
practice establishes and patrols the borders that protect this privilege.

Thus the only unprofessional, or perhaps anti-professional, act left in this affair marked by rampant collegial self-protection and attack (the same thing, really) is the refusal to read. Indeed, Warminski says, "the suspension of the necessity of reading needs to be resisted because it closes down the possibility of a future." It is counter-intuitive, of course to suggest that the refusal to perform an act as determinate as reading constitutes a closing down and indeed, such a refusal only constitutes a limitation of possibilities when the result is not simply indeterminancy, but an overdetermined opposition—a court case, a jury trial, a sure execution. Nor is the assignment of individuals into these two piles—those who deserve to be read, and those who must be tried—arbitrary. In reading the de Man trial, the discipline of literary studies promises the same results it promised when it read the classics—a gain in self-understanding—a gain in enlightenment—through its examination of this special and elevated text—the de Man case. Because, as a text, the affair is ambiguous and arbitrary (one might as well say literary and aestheticized for the de Man affair in this sense has become an elevated literary text just as surely as Hamlet) the future in question is precisely the future of reading—or more precisely the future of phono-logocentrism—which depends upon and allows
for this interesting distinction between texts that are more or less arbitrary. Consider Kristeva: "...the concepts of "arbitrariness" and "literariness" can only be accepted within the ideology of valorization of the oeuvre (as phonic, discursive) to the detriment of writing (textual productivity): in other words, only within a bounded (cultural) text." In a phono-logocentric culture, the space of freedom is that of speech and its supposed direct connection; the closing down of possibilities, writing. Reading texts, then, in its curious way preserves the "open" values of speech, for supposedly, reading maintains the options that writing (resistance to reading) would foreclose. Warminski, then, wants to continue to read de Man—to continue to postpone the inevitable moment when the legal crashes through the text and insists upon a judgement—the moment where speech confronts writing with death.

I do not mean to suggest that our discipline is simply guilty of bad faith in advertising—that it promises enlightenment yet merely delivers more ideology. The discipline has, of course, historically done so. Yet what interests me is that by promising to read the supposedly inclusive "social text," literary studies seems to evade the accusation that it picks only privileged texts for its study. Or, to state the same thing more strongly, critical reading itself depends on phonocentrism. The connection that remains intact during the de Man discussion is the supposed tie
between "reading" and "responsibility"—a tie that is the same as the imagined connection between "speech" and immediacy. Even the post-structural respondents, eager to prove responsibility in the face of detractors equally ready to show "theory" guilty of moral blindness (a symptom of theory's interest in deflating the privileging of the immediate), insist on a type of "reading" that seems a strange methodological ally for a discipline that largely understands itself as "after" and often "against" New Criticism. And again, the manifestation of such phonocentrism is the celebration and protection of personality. In some ways the elevation of the "de Man case" as text still depends on the figure of de Man that stands in its center, organizing its content, with a context that is still entirely determined by disciplinary interests that not only rely on outmoded models such as authorship or at least individual personality (whether as a result of essential humanity or subject position, the organizational structure of the individual remains the same) but commit acts of representational violence. Even for those critics who might be willing to concede de Man to be more of a subject-position than an essential personality, the "social text" is still centered around the blank outline of his form. The characteristic of the most extreme representational violence--the invention of individuals as certain roles, the most literal understanding of subjection--remains intact.
No one commenting on the De Man affair has suggested a study of pre-war Belgium in spite of Paul de Man, or indeed suggested that Paul de Man might be used to explore the contours of that pre-war period. Instead the call to read more than the works of de Man himself always appeals to such a study as a way to a greater understanding of de Man himself, de Man thus remaining the instigation for the definition of a particular social text: pre-war Belgium. Even Rodolphe Gasch’s response to the crisis "Edges of Understanding" serves to reconstruct the dignity of the individual Paul de Man. He writes:

Responsible examination (of the situation), however, requires detailed and in-depth documentation of the historical, cultural, and political situation of Belgium between 1939 and 1942, so that the truly incriminating facts can be established with necessary precision, and no confusion remains as to what under the given circumstances can and cannot be laid to de Man’s charge. Responsible examination also requires that such inquiry be conducted in the spirit of respect that both friend and foe, as Others, demand.36

The construction of an autonomous individual--Paul de Man--has marked the obsessive critical task of this work on the "crisis" almost in equal proportions to the call for re-reading. This has been true of his critics and supporters alike. David Lehman’s book, Signs of the Times: Deconstruction and the Fall of Paul de Man clearly supposes that de Man’s personal shame is the end of deconstructive methodology, and his triumphant addition to the 1992 edition of this book furthers the ad hominem_argument by detailing de Man’s failures as a tenant
and a husband. Of all the critics responding to the de Man case, only Marc Redfield has noted the problematics of constructing the discussion of the politics of deconstruction around a single man. He observes:

Obsession...might turn out to be the enabling disease of theory. And the proper name of Paul de Man would then be serving as theory's "psychological and therefore intelligible equivalent" of a process in which psychological entities are only contingently involved.

Yet even Redfield seems resigned to such anthropomorphizing in so far as he see its to be the result not of a particular kind of reading, but of reading itself, and as long as he clings to an individualistic model of "responsibility." The last lines of this article read:

The ethical can never be determinately ethical but must nonetheless pursue its course. What we call consciousness, or, in an analogous register, thematic comprehension or misunderstanding, is a restatement of this linguistic predicament. These two studies of Paul de Man [the works by Miller and Norris that Redfeld is reviewing], in other words, are not any less responsible for their error because it happens to be at the origin of that reading.

Here, in a much more subtle form, we find a familiar figure of de Man as a man and a theory who made unusual demands, and once again requires a much more careful reading than we have been giving him, and are even capable of giving.

The immediate result of such excessive, and when most unsubtle, cultish personality construction is a rash of curious displacements, erasures and exaggerations that frame the discussion about de Man's responsibility. De Man's
collaborationist involvement with his wartime journalism is mentioned at least as often as an incredibly strange array of things clearly beyond his control. In the Preface to her paperback edition of *A World of Difference* Barbara Johnson writes:

...my first impulse [on hearing the news of de Man’s collaboration] was a desire to rename my dogs (Nietschie [sic] and Wagner). That is, my reaction was symptomatic of a logic of purification, expulsion, the vomiting of the name.40

Johnson did not name either of her dogs Paul de Man; so exactly whose name is it that she vomits? What is perhaps most odd about this passage is the strange lurking suspicion that somehow de Man is responsible for giving Nietzsche and Wagner the fascist connotations that their names bear today—that somehow, Paul de Man gave Nazism a bad name.

Jerome Christensen has analyzed that now famous juxtaposition of photographs that mark the *Newsweek* article on the crisis—the fateful page where a snapshot of de Man—looking professorial, posed in front of the requisite bookcase—inhabits the upper left hand corner diagonally across the page from a photograph of Nazis on parade. 41 One possible semiotics of such a positioning is again the suggestion of causality—again, an attempt to make it clear, if somewhat larger than life, what de Man was responsible for (Nazism)—an attempt that Christensen suggests is successful in making de Man appear both apolitical and politically vicious (453). The sub-heading of the picture of the Nazis
goosestepping is "anti-intellectual," and thus serves as another reminder that extreme politics warrent a judgment that is normally not applied to distinguished professors who remain at an appropriate remove from the political—he is condemned by the horrors invoked by the picture, yet remains distanced from them in so far as he is portrayed as an intellectual. Christensen suggests the larger problem raised by the photographs is the crisis that results from the very unpicturability of de Man’s crimes, a conclusion which supports his larger statement about the impact of the de Manian crisis:

The de Man phenomenon is significant in part because it delineates a parallel between the breakdown of the determination of theory and the breakdown of the determination of the contemporary. The agent is the same: an insistent message from the past that mars the picture we have designed and that, in doing so, vitiates the notion of picturability on which, increasingly both contemporary theory and the theory of contemporality are based. (439)

"Vitiation" is an interesting word choice here, indicating as it does a simultaneous moral and intellectual affront to an aesthetic category still maintained by a contemporary theory marked by picturability (one might well ask in whose contemporary theory—W.J.T. Mitchell’s? Derrida’s?). As a word choice, it only makes sense when compared with the Schlegelian agent, the "message from the past" that hardly questions picturability as Christensen suggests as much as it invites one to try again. Ironically, then, "picturability"
and "determination" are "good" and placed in direct opposition to "agents from the past" and all others who would vitiate aestheticism.

I find it difficult to be so sure that the morally outrageous necessarily involves an affront to aestheticism. After all, one need not go very far to find convincing analysis of Nazism as a kind of aesthetic. Philippe Lacoue-Labarthe has developed a convincing model for understanding Nazism as a "national aestheticism" and somewhat more cryptically, Jean-Jospeh Goux has identified the Nazi aesthetic as "anti-cubism." Of course both Lacoue-Labarthe and Goux had their own connection to establish between a particular intellectual and Nazism, for each had Heidegger in mind; each wrote these works shortly after the publication of Victor Farias' book in France, the book which exposed the details of Heidegger's "secret" membership in the Nazi party during his rectorship at the university at Freiburg. Although Heidegger's involvement was hardly unknown, the publication of Farias' book received an immediate attention that suggested that already and ironically, the problem of intellectual Nazism had been somehow displaced to post-structural France—the same displacement which makes "anti-aesthetic" seem to work as a label with which to condemn both de Man's politics and deconstruction. In many ways the Heidegger discussion prepared the path for the de Man crisis by establishing the pattern of what Lacoue-Labarthe disapprovingly refers to in
his book as "juridical humanism." The seeming immediacy of the Heidegger involvement resulted in the by now requisite critical insistence on the professional reading and rereading of Heidegger (to cite only one—Derrida's—"who would prohibit us henceforth, from reading Heidegger? Who, therefore, claims to have already read him?"), accomplishing little other than an infinite displacement of responsibility for the privileged position of Heidegger within the philosophical canon in the first place. The literary and philosophic poststructural inheritors of Heideggerian thought continued and continue to circle around the Heideggerian canon as if to express mystification that one such as he ever came among their midst, ignoring, as in the de Man case, how critical response was being dictated by the elevated status of such a canon. Avital Ronnell has carried this fascination to its logical extreme in her *Telephone Book*, which returns obsessationally to various imaginings of a telephone call placed by the Nazis to Heidegger on his assumption to the rectorship. I see it as no coincidence that the *Telephone Book*, in result, is itself an example of highly aestheticized discourse (it was reviewed as often by fiction writers as theorists).

The de Man affair seems to have provided further opportunity for a broad range of such re-affirmations of the liberatory powers of the aesthetic. Terry Eagleton, too, gets into the act. Here is his assessment of the case:
In what one might see as an excessive reaction to his own earlier involvements with organicist ideologies of an extreme right wing kind, de Man is led to suppress the potentially positive dimensions of the aesthetic in a way which perpetuates, if now in a wholly new style, his earlier hostility to an emancipatory politics.46

What alarms me about this age old conflation of the aesthetic and the emancipatory is the ease in which it collapses a particular historical and liberal bourgeois notion of emancipation with a post-revolutionary emancipation under the banner of aesthetics. Eagleton assumes that the emancipation spoken of by the original Kantian aestheticists (I am thinking primarily of Schiller here) as a democracy of readers is the same as the post-Marx notion of emancipation that would mark the close history. This seems a puzzling mistake for a scholar as interested in the social construction of reality as Eagleton, and I think to a large degree his mistake is ready made into the theory he applies, in so far as that theory allows for the connection between art and issues of freedom, legality, spontaneity and necessity, yet obscures the notion and valorization of autonomy as the nature of that connection.47

III. Maintaining Discipline

I return to Foucault's Birth of the Clinic, to once again examine how the aesthetic text becomes a type of patient to the literary critic (as in my mind, the clearest example of how a disciplined empiricism delivers autonomy up for the use
of liberal humanism). Foucault writes, "The patient is a geometrically impossible spatial synthesis, but for that reason unique, central, and irreplaceable: an order that has become destiny in a set of qualifying modulations" (14). Noting the impossibility of the autonomous text or patient serving as an agent is completely ineffectual as an opposition to such autonomy, and Foucault’s entire oeuvre can easily be used to draw into question the extent to which merely noting the social construction of categories might serve to effectively dissolve them (hence the oft heard complaint that Foucault’s notion of omnipresent and discursive power leaves no space for resistance, as if resistance must correspond to an individual agent, and as if resistance requires a power-free space for its operation 4 8). Yet this description of the patient, this portrait of a methodological mistake, is remarkably similar to Foucault’s own description of the "subject-position," a concept which was afterall meant to interrupt the attributes of the unique, irreplaceable centrality assumed by the essential subject, who would understand that subjectivity as unproblematized agency. Indeed, the chapter of the Archeology of Knowledge which develops an operative definition of "subject-position" is spun, once again, from the modalities of medical clinical discourse. And while Foucault is clear to point out his aim that "In the proposed analysis, instead of refering back to the synthesis or the unifying function of a subject, the
various enunciative modalities manifest his dispersion" it is more difficult to see how any of his definitions overcome the individual subject even rhetorically, given Foucault’s frequent conflation of the subject-position with an actual individual, with all of the traits of subjectivity, including gender and centrality ("The positions of the subject are also defined by the situation that it is possible for him to occupy in relation to various domains or groups of objects: according to a certain grid of explicit or implicit interrogations, he is the questioning subject and, according to a certain programme of information, he is the listening subject..." [Archeaology 52]). The model for the subject-position remains the bourgeois subject.

But I am not suggesting that Foucault is a particular problem, that Foucault’s slippage on the matter of the subject should be purged somehow from the field of critical theory. Slippage is perhaps the only way to discuss a concept that is most literally unthinkable within the theory that would articulate a true dispersion of the subject, and it is especially significance here that it is easiest to tease such fault lines out through a discussion of a crisis that is marked by the name of one of contemporary theory’s luminaries, Paul de Man. The crisis of aesthetic autonomy is finally a professional matter, organized by and breaking along the lines of specific professionals. Samuel Weber, speaking in the voice of a kind of apocalyptic prophet, has suggested that
As the legitimation of the professionalist paradigm becomes increasingly difficult, it seems likely that the repression of its ontotheological origins will return in direct proportion to the difficulties encountered: communities, defining themselves in terms of leaders and founders who present an image or figure... 

Insisting as I have on the ontotheological nature of the valorization of the aesthetic, I hardly disagree with Weber, and am happy to understand the de Man affair as such a return. Given, though, that it is also my argument that the autonomy of the aesthetic and the individual is held together precisely by an understanding of textuality, I would like to explore a little more the reason that literary studies would be the discipline to host so many, in Weber's words, "professional fault-lines."

Richard Rorty, in assessing what he understands as the falling star of philosophy against the rising sun of an English department theory cartel, attributes this modern disciplinary reversal of fortunes to the ability of the English department to market textualism as the best means to meet the educational market demands for interdepartmental and interdisciplinary communication. I think it is perhaps more likely that textualism presents itself not as a means towards the new, but rather as the return of the very idea of the university. Jurgen Habermas has most recently made the connection between the autonomy of the university, and the autonomy of persons, and the confusion of discursity as an
insurance of freedom. He writes of the autonomous university as a kind of subject:

...the university should institutionally embody, and at the same time motivationally anchor, a life form which is intersubjectively shared by its members, and which even bears an exemplary character. What since Humboldt has been called the "idea of the university" is the project of embodying an idea life form. Moreover, this idea does not limit itself to one of the many particularized life forms of early bourgeois society, but--thanks to its intimate connection with science and truth to something universal, something prior to the pluralism of social life forms.52

The organic and truth seeking function of the university that Habermas describes--the status of this university as an original "social life form" (what I would term institution)--reflects the bourgeois individual as it model. The life blood of the university in this oddly romantic conception remains for Habermas the strange promise of discursive freedom, the oldest of all illusions maintained by the valorization of the aesthetic category. For the first step towards freedom even for this vast beast was a discursive moment: "They all live from the stimulation and productive power of discursive disputes that carry the promissory note of generating surprising arguments. The doors stand open, and at any moment a new face can suddenly appear, a new idea can unexpectedly arrive" (21). The irony is that the new face that appears is the imagined and invented face of the university-being itself, resplendent in its assumed autonomy. The university itself is
perhaps the most successful of all cultured and learned bourgeois individuals.

With the university thus understood as a life-form, acting independently towards its own self-actualization, it becomes very difficult to describe in accurate ways the patterns of work and discipline which in fact define the university as an institution for social technology. The only attempt to systematically characterize the patterns and type of work that make up the typical English department, for instance, is marked by some startling oversights. While Evan Watkin’s *Work Time: English Departments and the Circulation of Cultural Value* shows a healthy interest in the role of the supporting staff, his understanding of their part exists only in total isolation from that of the professorial work which defined the department. His repeated discussion of the amount of time it takes a secretary to slide across the floor on an office chair, reach out and remove a file from a cabinet, suggests that such micro-moments define the secretaries’ roles in the department, rather than their social position, as handmaidens to the scholars or as the source of information for students (what graduate student has not been indebted at some point to a well informed graduate secretary?). And it seems truly remarkable that Watkin could discuss the English Department—a department often bloated with huge numbers of graduate students with less scholarly promise than willingness to serve as teachers of the required
lower level survey and composition courses—without single reference to the work distributed to poorly paid graduate teaching assistants.

Perhaps the oversight is not as remarkable as it might seem. In 1966, a small group of radical students, inspired by the Situationalists International, spent a large amount of student union money (until the courts intervened, 10 days after the students' election to the student union board) producing and distributing a pamphlet which they called "Of Student Poverty." They offered this description of the relationship between students and cultural value:

Student poverty is an anachronism....The student is a stoical slave: the more chains authority heaps upon him, the freer he is in phantasy. He shares with his new family, the University, a belief in a curious kind of autonomy....He celebrates all the values and mystifications of the system, devouring them with all the anxiety of an infant at the breast."

The efficacy of the Situationalist styled critique will be the topic of my next chapter. For now it is enough to note that underneath a certain distribution of work or wealth lies a corresponding investment in the social value represented, re-enacted and even authorized by the culture of textuality. Ironically, then, it is students and secretaries who might be found to defend the old categories with the most vigor and conviction; conversely, though, it might mean very little for a professor to take on those values, confirming them as she does through her very departmental subject-position. The
vast amount of critical work which the Paul de Man affair has
generated and continues to generate, then, has less to do with
an historical monstrosity than it does with a contemporary
effort to regroup and reaffirm the boundaries of the text; to
decide what worthy cultural texts are to be read, and what
cultural texts might be referred immediately to the court
room. The invention of the first category of texts guarantees
the autonomy of the texts themselves, and of those they
protect and invent.
NOTES


3. Aesthetic 3.


5. Dominick La Capra has suggested that as "outside the text" should be understood not as an actual place than as a single, categorical concept. He argues it is often incorrectly invoked by critics, and that the preferred translation should read, "there is no outside-the-text." See Dominick La Capra, Soundings in Critical Theory (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1989): 157. The Derrida quote appears in "Signature Event Context," in The Margins of Philosophy.


7. Jorge Larrain both chronicles and offers his own critique of this assumption in The Concept of Ideology (Athens, Georgia: University of Georgia Press, 1979): 24-34.


12. For a full accounting of the parallel development of theories of artistic autonomy and the growth of the popular book trade, see Martha Woodmansee, "The Interests in Disinterestedness: Karl Phillip Moritz and the Emergence of the Theory of Aesthetic Autonomy in Eighteenth Century Germany," *MLQ* 45:1 (March 1984): 24-47. Also of interest is the "Great German Reading Debate" of the 1790's, where the phenomenal growth of the print media sparked various discussions over the need for aesthetic discrimination. See Martha Woodmansee, "Toward a Genealogy of the Aesthetic: The German Reading Debate of the 1790's," *Cultural Critique* (Winter 1988-1989): 203-221.


14. For example, Christopher Norris draws a continuous line between an unproblematized grouping of "German Idealists" and contemporary critic such as Paul de Man in their supposedly similar interests in demystifying ideology. See Norris, *Paul de Man: Deconstruction and the Critique of Aesthetic Ideology* (New York: Routledge, 1988).

15. My point here is similar to that made by Adorno about Schiller, although I do not agree with Adorno that the elevation of human autonomy is at all hostile to artistic autonomy: "Schiller was potentially the first Kantian to have been openly inimical to works of art, for he considers the human being behind them more essential than the works themselves.... This is in harmony with vulgar bourgeois consciousness for two reasons: one it glorifies pure creation by the human being without regard to purpose and thus feeds into the bourgeois work ethic; and two, it relieves the view of the task of understanding the artistic object before him, giving him instead a surrogate—the personality of the artist, or worse, trashy biographies of him." Theodor Adorno, *Aesthetic Theory*, trans. C. Lenhardt (London: Routledge, 1984): 245.


18. See David Carr, "Narrative and the Real World: An Argument for Continuity" *History and Theory* (1986): 117-131. Somewhat different from Schama's characterization, Carr uses the arguments of various German theorists who argue the continuity between narrative and experience (Wilhelm Schapp, Hermann Lubbe, and Karlheinz Stierle) to reach the conclusion that "Narrative is not merely a possible way of describing events; its structure inheres in the events themselves" (117).


22. In this sense my usage of "critical" or "empirical" reading corresponds with this Foucauldian definition of "commentary": "In this activity known as commentary which tries to transmit an old, unyielding discourse seemingly silent to itself, into another, more prolix discourse that is both more archaic and more contemporary—is concealed a strange attitude towards language: to comment is to admit by definition an excess of the signified over the signifier; a necessary, unformulated remainder of thought that language has left in the shade—a remainder that is the very essence of thought, driven outside its secret—but to comment also presupposes that this unspoken element slumbers within speech (parole), and that, by a superabundance proper to the signifier, one may, in questioning it, give a voice to a content that was not explicitly signified." *Birth* xvi.


30. For an excellent and amusing case study on the building of an academic career, see Michele Lamont, "How to Become a Dominant French Philosopher: The Case of Jacques Derrida," *American Journal of Sociology* 93:3 (November 1987): 584-622.


33. "Terrible Reading" 388.

34. "Terrible Reading" 387.


36. Responses, 208.


47. Recall Eagelton's statement, quoted above, that aesthetics, in "speaking of art it speaks of these other matters too [freedom and legality, spontaneity and necessity, self-determination, autonomy, particularity and universality]..." (Aesthetic 13).

48. Foucault answers the charge: "For some people, asking questions about the 'how' of power would limit them to describing its effects without ever relating those effects either to causes or to a basic nature....By proceeding this way, which is never explicitly justified, they seem to suspect the presence of a kind of fatalism. But does not their distrust indicate a presupposition that power is something which exists with three distinct qualities: its origin, its basic nature, and its manifestations?" See Michel Foucault, "The Subject and Power," Critical Inquiry 8 (Summer 1982): 777-795; 785. Interestingly enough, in the commentary about Foucault's work, the topic of political fatalism is always addressed within a scheme of variously conceived scales meant to chart Foucault's political "progress." Gilles Deleuze understands Foucault's oeuvre to consist of two stages, that of archeology and that of a politically motivated cartography. Peter Dews constructs three Foucaults: the early Foucault (the Foucault of Historie de la folie dans l'age classique and Naissance de la Clinique) which contains the seeds for the later, political Foucault; the purely structuralist Foucault of L'archeologie de savoir and Le Mot et Les Choses; and the Foucault first appears in Surveiller et Punir to grapple with issues of power and oppression more directly. See Gilles Deluze, Foucault, Sean Hand, trans (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1988) and Peter Dews, Logics of Disintegration: Post-structural Thought and the Claims of Critical Theory (London and New York: Verso, 1987).

49. I think it safe to say that other attempts to understand a nonessential, nonautonomous individual and text have similar slippages, although increasingly two separate trends might be noted. The one, marked by Gayatri Spivak, works a Foucauldian inheritance; another, which Fred Dallymayr might be said to represent, seeks clever ways of retaining an individualism somehow stripped of anthropocentric connotations. Gayatri Spivak develops the notion of subject-effect in "Subaltern Studies: Deconstructing Historiography" In Other Worlds: Essays in Cultural Politics (New York: Routledge, 1988): 154-179. See also Fred Dallymayr, Twilight of Subjectivity: Contributions to a Post-Individualistic Theory of Politics (Amherst: University of Masachusetts Press, 1981).


51. Richard Rorty, Consequences of Pragmatism (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1982).


54. "OF STUDENT POVERTY: Considered in the economic, political pyschological, sexual and, particularly intellectual aspects, and a modest proposal for its remedy," in ten days that shook the university (London: Situationalist International, no copyright reserved, approximately 1968): 5.
CHAPTER III

PROFESSING READING:

POLITICS AND POSTSTRUCTURALISM IN LITERARY STUDIES

Intellectuals and the Politics of the Citizen-Reader

The Enlightenment posed a strange new challenge to the political role of the intellectual in the exercise of reason. If Kant is taken as an instance, one has only to recall the political and institutional machinations of The Conflict of Faculties to understand the Enlightenment not as a period marked by the effortless acquisition of reason but as the strained attempt to negotiate the strangely dual qualities of reason as they developed out of the 18th century. For by the end of the 18th century, for Kant, reason emerged as both that which comprised essential, generic humanity in the public sphere and that which guaranteed a private individual uniqueness. By the same token, literary intellectuals, specifically intellectuals who carried out critique in the Kantian sense, became both public representatives, and, as history, philosophy and enlightened politics all became increasingly understood as being best performed by those trained in the exercise and critic of the aesthetic
imagination, intellectuals became individuals with considerable personal political power.

As we enter contemporary debates, then, about the political role of the intellectual (here the poststructural intellectual), and thus address the "agony of the intellectuals" (which results from the intellectual's inability to fuse, in their own self-conception, or in their activity in the world, their role as active agents on one hand and as signifiers of the scientific truth of the human on the other"), it is good to remember that the terms of the discussion issue less from poststructuralism's unique problematics than an Enlightenment era paradox. In fact, my point is that questions about the possibility of intellectuals serving as radical political agents have been hopelessly hung up in so far as they still assume obscene privileges for the intellectual that issue from anything but a revolutionary or transformative intellectual subject position. Within the "humanist model the intellectual is the ultimate human subject, serving as pivot around which other individuals turn, and through which they know themselves as subjectivities and know their places as social beings as well" (Stoekel Agonies 5). My argument in this chapter is that while intellectuals continue to adhere to the technologies of reading that insures their inscription as "representatives" within this Enlightenment era paradox of power and responsibility, the question of radical involvement
will continue to seem impossible and riddled with dead end contradictions. Perhaps the means of casting off that subject-position, though, might be its full articulation. For representational power depends on paradox, and presentation is its only sure doom.

Contemporary intellectuals are rightly fascinated by the contradictions that Enlightenment politics required and engendered within thinking persons. Foucault describes the dualism of Enlightenment reason as the result of the struggle between the personal obedience required of the subject by the modern state and the public exercise of reason required to demonstrate individual free will. Foucault thus understands one of the problems of the Enlightenment to be "that of knowing how the use of reason can take the public form that it requires, how the audacity to know can be exercised in broad daylight, while individuals are obeying as scrupulously as possible."² For Foucault, Kant enacted this dualism evidently and emblematically, making it the basis of a kind of contract with the liberal Fredrick II, where the exercise of reason in service of the public would constitute thereafter the special condition of obedience to the state. Neither Kant nor Foucault specify the mechanism of this contract: the exact political technology by which the "audacity to know" could come to be exercised in "broad daylight," as a condition of obedience. Yet Kant wrote the beginnings of an answer into the Conflict of the Faculties. Recall Kant's bitter promise
for the future of the human sciences: "For the government may find in the freedom of the philosophy faculty, and the increased insight gained from this freedom, means for achieving its ends other than its own absolute authority." For Kant and for those who yet invoke him, the paradox of modern reason are both enacted and owned by the developing class of humanistic intellectuals and governed by the developing institutional sites of critical thought.

The post-Enlightenment critical project thus requires that intellectuals find justification, protection and forum for the exercise of the audacity of knowledge. That they should find such in institutions, universities, and disciplines is hardly surprising. And that these institutions should lose their obvious connection to state ideology—that Kant's "agreement" with Fredrick III should be forgotten—indicates the operation of a subtle social mechanism that is often suspected but seldom articulated. Locating the various descriptions of the operation of dominant paradigms on intellectual institutions is not difficult. Gramsci, for instance, is credited with noting the extent to which the complicit relationship between intellectuals and state ideology compromises the former and contributes to the latter. Indeed, writing that "intellectuals are the dominant group's deputies exercising the subaltern functions of social hegemony and political government," Gramsci describes the intellectual as a cultural intermediary in the manufacture of ideological
consent. Yet as with Kant and Foucault, the precise mechanism of that manufacture remains unarticulated—the Gramscian hegemony remaining the product of an invisible technology, just as the articulation of "common sense" as resistance remains in Gramsci as the tempting but ever elusive goal of the radical organic intellectual—an intellectual champion of working class agency who seems increasingly unlikely in the postmodern dissemination and displacement of the agency that once belonged to the working class.5

Yet if Gramsci and Foucault continue to manifest some of the limitations of the post-Kantian intellectual, they do so in a poststructural world that fancies itself vastly removed from the Enlightenment. Most poststructuralisms insist on the absolute political necessity of opposing the programs and social technologies of the liberal, individualistic Enlightenment. Even Habermas, in his critique of Focuault and Derrida, does not question the desireability of an anti-enlightenment, but merely suggests a radicalized Enlightenment as the best weapon.6 And while one might question whether or not poststructuralism has successfully moved us significantly away from the Enlightenment, the ways in which a Foucault or Gramsci still depend on invoking, tacetly or not, the Kantian, should not be elided. Foucault enacts the Kantian "audacity to know" with the guilt or self-consciousness of a poststructuralist who finds the only justification for the exercise of knowledge to be the search
for its alternative. And while Gramsci himself missed the advent of poststructuralism, his work is forever marked by the politically needy poststructural return to it: Gramsci after '68.

For if the Enlightenment is linked with the first Revolutions, the post-structural movement's desperate interest in political and theoretical alternatives bears the traces of the last, failed revolution. Marcia Landy, for one, has attributed the recent, growing interest in Gramsci's ideas to a specifically located post-1968 despair over the inefficacy of orthodox Marxist political practice. Gramsci provided for those jaded, radical post '68 intellectuals both a model for the totalizing character of the "new" hegemony of the right, as well as a flexible understanding of subjectivity ripe with the possibility of resistance. For post-structuralism is agreed that post '68 networks of power and resistance operate in decentralized, heterogeneous ways that require that the single master narratives of the past be forever eschewed. The left must strive to bring about a permanent revolution comprised of repetitive, local subversions and persistent critiques.

The charting of the successes and failures of this permanent poststructural revolution have hitherto only taken place on grounds specifically marked by the struggle for institutional or canonical power. However the struggle over canons, pedagogies and curriculum, not to mention professorial
"tracks" and responsibilities, is itself a symptom of poststructural attempts to bring these political and institutional issues to light. The goal of this chapter is to wrestle the assessment of poststructuralism's political efficacy away from its grounding in the discourse of professionalism. Only in this way does it become possible to discuss not only the vast changes that poststructuralism has made in academic discourse but also the residual sense that in many ways, poststructuralism has belied its radical political promise.

For poststructuralism as a discourse has never taken place far away from the negotiation of professional issues. Deleuze and Guattari's landmark *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* (1971), for instance, attempted to map the psychic spaces of the permanent revolution suggested by the post-'68 left. Characteristic of post-structuralism in so far as it suggested the process of schizophrenia (the famed body without organs) as a kind of permanent resistance to capitalism's organic power, *Anti-Oedipus* also enacted a growing poststructural interest in exposing the ideological alliances of the professions and of professional institutions. Finding psychoanalysis the means of inscribing Oedipal power relations in persons and societies who seemed to be successfully avoiding them, *Anti-Oedipus* suggested the practice of "schizoanalysis" in the place of psychoanalysis.

The "schizoanalytic" commitment to the subversion of master-
narratives at all junctures represents poststructuralism at its radical best. Yet there is something unsettling and finally compromising about the professional focus of the suggestions made by the *Anti-Oedipus*. Why, for instance, does the aspiring schizophrenic revolutionary require professional help to attain her status? For the entire latter part of the *Anti-Oedipus* is devoted to the principles of schizoanalysis—from the viewpoint of the analyst. Is it enough to take comfort in Deleuze and Guatarri’s reminders that as professionals they are at least "radically incompetent" (334) and that while Freud didn’t notice who pays the bill, they do (356)?

The *Anti-Oedipus* has its own good reasons for valuing professional intervention. For the world that Deleuze and Guattari describe is one that is already diffuse and diverse enough to sponsor revolutionary change—only the professionals keep us from noticing. Analysis can create a permanent revolution precisely because analysis has been the place where ideological illusions were constructed. Thus Deleuze and Guattari ocaisionally slip away from understanding reality as a social construction to implying that ideology is merely an inaccurate image of some underlying actual reality. They understand "desire," for instance, as a real, rather than socially constructed category. Capitalism may misdirect desire, but desire pre-exists capitalism: "The task of schizoanalysis is therefore to reach the unvestments of the
unconscious desire of the social field, insofar as they are differentiated from the preconscious investments of interest, and insofar as they are not merely capable of counteracting them, but also of co-existing with them in opposite modes" (350). Thus, rather than comprising a permanent revolution bringing about schizoanalysis, schizoanalysis promises the revolution by unleashing desire.

But my point here is not to offer a specific critique of Deleuze and Guattari so much as suggest the outlines of one of the stranger dynamics of poststructuralism, whereby radical disruption is thought to be best carried out by professionals (shrinks, critics, professors) and where radical social goals are quickly conflated and deflated into the realization of some complicated yet recognizable model of a liberated individual. Schizoanalysis, for instance, produces revolutionary individuals who possess a new kind of psychic comfort. Schizoanalysis does not produce the revolution itself. Post-structuralism, of course, claims a relationship (and thus indicates a difference) between radical political action and its own attacks on the institutions of Western symbolic thought. But that professionalism should be the bridge between this radical action and institutional deconstruction strikes me as a particular abberation—one that can only result in the inscription of some Enlightenment-styled individual agent. My argument is that this development has been the result of the particular institutional locus of
poststructuralism, and one that necessarily threatens its promised subversiveness. I begin, then, with the effects of the institutional resistance to poststructuralism to understand some of the discursive forces whereby poststructuralism and professionalism are linked.

Interestingly, the growth of post '68 discussions of intellectual theory and poststructuralist practice has been accompanied by a slew of contemporary works that accuse an entire range of persons and groups with the inappropriate use of intellectual power. On one hand, this flurry of activity suggests that something (presumably poststructuralism) is posing a genuine threat to the intellectual establishment. On the other, the effort to contain any threat has been both highly visible and alarmingly effective. Most recently, conservatives have issued an impressive number of books (all through popular presses, all with tantalizingly dour and alarmist subtitles) that warn the public about the evil influence wielded by radical professors. In all of these works radical professors and poststructuralists are thought to be exactly the same persons, one simple conflation erasing Marxism and feminism by making poststructuralism, rather than community based activism, responsible for political radicalness. The result shores up both the borders of the campus against social or political interests that have a vested interest in change in the public sphere and a standard idea of the intellectual-as-agent by suggesting that
professors either brainwash or oppress their students. That this message has hit home is apparent in a recent *Newsweek* cover story called "Thought Police" which attributes the current focus on "politically correct" attentions to race, class, and gender not to feminist or Marxist social movements, but to the intellectual Jacques Derrida, and professors who ascribe to his "famously obscure" beliefs.¹⁰

It has been a standard ploy to use poststructuralism's insistence on political efficacy against itself. Yet asking a question such as "Does Deconstruction make any difference?" is an inherently a conservative act—a question that guarantees a negative response, and a question which involves a manipulated slippage from politics to "making a difference."¹¹ Such questions hold post-structuralism responsible for simply reinscribing familiar connections between resistance, freedom, and political difference-making, and that the answer as to whether poststructuralism allows individuals to act freely should be "no" indicates poststructuralism's most radical contribution to a politics of intellectual subjectivity, not its failing. Yet such questions do participate in rereading alternative intellectual subject positions back into a more comfortable model of agency, recuperating a standard professional conception of intellectual power. Terry Eagleton criticizes poststructuralism because "it provides you with all the risks
of a radical politics while canceling the subject who might be summoned to become an agent of them."\textsuperscript{12}

The liberal and radical response to such accusations as proffered by Bloom, Sykes, Kimbell, et. al. has been strangely unstrategic—which is to say it is symptomatic of a political age when capturing the popular imagination has become a conservative talent. A few Marxist critics have even provided grist for the conservative mills by deeming poststructuralism's political interests to be an unnecessary and even reactionary engagement with Marxism.\textsuperscript{13} Other liberal and radical intellectuals, rather than seeking to attract the same popular audience as their detractors, have instead denied power, invoking Gramsci and others to note the inherently conservative nature of their positions.\textsuperscript{14} An explication of the mechanisms whereby intellectuals are involved in political legitimation has been effectively displaced by these arguments over who has been sleeping at the helm—arguments which only further the individualist notion that specific persons or even groups unproblematically effect and wield power in otherwise ideologically free spaces, a notion to which poststructuralism contributes in its own way. Indeed, it appears to have become impossible to discuss any relationship between the political and the symbolic which does not in some way reinscribe a professional role for the intellectual.
For considering that anti-radicals such as Kimbell, Charles Sykes, and to an extent Allan Bloom, never accuse the younger, more radical generation of scholars of any activism that would be of any remote interest to, say, the CIA, but rather blame them for a general laxity of standards and for filling too much time and space with obscure and theoretical discussion (the Newsweek piece ironically made the strongest charge—that the politically correct generation of sixties radicals turned professors are impinging on young people’s freedom), it seems possible that in a perverse way, the expectation that professors enact their political beliefs in the public sphere (and only in the public sphere) reaffirms in some way this basically conservative idea of the individual historical agent. This is not, of course, to suggest that political activism itself is necessarily ineffectual, but to note how when political activism is understood as an acquired, individual right (such as it does in the formulation of "academic freedom"—where political risks are granted to only mature and accomplished senior faculty members) or responsibility (such as when it is regarded as a prerequisite if one is going to "talk" politics) it simply becomes another inscription of the bourgeois intellectual. Yet the poststructural attempt to wrest the discourse of political interventionism away from its accompanying Enlightenment on the rights and responsibilities of individuals has made its effect only within the confines of the university.
The pressure to rearticulate agency and the individual speaks to the vested interests of intellectuals as much as it does to any specific discourse. For the paradigm of bourgeois individualism—the very condition of subjectivity—attributes to the intellectual the power to effect thought, attitudes and political beliefs—even action. The mechanism of agency, in this sense the notion that clear thinking empowers action, is the same for the individual citizen as it is for the intellectual. In fact, the intellectual, in this sense, is nothing but a hyper-model of a successful citizen: the possessor of an "academic freedom" that is in fact little other than an almost parodic "license" to enact the link between symbolic belief and free action that suposedly marks the powers and privilege of any bourgeois individual. That the intellectual should have a special relationship to this model of subjectivity, and hence a vested interest in rereading the poststructural threat to that subjectivity, is hardly surprising when a name is given to the technology that Gramsci described and its mechanisms explored. That technology is the modern, critical understanding of reading.

Linking the role of the intellectual in politics to the role of the intellectual as a reader and as bourgeois subject is actually a time honored process. The notion that one progresses from learnedness to a practical application of one's understandings in the "real" world is afterall one of the older and more romantic descriptions of the successful,
self-made reader. As Schopenhauer writes, "Men of learning are those who have done their reading in the pages of a book. Thinkers and men of genius are those who have gone straight to the book of Nature; it is they who have enlightened the world and carried humanity further on its way." And while reading has been widely praised as the democratic ideal, cultural democracy provides less a place of equality than a place to certify an individual's essential merits, and reading, in this sense, serves as both the vehicle and justification for social position. The uneducated might strive to become readers; the educated learned, but hierarchy remains, just as action remains a subset of reading. It seems more accurate to say, then, that within a democratic society, reading does not mark the new privileges of the citizen so much as it determines, qualifies and limits those privileges. Democratic-capitalistic societies often tell the myth of the citizen who might advance up the ranks of society by proving to be an excellent reader. The mid-nineteenth century, which saw the zenith of the interest in public libraries and so-called "print democracy" also saw books such as George Lillie Craik's *The Pursuit of Knowledge Under Difficulties*, published by the Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge, which chronicles the accounts of a score of young underclass men who were able to improve their lot by becoming self-made readers. Reading confirms and testifies to the degree to which these men assumed an acceptable
subjectivity of appropriate gender and class. And as Patricinio Schweikart has pointed out in her discussion of Wayne Booth's 1982 Presidential address to the Modern Language Association where he discussed the now apocryphal story of Malcolm X learning to read in prison, it is precisely such stories of self-making through reading that most easily elide the race, class and gender differences of those who tell such stories as a means of professional bonding. Booth elides Malcolm X's reference to the incompatibility of reading and Malcolm X's interest in a radical black history, and Schweikart points out how Malcolm X's reading elides women. That Booth likens Malcolm X's "love of books" to his great-grandfather Booth's, and consequently his own, reads the intellectual into a subject position in which only patriarchs named Booth can fully participate.

My topic, then, is not the origin of the prodigal reader in the democratic citizen, or even the citizen in the reader, but the cultivation of this citizen-reader by literary intellectuals—a class of professional readers. For the Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge did not think that the populace would come around to the "reading habit" by themselves. Henry Brougham, the founder of the Society, also a founder (later lord chancellor) of London University, consequently hit upon a plan to insure the promotion of positive reading habits: the institutionalization of a professoriate in English. In 1828 London University appointed
the Reverend Thomas Dale to be the first Professor of English Language and Literature. Dale was to resign two years later, stating that he felt that it would never be possible to attract the number of students necessary to earn a living as an English professor. Dale would nonetheless accept the first English professorship at King's College when that vacancy opened in 1835. Although remaining at this post for more than four years, he quit with a final complaint about his students' misbehaviour in the classroom. The seemingly contemporary "crisis" in English studies, focused (much as it is today) not on the aims of the discipline but the means of best realizing them, was already in full swing by 1848.19

Brougham established Dale's professorship for reasons other than the mere disinterested promotion of reading for its own sake or even for the sake of providing instruction to the less fortunate. The prospect of revolution terrified Brougham, as it did many Victorian intellectuals. And like such intellectuals as Matthew Arnold, Brougham felt that the promotion of culture was the best prevention against anarchy. Yet Brougham, the author of Practical Observations upon the Education of the People (1825) and Cheap Literature for the People (1858), decided to set about the promotion of preventative culture in a more specific and pragmatic fashion than his contemporaries.20 He felt that only the cultivation of the "reading habit" on the part of the middle class would prepare the citizenry for the intellectual
challenges of a social reform—social reform being the best means of stalling the threatened revolution. Terry Eagleton’s reductive statement of this position, "if the masses are not thrown a few novels they may react by throwing up a few barricades," is often criticized for its simple relation of cause and effect and its assumption that in this regard, nineteenth century criticism was entirely successful. Jonathan Culler, for one, remarks that "can not one just as few retort that you won’t keep the working class from throwing up barricades by throwing them a few novels?" However even Eagleton is not interested in blaming English Departments for singlehandly squashing dissent as much as he is interested in noting how this dynamic has explicitly shaped our professional imperatives, and has positioned classes, literatures, and nationalism in such ways as have yet to be fully unpacked. For the first practitioners of the discipline themselves had more complex understanding of the connection between literature and anti-revolutionary activity than some simple notion that novels might keep people off the streets. The Reverand F.D. Maurice, Dale’s successor at King’s College, believing as Brougham did that English literature was the vehicle for teaching a nationalism that would discourage class identification and a Chartist revolution, articulated this special need for targeting the middle classes: "To diminish in any degrees the feeling of alienation and estrangement in the different classes of which
our country is composed—to make any single person fell that it is his duty, not to widen the breach between them, but to labour, that it may be closed; this is an object worth speaking for, and living for." 24 Maurice, who traced the beginning of English literature to the rise of the middles class (in the person of Chaucer), sought to bridge the breach with literature. 25 The middle classes, barred access to a public school training in classical languages and in special need of nationalitic instruction, could now be interpellated into the improving virtues of reading. From the beginning, the English Professor worked to construct the Gramscian consent necessary to the successful control of the populace.

Still, many a contemporary scholar of the institution of English praise Brougham's manipulative inclusion of the middle classes into the cultural project. Franklin Court, for example, opposes those who would read Brougham to understand the history of English as the history of ideological control. "Brougham," he writes, "did not share the cynical opinion of other Victorian intellectuals that perhaps 'if the masses were thrown a few novels they would be less inclined to throw up the barricades.'" 26 In this direct criticism of Terry Eagleton's study, Court further asserts that "The founding impulse behind Dale's appointment was political reform, not social control" (806). But Court forgets that reading is a political reform aimed at social control insofar as reading is made possible only at the cost of forever forgoing revolution.
Reading is both the mechanism of reformatory purchase and the means of revolutionary forgetting. When the intellectual class of literary professionals functions politically, it re-enforces the conflation of readership and agency while making it clear that to participate in reading is to tacetly agree to a social contract in which revolution is illegal.

The professional linkage of reading and reform has been so persistent as to make the mere idea of social change independent of scholarship seem unthinkable even well into the poststructural age. Even those who strive to be critical of the ideological problems of disciplinary thought still argue that "There is obviously no substitute for reading well...."

Edward Said goes on to write:

Criticism cannot assume that its province is merely the text, nor even the great literary text. It must see itself, as well as other discourses, as inhabiting a much contested cultural space in which what counted in the continuity and transformation of knowledge has been the signifier as an event that has left lasting traces upon the human subject. Once we take that view, then literature as an isolated paddock in the broad cultural field disappears, and with it too the harmless rhetoric of self-delighting humanism. Instead, we will be able, I think, to read and write with a sense of the greater stake in historical and political effectiveness that literary, as well as other, texts have had."

I have no doubt that it is as Said says—that reading critically and measurably enhances the effectiveness of the human subject. It is precisely the invention of human subjectivity through reading and the "greater stake" that this privilege lends that worries me. It is the inability to
distinguish between textual agency and our own that convinces me that calls to "read well" defend a kind of blindness to the degree to which textual agency invents the blindest agent yet—the autonomous subject.

Poststructuralism poses a certain, although far from necessary, challenge to such simple individualisms when its dual preoccupations of textuality and subjectivity intersect. Too often, though, the former is used to denaturalize the latter, with no attention as to how textuality is itself naturalized, as if the profession were still proceeding after Brougham's plan. In short, while the analogies between textuality and subjectivity are explored, the ways in which they construct each other are left unarticulated. And too often poststructuralism is recuperated as a kind of reading, as when Dominick LaCapra asserts that Of Grammatology is really just a close reading of Rousseau. When poststructuralism is either attacked or promoted on the virtue of its supposedly political readings, then, it is not difficult to see the simultaneous assertion of the most traditional sort of individual-as-agent—an individual reader and the recuperation of the most accessible definition of the profession as champions of the reading habit. The cost of such maneuvers is the genuinely oppositional discourse that is made invisible for its movement beyond Enlightenment notions of agency or professional, Victorian ideas about the social
mission of English. Donald Morton summarized his treatment of post-structural feminism in this way:

Rejecting critique as dialectics, this "new" politics embraces critique as dialogics in the hands of its advocates, critique becomes a Bakhtinian carnivalesque "free for all" in which individual subjects 'unsettle' representation by expressing their 'excess' instead of a practice that opens a historically determined, conceptually structured, and collective space of oppositionality aimed at social transformation.²⁹

Morton understands practice in the most vigorous terms: practice is able to "open" a space "aimed" at nothing short of "transformation." And as such, Morton's characterization of practice is perfectly consistent with the bourgeois definition of the purposeful individual who acts from solid ground in order to open up a social text that yields to his gendered and classed mastery of agency. Indeed, the anti-theoretical insistence that professors stop talking (and publishing—Charles Sykes' complaint after all is that intellectuals are more interested in promiscuous publishing than vocational reading) and start reading becomes a call to literally practice discipline. Often, as with Allan Bloom, the call is a literal call to read the classics, but more importantly, this insistence on practice in the public sphere becomes a call to enact a version of the same politically suspect individual.

The assumption is not only a conservative one, though. Even literary critics hoping to disrupt the dominant paradigm often define the nature of the proposed theoretical
intervention in terms that only work to re-inscribe liberal individualism. Jim Merod in his study, The Political Responsibility of the Critic argues that the critic has the responsibility to critique, and to teach students to critique, dominant ideologies. Although he deplores the aesthetic idealism he feels is taught in most American literature departments, he understands the virtues of criticism as an increase in the measure of the individual's power. He writes that most intellectuals choose criticism because of an attraction to "...a conceptual clarity that was more than mere analytical elegance or explanatory brilliance but suggested, and perhaps demonstrated, the life-enhancing courage of passionate knowledge....However, ...intellectual passion is not a style. It is a form of warfare (in Nietzsche's sense), free of gloom, that converts aggression to self-conscious energy."30

It is hard not to become suspicious when the most bourgeois of all self affirming concepts--responsibility (always a noblesse oblige)--is invoked as the necessary component of all criticism. And it is everywhere--even in the founding document of the International College of Philosophy--the organization directed by Derrida to "provoke" the disciplinary practice of philosophy. Even here, "The only requirement" made of the new thinkers "is that of a rigor which increases with the risk of the endeavor, of a vigilance which intensifies with the singularity of its objects."31
For Derrida, who has been "thinking especially of the necessity to awaken or to resituate a responsibility, in the university or in the face of the university, whether one belongs to it or not," reading remains intact as responsibility remains relevent, and the university is reinscribed. ³² It is my argument that it is through reading that "academic freedom" with the seemingly singular and reasonable professional requirement of "rigour" is imagined much as Brougham imagined the middle class reader participating in limited reform. As Derrida has rephrased after Nietzsche, "Through the agency of 'academic freedom,' the State controls all."³³

It is easy to begin a list of the vile perspectives fostered under the banner of academic freedom: the rash of books that insist the Holocaust never took place perhaps being the best example (in one famous recent case, as authored by a Northwestern University engineering professor who was nonetheless able to invoke the protection of academic freedom for his revisionist history).³⁴ I find it too easy to regard such examples as the "cost" of liberty. Rather such examples make too explicit the way in which freedom is necessarily qualified by a seemingly minor, metonymical limitation which is in fact the basis of oppression. Nietzsche, afterall, understood the scholar-student as being connected to the State only "by the ear," a description worth quoting at length in so
far as it establishes a link between the university, individual autonomy and ideological complicity:

Permit me to measure this autonomy of yours by the standards of this culture and to consider your university solely as a cultural institution. When a foreigner wants to understand our university system, he first asks earnestly, "how is the student connected with the university?" We answer "By the ear, as a listener." The foreigner is taken aback. "Only by the ear?" he repeats, "Only by the ear," we again reply. The student listens. The student is autonomous, i.e. not dependent upon the education institution when he speaks, when he sees, when he enjoys the company of his companions, when he engages in artistic activity, short, when he lives. Quite often, the student writes as he listens; and it is only in these rare moments that he dangles by the umbilical cord of the university."

Derrida teases the oppressive nature of this exception from this passage and so qualifies the enslaving character of "academic freedom." The "autonomy" of student and professor is assured only in the literal separation of the mouth that speaks and the ears that transcribe. But Derrida too, claims the privilege of academic freedom.

Nietzsche, of course, imagines both student and professor as more powerful individuals than does Derrida. Nietzsche's individual is capable of not listening, of actually living with aggressively closed ears in a space free of ideology. Derrida, in contrast, expands on the consequences of this oppression-by-ear, and further characterizes the dependent character of the "relatively" autonomous ear and the talking head of the professor. In doing so, he describes the kind of world that the student revolt of May '68 apparently
represents—a world where simple minded and bodied resistance became suddenly impossible. He speaks to the student, taking notes on a lecture:

The person transmitting the discourse which you teleprint in this situation does not himself produce it; indeed, he barely emits it. He reads it. Just as you are ears that transcribe, the master is a mouth that reads; and what you transcribe amounts to what he decipheres of a text that precedes him—and from which he is suspended by the same umbilical cord. (Otobiography 248)

In assuming this new model of relative autonomy and of compromised resistance the old vision of resistance as a bodily, personal, and individual defense, is restored and made all the more attractive in its distress. For Derrida, would agree that reading and resistance are impossible—that it is in the moment of reading that the ideology of state and university takes effect. Yet the means of this connection—the umbilical cord—would suggest the students as the created beings of the university. The university maintains the mythical, untouchable status of the mother while the mother’s relations with the father-state remain taboo.

In short, the "resisting reader," to use Judith Fetterley’s phrase, is impossible if resistance is ever to be anything other than an affirmation of the powers of the individual subject. In fact, it has been and will be my task to show that to describe intellectuals acting on the public sphere is an impossible undertaking without enacting a "reading" that both positions the intellectual as a subject and insures the conservative nature of the intellectual
subject position. Consider now some of the strongest possible descriptions of the influence of intellectuals in the public sphere: versions of the events that took place in France during May of 1968.

Where Where You in May '68?

One year after Derrida published his definitive work, the Sorbonne fell. One of three works published within a year’s time, *De la grammatologie* began the cartography of the epistemological violence done by institutionalized critical thought. Tracing and resisting the dominant strains of western philosophy—chiefly phonocentrism and logocentrism, the major technologies of a dangerous metaphysics of presence—*De la grammatologie* remains one of the most important documents of poststructuralism. One year later, on May 2, 1968, radical student leaders at the Sorbonne, fearing threatened attacks from ultra-right wing groups, called on Maoist colleagues trained in street fighting to occupy and defend the university. The next morning, as the police vans came for the students, an unidentified woman threw the first brick of the last revolution.

It is tempting, of course to imply and divine a causal pattern between the student revolution and poststructural thought. And indeed, Derrida’s work would seem to share a great deal with the student revolts—or perhaps the student revolts shared a great with Derrida. Spontaneously
constructed, the barricades were hardly effective tactically: some of the streets of the Latin Quarter had three barricades, others none; the barricades themselves were often facing opposite directions. Yet their effect was not so much logistic as strategic: they were not effective in a literal sense so much as they were philosophically effective—invoking and serving as a relic of all the other barricades of French history. Much like De La Grammatologie, the barricades pointed less to a single oppressive force than to a power that might exist and perhaps be opposed—anywhere.38 The bourgeois understanding of resistance as the defense of a piece of property clearly delineated from enemy territory (such the bourgeois individual imagined the body) was no longer thinkable.

French poststructural intellectuals and the events of May '68 are frequently so connected in various causal patterns as the perversions and variations on the rather generic theme of "resistance to institutions" are worked out.39 Yet despite the place granted to post-structuralism in these discussions (whether poststructuralism in the 1990's is seen as the arrival of '60's politics; or the process by which everything political is exorcised), the connections established between the political events and the intellectuals almost always describe a revolution of the "old" style: a revolution which imagined its enemy as a single centralized power—a revolution that imagined a bourgeois "individual freedom" as its goal.
It has been suggested before, of course, that the revolt failed because of the Communist Party's failure to support the students; that de Gaulle's final containment of the revolution worked only because the movement had not clearly defined its demands or goals. Yet even in these more subtle accounts, it is alarming to me that it should be impossible to talk about the relationship between the political and the symbolic (the intellectual) in any way that does something other than contribute to a mythology of the individual subject. Looking back, it hardly seems odd that the conditions of philosophy changed more dramatically than those of history.

Ironically, it is often in the defense of a political post-structuralism that such narratives—of individuals enacting inspiration and history on the rue Gay-Lassac—are told. Perhaps even the most cynical post-individualist theorists are still humanistic enough to suppose and hope that post-structural intellectuals had something to do with the action. Such inquiries are fated to disappoint, however, for not only was the role of France's intelligentsia in the action unimpressive (Lyotard simply held seminars that used strike manifestos in the place of Plato and Aristotle to make points about persuasive discourse), but a number of the most celebrated intellectuals betrayed themselves to be aggressively unaware and uninterested in the revolution erupting around them (so Catherine Clément describes Jacques Lacan). The historical-intellectual gossip, though, is
irresistible precisely because of the absence of political involvement it would seem to indicate. Althusser aligned himself with the French Communist Party, which condemned the student strike: they felt that the revolt lacked a sufficiently developed class consciousness and correspondingly would be too easily appropriated by bourgeois interests to count as "the" revolution. Derrida stayed home to work on "The Ends of Man." Kristeva seems to understand the culmination of the sixties to be her visit to China; others have made the suspiciously sexist assumption that '68 saw Kristeva too consumed by her affair with Phillipe Sollers and discipleship to Roland Barthes to spend a lot of time at the barricades. Kristeva has made her own contribution to '68 sexual-historical gossip, though, having recently penned an academic novel in which the Barthes-character is portrayed as having very little on his mind in 1968 other than the pursuit of young men at maoist ballets. Foucault, although in Tunisia for all but a brief part of May '68, fared a little better; remarking of the students that "they are not making a revolution; they are a revolution." Foucault also did attempt to speak out on behalf of the Tunisian students, and housed a duplicating machine for a revolutionary student group in his garden in Sidi Bou Said.

But the disinterest on the part of the intellectuals has not discouraged those who have established May 1968 as the final test case for the possibility of establishing a bridge
between theory and practice. And there was indeed some attempt at the time to align practice with developing theories of decentralized oppression and contingent revolutions. Herbert Marcuse theoretically accommodated the model of working class revolution to student led movements as early as 1966. Marcuse, in fact, made it to Paris on May 10, 1968 to officially proclaim students the new agents of class revolt. Marcuse perhaps more than any other thinker could be described as the intellectual-activist mentor for the worldwide student movement, appearing as he did in all of the hot spots in the late sixties to foster and theorize the cause, explicitly complaining about the failure of critical theory to adequately theorize political practice. Yet the students themselves denied following Marcuse, and it is not as if the intellectuals on the international scene had either the inclination or ability to help. In fact, by 1968 the German SDS (Socialistische Deutsche Studentenbund) had already lost Jurgen Habermas, who proclaimed his dissatisfaction with the SDS's theoretical sloppiness the year before (Fraser 123). Adorno (who died in 1969) disapproved of any attempts to link his thought with student praxis. "When I made my theoretical model, I could not have guessed people would try to realize it with Molotov cocktails," he complained. But while the students themselves insisted that Marcuse or any other intellectual could not account for their inspiration, it is clear, as in the following statement by student leader Daniel
Cohn-Bendit that the possibility occurred to them, that somewhere, the question about the intellectual roots of the revolution was being raised:


Attempts to establish a fantasy link between intellectual history and revolutionary historical necessity are essentially corrupt. For they are guilty of what Nancy Fraser has described as "reverse imperialism"—the easy assumption that attacks on social institutions and canonized ideas are the same thing—an assumption marked by the subordination of social history to the history of philosophy.51 And the mechanism of this subordination is a familiar intellectual strategy. With the interesting exception of the book by Alain Touraine (the sociologist at Nanterres credited with anticipating the student rebellion as the logical development of the crisis in the university), accounts of May 1968 are terrifically concerned with determining who benefited from reading whom (Interestingly, Touraine attempted to play an active part in the students' deliberations, and served as Cohn-Bendit's mentor—exceptions, however do very little other than prove the case).52 The assumption that revolutions should be traced to either books, well-read persons, or the actions of a mob as interpreted by well-read persons, is
itself a symptom of the institutionalization of knowledge—in short, of the university system against which the students thought to rebel. And the insistence on such a literal connection between the symbolic and the political does much to obscure any relations between the two that may be mediated by such agents less unsubtle than individual subjects—indeed, it is bridging the gap between the symbolic and the political that actually creates the seemingly autonomous subject.

The peculiar conflation of assumptions apparent in the accounts of May 1968: the assumption that thinkers have loyal disciples; that the intelligensia, by virtue of an ill defined "academic freedom" is in the position to best orchestrate, interpret or capitalize on revolution; and the overwhelming sense that May 1968 represents a "lesson," all suggest the continual reinscription of the university itself—acting in its capacity as an individual subject (as what Hegel described as the "most perfectly ethical human being")—as the individual subject that is created in the articulation of a direct relationship between the symbolic and the political. And as I have suggest above and below, the only technology adequate to establishing such relationships and entities is reading.

Consider the pressure to establish the essentially academic nature of the student revolution—a move considerably different than that of say, Marcuse, who attempted to model students according to the model of the working class agents of
history. Seale and McConville write in analysis of the revolt's origins:

All students are bolshie, students of sociology are bolshier than most. If this phenomenon is true anywhere, it is true at Nanterre, where the sociology department was the nursery of the revolution. It is a discipline, which by its very nature, makes those who study it critical of any questioning about the society in which they live.

This statement is typical of the bizarre way in which the students are simultaneously credited and denied agency for the revolution. They are thought to be critical, yet critical of questioning; they are thought of in terms of class, but as "bolshies"; they belong to the "nursery" of the revolution, but only as children. The agent that emerges from such waffling is, of course, that of discipline itself— that of the university. Touraine's own account, afterall, only saw student action as a symptom of the university in crisis. The revolution against the university begins to sound like the institution itself. Eric Hobsbawm writes of May 1968 that "no other revolutionary movement contained a higher percentage of people reading and writing books" and is terrifically impressed that the revolt occured in the Latin Quarter, which he describes as containing more intelligent people "per square yard than any other spot on earth." Pierre Bourdieu's account of the crisis also insists on its intrinsically academic nature as he claims an alliance between the radical young professors and their students resulted solely from the young instructors' bitterness against those other professors
who held the academy's most elite titles and and worked at the most elite institutions. Bourdieu constantly mitigates the import of the sentiments behind '68, as when he adds in a footnote that "one tends to forget that the student revolution of May '68 was triggered by a clash between students and the academic authorities over freedom of access to female student's accommodations."

Thus the revolution becomes a seminar squabble—a collection of differences that are unimportant precisely because those who engage in them have been given the permission, the academic freedom, to do so. And it is through its association with reading that the university is granted this Althusserian "relative autonomy"—a phrase, which like "academic freedom," is not necessarily redundant so much as indicative of necessary paradox. "Relative autonomy" in this case is represented by the tendency of universities, students and professors to assume themselves autonomous entities, without realizing that it is through autonomy that the link of complicity between intellectuals and the dominant ideology is formed. It is a strange experience to read the pamphlets written hastily after the riots but before the containment which describe the University as a revolutionary source—an experience which rivals reading Cornelius Castoriadis' description of Detroit as the likely birthplace of Socialism. One "eyewitness" report on May 11 reads as follows:
The Sorbonne was suddenly transformed from the fully fusty precinct where French capitalism selected and moulded its hierarchs, its technocrats and its administrative bureaucracy into a revolutionary volcano in full eruption whose lava was to spread far and wide, searing the social structure of modern France.57

Describing the revolution as that which issued forth from the university to enthuse the students and the ranks of professional intelligensia that joined the protest early on (a physicians’ group aligned themselves with the students almost immediately) in this case was the exact same thing as anti-revolutionary activity (it hardly seems a wonder that the French workers persistently resisted student assistance as they went on strike themselves----sometimes even physically barring students marching to join workers’ protests). For in this way the revolution became a gift handed from teacher to disciple: presented as the gift of the university and of reading, when in fact the reading guaranteed the student’s subjection to the creation of the autonomous university. Reading assumes a lesson to be learned and a discipleship of reader and author that nonetheless supposes a degree of autonomy, or "academic freedom" for each. And when the university is intact, one may still marshall up its forces. So in a strange way, May ’68 has come to serve not as a metaphor for the rupture of the university, but for the gathering together of its powers for a single purpose. Phillipe Lacoue-Labarthe, for example, has called Heidegger’s
plan to involve German students in the fascist movement "a kind of '68."^58

Indeed, '68's invocation of the university at least required that those aligned with it choose sides. Luc Ferry and Alain Renault, France's eminent neohumanist philosophers, are fond of quoting Foucault that "despite the Marxist tradition and the P.C. it was not until around 1968 that these questions [which frame my work] took on their political significance with a sharpness I have not suspected, revealing how timid and diffident my earlier works still were."^59 While Ferry and Renault use such remarks to imply that poststructuralism is little more than a careerist fad, thinkers such as Dominick Grisoni praise philosophy's response to the events of '68--claiming that with '68 philosophy achieved nomadization (Deleuze's term--borrowed, of course, from Gramsci--for a pluralistic practice that opposes and resists discipline).^60 Grisoni's own anthology, *Politiques de la philosophie*, is filled with the famous proclaiming their debt to the student movement for forcing them to find a match between teaching and institutional critique. But, disappointingly, it is once again the individual as teacher, appearing in the guise of responsibility and rigour, who constructs the bridge between the symbolic and political and in so doing makes the university. Derrida writes that "une deconstruction rigoureuse et efficiente devrait a la fois developper la critique (pratique) de l'institution
philosophique actuelle et engager une transformation positive, affirmative plutot, audacieuse, extensive et intensive, d'un enseignement dit "philosophique." And as Steven Ungar has noted, it is hard to describe such intellectuals' own self-conscious identifications with the movement as anything other than "personal confession(s)" intended to "justify personal rather than collective action."

Some still claim that 68 did more for revolutionary theory than make careers for a few famous thinkers. The Situationalists, the group of social activists who rallied around Guy Debord's work, have claimed both that the events of May '68 were an enactment of Situationalist theory and that the '68 revolution entailed a decisive, if not final, blow to capitalistic society. And while most works on '68 make little mention of the Situationalists, the group itself has published statements such as Rene Vienet's Enrages et Situationnistes dans le mouvement de occupations that not only attempt to prove the literal involvement of Situationalists in every facet of the revolt, but argue that critics have deliberately minimized their role in the anti-revolutionary activity.

The Situationalists' rather literal interest in reading and rupturing the social text have made them the object of both theoretical neglect and misunderstanding. They are usually described as having been inspired by Henri Lefevbre's
1947 Critique de la vie quotidienne to form a society dedicated to the disruption of the absolute alienation that Lefebvre described as increasingly characteristic of life under advanced capital. Through the creation of "situations" that were designed around the administration of sudden, contextual shocks, the Situationalists hoped to make Lefebvre's alienation from the everyday apparent (in one famous example, a Situationalist disguised as a priest read Marx to astonished parishioners at Notre Dame). The Situationalists hoped to restore revolutionary potential to a world seemingly wholly colonized by capitalism through its use of "detournement," a textual strategy reminiscent of Brechtian-Shklovskian defamiliarization, on the social text. The Situationalists described "detournement," in fact, as an artistic technique, one that in deliberately misusing sign systems ruptures the alienation that marks the social, and thus creates a space for revolutionary action. The Situationalists hoped to use detournement as a new, unsettling kind of parody worked on the scene of the social. The SI document Methods of Detournement states that "It is necessary to conceive of a parodic-serious stage where the accumulation of detoured elements, far from aiming at arousing indignation or laughter by alluding to some original work, will express our indifference towards a meaningless and forgotten original, and concern itself with rendering a certain sublimity."
But too much can be made of the Situationalist's connections with Lefebvre. It is often ignored, as it was in the recent issue of *Yale French Studies* (1987) devoted in part to "Lefebvre and the Situationalists" that Lefebvre himself wrote one of the most interesting critiques of the situationalists after separating from them in the early 1960's. His complaint was that "The situationalists... propose not a concrete utopia, but an abstract one. Do they really imagine that one fine day or one decisive evening people will look at each other and say. 'Enough! We're fed up with work and boredom! Let's put an end to them!' and then they will proceed to the eternal Festival and the creation of situations?" Lefebvre thus described what is simultaneously so appealing and suspect about Situationalist theory--its insistence that real happiness and personal enjoyment are hallmarks of a revolutionary condition. But the Situationalists felt that the events of May '68 had proven Lefebvre's pessimism wrong--that the joy that characterized the students' return to the Sorbonne in mid-May in fact proved the revolutionary effectiveness of the festival against capitalist alienation (indeed it is hard to ignore the contagious rapture that marks the description of the movement back to the Sorbonne: the appearance of pianos in the courtyard, the spontaneous art exhibits held outdoors in the Parisian spring, and the graffiti that kept track of these "days of bliss").
The conflict between Lefebvre and the Situationists seems inevitable when one recalls Lefebvre's sociological interest in the appropriation of the most commonplace events of daily life and the Situationalist's avant-garde passion for new artistic forms. Thus the Situationalist's basic and founding theoretical impulse is best be understood as the result of Guy Debord's work on the *Society of the Spectacle* (on the commodification of images) combined with a great deal of confidence in surrealist and dada-like artistic strategy. From these origins, the Situationalists set about inventing a revolutionary strategy more closely modeled on creative genius than class agency. If the most horrific aspect of recent capitalism was its commodification of images, the revolution might be raged in the highest reaches of the superstructure. "The[ir] premise: politics is a part the problem of the use or reading of objects. The program: the reign of the spectacular commodity may be combatted by the intentional misrecognition of exchange values." The Situationalists, then, literalized what today is so much talk about instituting ruptures in the social text. They felt that the social literally was a text—that "everything that was [before capitalism] directly lived has moved away into representation" (de Bord, thesis number 1). The Situationalists were perhaps most suspect in this belief that the Real was actual and recoverable. Their lapsarian understanding of ideology convinced them of the powers of
deliberate misreadings to restore ideology-free, revolutionary space. And the insistence on such a traditional idea of resistance as the creation or restoration of the real caused them to rely on the readers for revolutionary agents. These readers would have to be such in two senses: deliberate misreaders capable of executing "detournements" as well as educated persons who had read enough to understand the desirability and complexities of Situationalist strategy. Overall, the Situationalists had a great deal of difficulty explaining how these strategies did not exclude the lower classes. In attempting to prove that "Situationalist theory had a significant role in the origins of the generalized critique that produced the first incidents of the May crisis and that developed along with that crisis," then, they can only cite evidence that "Two or three thousand copies each of Venigeim's and Debord's books, for example, had already been circulated in the months proceeding May, particularly in Paris, and an unusual proportion of them had been read by revolutionary workers (according to certain indications it also appears that these two books were the most frequently stolen from bookstores in 1968...)." 67

The limitations of such activism would seem to be fairly well inscribed within the conditions for its execution. Yet the Situationalists brag that with May '68, "la theorie radicale a ete confirmee." That "Le mouvement des occupations a tue le sommeil de tous les maitres de la marchandise, et
And in some ways, Situationalist theory does continue to inform action in the social text. AIDS activist groups such as ACT UP self consciously draw upon de Bord's idea in the construction of their highly visible and visual protests; the Spectacular Times is in fact still being published. Yet the main legacy of the Situationalists remains cultural rather than revolutionary. When asked to prove the effectual presence of Situationalists during the events of May, "read the walls" was a common retort--the walls being covered with the grafitti of Situationalist-inspired slogans from the rather direct "Abolish the University" to the more poetic "Under the pavement, the sea." And indeed, the zany Situationalists comics that appropriated the bubbles of ordinary 50's style romances for revolutionary messages live on in the hallways of American universities decorated with posters comprised of stills from "The Wizard of Oz" with Auntie Em encouraging us to attend some wretched lecture.69

That the Situationalists should have contributed more to a form of campy spectacular advertising than lasting social revolt testifies to the dangers assuming that textual and political radicalism might be accomplished in a single gesture--a danger emblematic of the discourse that surrounds May of '68. The Situationalists attempted to recover an unalienated life--a life marked by personal freedom free of ideology. Interference with the spectacle was an interim
strategy—hopes lay with the society beyond it. The result was the cynical yet profoundly optimistic pursuit of clearly suspect politics. In a startling interview, one young situationalist explained her own manipulation of the spectacle in order to raise money for the cause: "An exposed nipple can become a Revolutionary book." And the book, in turn, works to create a post-ideological life. Brigitte Bardot continues, "...the money goes into the project for the destruction of hierarchical power. Beyond the power structure and ideologies [what] it has fed is another reality. Let it flower, a ferocious flower, bursting through the shit of the given."\textsuperscript{70} Given this aim, the Situational use of aesthethic technologies and their confidence in reading was most appropriate. It is not surprising that they failed to articulate a radical new subjectivity, but instead invoked one characterized by the appeal freedom that marks liberal individualism.

**Autocritique**

In 1967, two years after the publication of the essays collected as *For Marx*, Althusser made an interesting self-accusation in the preface to the Italian language edition of that work. He accused himself of "theoreticism," an error that he later expounded upon in the 1974 work, *éléments d'autocritique*. In this self-criticism he explained that he had been so eager to describe the differences between the early Marx and the later Marx (a post-*German Ideology* Marx)
who he saw as making a complete break with earlier bourgeois ideologies that he—well, here, in the spirit of self-criticism, I should let Althusser confess his own digression:

But instead of explaining this historical fact in all its dimensions—social, political, ideological and theoretical—I reduced it to a simple theoretical fact: to the epistemological "break" which can be observed in Marx's work from 1845 onwards.71

Althusser later explains that it is necessary to do philosophy in metaphors, and sees the source of his error in the tempting yet unhistorical notion of an "epistemological break"—a term borrowed, interestingly enough, from Bachelard.

It would seem that Althusser accused himself of a mistake much like that described by Nancy Fraser above—of subordinating a philosophical history to an account of actual historical conditions. Such a complaint, while clearly pointing out the privileged position assigned to intellectuals under such conditions, nonetheless reproduces the Cartesian separation of "just discourse" from some other, separate and actual reality. I propose to understand the objections to "theoreticism" in a different fashion. For Althusser's mistake was not to confuse image for reality. Nor does a return to historical reality solve difficulties caused by what Althusser supposed was his elevation of theory over practice.

In fleeing from the seemingly privileged intellectual territory of epistemological breaks to describe the changes in the historical Marx—from young Marx to old Marx—Althusser bridged the change between the two not by "actual" history,
but through the invention of a personal history for Marx. Althusser displaces the history of the social body on to the body of Marx. Later, as Althusser’s own troubled personal history would be revealed, Marxism would be conflated into Althusser’s personal history in the form of sensationalistic news stories that implied Marxism as the agent behind Althusser’s murdering his wife. The result of Althusser’s textual bridgings, as with any single conflation of the political and symbolic, is the invention of an individual who uses the displacement of history to assume the subject-position of an intentional agent. Marx is assumed to be a more powerful critic than even the paradigm of historical materialism reflects.

When poststructuralist Marxism assumes the textuality of either the social or economic text the invention of the critic is not far beyond, working against a radical interest in the description of a truly alternative and collective agent. Yet this rewriting of Marxism into the most prevalent of all postmodern tropes (Marx as critic) is hard to avoid. In "Scattered Speculations on Value," Gayatri Spivak describes Marx’s contribution as follows:

Around 1857, Marx set out to unpack the concept-phenomenon money in response to the analyses and crisis managerial suggestions of Frederic Bastiat and Henry Charles Carey, and to the utopian socialist projects endorsed by Proudhon. It is our task to suggest that, by lifting the lid of that seemingly unitary concept phenomenon, Marx uncovered the economic text.
Again, the metaphor of the text informs and allows for the appearance of the subject in this inscription of the cooking, critical Marx.

The assumption that the social resemble texts is both provocative and persuasive, and perhaps even a part of the communist vision of a planned economy. Yet, remarking on the resemblance establishes texts and economies as analogous, a move which makes it most difficult to explore the responsibility they share in inventing each other, and in inventing autonomous others such as the critic. And too often (as with the Situationalists) the resemblance of the interaction of commodities as signfiers to the play of signifiers within a text encourages the idea that underneath so many images remains a lost gold standard. The result is a sense that our commodified life is a strange simulacrum of some other, original and more fun existence marked by a strength of personal will. This Cartesian dualism that would insist the will and the commodity belong to separate realms need not be preserved. In fact, Capital writes the connection between commodification and will not as the evidence of individual intention, but of mutual construction. In the beginning of Chapter II, the chapter which contains the lengthy description of differences between a commodity and its owner (precisely because the differences are not obvious), Marx writes:'

It is plain that commodities cannot go to market and make exchanges on their own account....In
order that these objects may enter into relation with each other as commodities, their guardians must place themselves in relation to one another, as persons whose will resides in those objects, and must behave in such a way that each does not appropriate the commodity of the other, and part with his own, except by mutual consent. This juridical relation, which thus expresses itself in a contract, whether such contract be part of a developed legal system or not, is a relation between the two wills, and is but the reflex of the real economic relation between the two.\textsuperscript{76}

The will of the consumer, then, rather than marking an intrinsic property that becomes displaced onto commodities, results from the textual, contractual relations that define consumer subject positions. As Lyotard has written, "Le capitalisme est l'un des noms de la modernité. Il suppose l'investissement de l'infini sur une instance déjà désignée par Descartes (et peut-être par Augustin, le premier moderne), qui est la volonté." \textsuperscript{77}

The contractual relation that most marks post-Enlightenment modern thought is the legal obligation and privilege incurred by the reader and explicated by the critic. The investment of will required by capitalism is regulated and positioned through this economy that far from being like a text, is managed and positioned through textual relations. And the place of the intellectual in this repeated invention of universal subjects is most suspect, and that which has resulted in poststructuralism's frequent confusion of textual constructions and its own textual analogies. Continuing with Lyotard, "La responsabilité des intellectuels est indissociable de l'idee (partagée) d'un sujet universel."\textsuperscript{78}
It is a symptom of the intellectual subject position to suppose that liberation occurs through textual manipulation. In so far as poststructural critics continue to cling to this belief, they continue to inscribe both the Enlightenment and themselves. But if reading is the means by which these connections are established, we can begin to imagine a poststructuralism that eschews articulation in terms of professionalism, and a poststructuralism that abandons liberatory claims for reading and in the process vanquishes it. But in the mean time, "intellectual" must remain the name we give to the most virulent symptom of texts, economies, and the modern passion for self-willed agency.
NOTES


5. This slippage of agency from the working class to the university is often masked in rewritings of the intellectual work that make it seem analogous to working class labour, such as in formulations of the "intellectual worker." For one such formulation particular to its application to English as a discipline see William Cain, *The Crisis in Criticism: Theory, Literature, and Reform in English Studies* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1984). Antonio Negri has worked out the theory of "post-revolutionary" societies for Marxism in his works, stressing that while the working class may no longer be clearly identifiable, a revolutionary class, consisting of many who do not strictly belong to the working class but who might claim to be "socialized workers," is still possible. See Antonio Negri, *Working Class Autonomy and the Crisis* (1978; London: Red Notes, 1979).


10. For a future collection of bizarre paraphrases of deconstruction, from the *Newsweek* piece, "Intellectual PC is informed by deconstructionism, a theory of literary criticism associated with the French thinker Jacques Derrida. This accounts for the concentration of PC thought in such seemingly unlikely disciplines as comparative literature. Deconstructionism is a famously obscure theory. It is impossible in deconstructionist terms to say if one text is superior to another." One wonders, of course, how comparative literature became especially unlikely. Jerry Adler, et. al., "Taking Offense: Is this the New Enlightenment on Campus or the New McCarthyism?" *Newsweek* December 24, 1990: 48-54; 53.

11. See Micheal Fischer's *Does Deconstruction Make Any Difference: Post-strucutralism and the Defence of Poetry in Modern Criticism* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1985), which amazingly enough, claims "not to take sides."


17. I am indebted throughout this section to Jean Gregorek's paper, "Narrative Erotics: Pulp Fiction and Male Paranoia," presented at the Northeastern Popular Culture Association conference of October 1990, for making the connection between capitalism in crisis (depressions) and the corresponding necessity for a reading matter that threatens and then bolsters male identity. In this way Gregorek describes how reading serves the construction a particularly sexual subjectivity.


20. Henry Brougham, Cheap Literature for the People (London: Taylor, 1858) and Practical Observations upon the Education of the People Addressed to the Working Class and Their Employers (London: Taylor, 1825)


25. F. D. Maurice, "Introductory Lecture by the Professor of English Literature and Modern History at King’s College, London delivered Thursday, October 13," *Educational Magazine* 2 (1840): 278-279. Also cited and discussed in Bacon, 603.


34. Among other complaints about academic freedom, one has been issued by a group of scholars who have authored an article that claims that "academic freedom" is the means by which radical interdisciplinary thought is discouraged as scholars become interested only in directing their own inquiries. See Henry Giroux, David Shumway, Paul Smith and James Sosnoski, "The Need for Cultural Studies: Resisting intellectuals and Oppositional Public Spheres," *Dalhousie Review* 64.2 (Summer 1984): 472-486.


37. While the copyright of *De la Grammatologie* is 1966, it was actually released in 1967.

38. In contrast, Samuel Weber describes *Of Grammatology* as a portrayal of "an institutionalized system of interpretation in which precisely the question of institution itself had come to be obliterated." In the Derridean system, institutions are, according to Weber, not conceived of differently but instead obscured. He continues, "Indeed, this is one, if not perhaps the major effect of what Derrida was describing as the Metaphysics of Presence: the obfuscation of institution as an indispensable, but also inevitably problematic part of the articulation of meaning." Samuel Weber, "Introduction," *Demarcating the Disciplines: Philosophy, Literature, Art* (Glyph Textual Studies I) (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1986): ix.


40. Some argue that the PCF simply slipped up; those more cynical about the possibility for revolutionary action have suggested that the failure of the PCF simply indicated the degree to which any organization, as such, is incapable of revolutionary spontaneity. See Daniel Singer, *Prelude to Revolution: France in May 1968* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1970).


42. Louis Althusser, "A propos de l’articel de Michel Verret sur Mai etudiant," *La Pensee*, May-June 1969: 11. Interestingly enough, for all the blame placed with the PCF, its description of the failings of the student revolution were fairly accurate.


45. *Les Samourais.*


50. D. Cohn-Bendit et J.P. Duteuil, *La Revolte etudiante: les animateurs parlent* (Paris: Ed. du Seuil, 1968): 70. "People wanted to blame Marcuse as our mentor: what a joke. None of us had read Marcuse. Some of use read Marx, maybe Bakunin and from contemporary writers such as Althusser, Mao, Guevara, Lefebvre. All of the political militants of the March 22 movements have read Sartre. But you can't really consider any writer as the inspiration for the movement."


55. Pierre Bourdieu, *Homo Academicus*, Trans. Peter Collier (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1988): 279. Bourdieu presents his interpretation of '68 in the chapter entitled "The Critical Moment," 159-193; see esp. 170-172. Also of interest is the Preface to the English language addition, the only place where French intellectuals who have gained currency in the States, such as Jacques Derrida and Giles Deleuze, are mentioned. Here he rehearses the same argument where the only motive for anti-institutionalism is understood to be frustrated career advancement. He writes of these professors, "they are inclined to react
inpatiently to the discrepancy between their already considerable fame in the outside world, that is, outside of the university and also outside of France, and the subaltern status which is accorded them inside the French university world, in collusion with their contempt and their rejection, by an institution which, when they were adolescents, had attracted and even consecrated them" xix.


59. Quoted in Ferry and Renault, xix.


61. Jacques Derrida, "Ou commence et comment finit un corps enseignant," 57-97; 67. "an efficient and rigorous deconstruction will have to simultaneously develop a practical critique of the current institution of philosophy and engage in a positive even affirmative, audacious, extensive and intensive transformation of the teaching of what is called 'philosophy.'"


68. Enrages et situationnnistes, 211-212. "Radical theory had been confirmed;" also "The occupation movement killed the quietude of the all of rulers of merchandise, and never again will the society of spectacle sleep peacefully."

69. I am grateful to Peter Wollen's point: "For the situationalists '68 proved a 'Bitter Victory.' Indeed, ironically, their contribution to the revolutionary uprising was remembered mainly through the diffusion and spontaneous expression of situationalist ideas and slogans, in graffiti and in posters using detournement (mainly of comic strips, a graphic technique pioneered after 1962) as well as in serried assaults on the routines of everyday life. In short, it was a cultural rather than political contribution, in the sense that the situationalists had come to demand." Peter Wollen, "The Situationalist International," New Left Review 174 (March/April 1989): 67-98; 71.


72. Laura Kipnis treats the conflation of the social body with Marx's personal body and indeed, all post-revolutionary bodies, in her film "Marx: the Video." The script is available through the electronic journal, postmodern culture 1:1 (Sept. 1990).


75. On the similarity between commodities and their owners, it is amusing to note the large numbers of books in since concerned with the history of various commodities. The commodity in question is always described as a self-willed agent of historical change, the model previously reserved for Great Men. A favorite example of mine is Heinrich Edward Jacob's Coffee: The Epic of a Commodity, trans. Eden and Cedar Paul (1934; New York: Viking Press, 1935).

77. "Capitalism is one of the names of modernity. It assumes an investment in infinity through an immediate phenomenon already designated by Descartes (and perhaps by Augustin, the first modern), which is will." Jean Francois Lyotard, "Appendice svelte a la question postmoderne," *Tombeau de l'intellectuel et autres papiers* (Paris: Editions Galilee, 1984): 77-87; 77.

CHAPTER IV

A BODY OF TEXTS:

THE FICTION OF HUMANIZATION IN MEDICAL DISCOURSE

Most of the physical sciences have already felt the presence of one or more representational gadflies, scholars who insist that their models are constructed paradigms (such as described by Thomas Kuhn) rather than real systems. While the acceptance of this idea is still limited, the dissemination of this idea in everything from the current popularity of chaos theory in the popular press to introductory physics textbooks that urge students not to confuse science with actual phenomena indicates the possibility of increasing acceptance. And among literary scholars, the possibilities of finding a model of social construction in the sciences has led to a flurry of activity. Katherine Hayles' 1990 *Chaos Bound: Orderly Disorder in Contemporary Literature and Science* best marks the current efforts to equate chaos theory to literary postmodernism. The paradox of this excitement is almost always found in its enthusiasm for postmodern models of political and social construction and its antithetical excitement about some kind of totalitarian universal field theory. As Antonio Benitez-
Rojo writes in *The Repeating Island: The Caribbean and the Postmodern Perspective*, "Chaos looks toward everything that repeats, reproduces, grows, decays, unfolds, spins, vibrates, seethes; it is as interested in the evolution of the solar system as in the stock market crashes, as involved in cardiac arrhythmia as in the novel or in myth" (3).

If the error of early twentieth century thought was to confuse Einstein's rather rigid and empirically-validatable relativity with an anything goes moral relativism, it seems this interest in proclaiming that models of construction found in chaos theory and postmodern literary theory are the same will be one of the confusions of the latter part of the century. But in fact this kind of discipline-bending is hardly new, nor is it really the process by which we might expect to forge a more flexible science or respectable social theory. For the disciplines have always used interdisciplinary exchange to foster their own separateness. By examining interdisciplinary phenomena, I hope to show how we might best avoid the constant displacement of our salvation, and hence the consistent invention of rigid boundaries for our thought.

I. Be all You Can Be: Locating Humanism in the Body

My internist has a print of Rembrandt's "Anatomy of Dr. Nicolas Tulp" hanging over his desk. At first I was
uneasy seeing such a graphic depiction of the two aspects of medicine most horrible and mysterious to the layperson (cutting and corpses) decorating the office of a seemingly affable family physician. I have since comforted myself by noting none of Dr. Tulp's distinguished colleagues observing the dissection are actually looking at the body--instead their scholarly gaze is focused elsewhere--on the enormous opened book, propped up at the corpse's feet in the right foreground. One of the doctors, assumed by art historians to be Dr. Hartman Hartmansz, holds in his hand yet another text.

But increasingly I am troubled by what seems to be the rather slender difference between the treatment of bodies in medicine and the construction of texts in literary criticism. Indeed, it will be my argument here that it would be a mistake to see the advent of clinical medicine and birth of the humanities as separate historical moments. To some extent, the power of medicine over the corpse issues first from the authority of the text at its feet. Yet the construction is mutual: if the text assists in the construction of the body as an object of knowledge, that body also invents the apparent need for the philosophical text. Dr. Tulp may seem to invent the body himself, yet beyond the frame of the picture are the members of the audience (the dissection took place in a public theatre, as was the custom) whose spectatorship lends him his authority. And as Francis Barker has suggested, that historical audience might well have included both Descartes and
Rembrandt, who legitimized Dr. Tulp's work even as his enterprise informed and legitimized their own pursuits. It is impossible to imagine medicine without Cartesian dualism; Rembrandt's artistic gaze serves above all to extend the spectacular authority of the dissection theatre. Nor does the chain of complicity stop with this merely binary exchange of legitimizing practices: Rembrandt, after all, would eventually become Dr. Tulp's patient, having taken to bed for an entire season, convinced his bones were made of wax.

In this textualized negotiation of categories and authorities, medicine and the humanities take on their seemingly disparate disciplinary boundaries precisely because of these complex networks of legitimation and complicity. Disciplinary boundaries are both patrolled and constantly shifting; sometimes they are renegotiated, sometimes even border-raided. The increasingly tendency of both medicine and humanism to describe all varieties of bodies, texts, and social phenomena as textualized constructions only seem to indicate the beginnings of true interdisciplinary cooperation. The increasing acceptance within medicine of the textual qualities of the body is hardly a melding of disciplines so much as it is a way reconstituting a humanity (claimed and defined by the humanities) to which medicine, as a discipline, might lay claim.

In the *Glands of Destiny* (1927), Dr. Ivo Geikie-Cobb undertook a study of what he felt was the determinate role of
the endocrine system in personality formation. Catherine the Great was entirely motivated by her ovaries, Henry the VIII by his thyroid. That his conclusions seem quaint, improbable, and perhaps even laughable today might be one way of marking the paradigmatic shift in medicine's attitude towards the body from the beginning of this century to its closing years. This shift is usually understood as a moving away from the body-centered essentialisms first developed in the 18th century towards a medical practice that appreciates the entire patient as both a social and biological being and has been well documented on the level of both society and of individual medical practice. The once wide-spread practice of keeping knowledge of fatal illness from patients is now almost universally replaced by the understanding that patients are entitled to know as much as possible about their conditions, and whenever possible, participate in medical decision making. 4

The present day patient is encouraged to draw on social strengths and family connections to bolster her strength—suddenly it is the patient, not the doctor, who is portrayed as having an increasingly active role in the healing process. Nor is this paradigmatic shift from the "physician as hero" to the "patient as hero" apparent only to health-care practitioners. 5 Even T.V. doctor shows and their Marcus Welby-type patriarchs are forever changed: in the fall of 1990 NBC began showing "Lifestories," described as "a many sided look at illness from the viewpoint of the patient." 6
For the most part, this change has been heralded as a long awaited humanization of medicine; the dawn of an age where patients might serve as equal partners with their physician in the health care process. As reasonable as this description seems, and as difficult it is even seemingly to argue against patient involvement, I am disturbed by the suggestion that the augmentation of the medical model with discourses borrowed from the humanities will automatically dispel any unsavory power imbalance that might have marked the physician-patient relationship previously. A revised medical practice would after all not simply turn the physician-patient relationship on its head as much as it would challenge the established relationships of persons and bodies that allow for professionalized power relations. For the relationship of persons and bodies that informs each of the empirical sciences—the assumption that the body has a separate and experimentally determinable existence entirely apart from its inhabitant’s humanity—is hardly an assumption that the humanities are in a position to challenge. The humanities participate just as thoroughly in this Cartesian paradigm by proposing to serve the life of the mind.

Hence medical power can hardly erase itself simply by referencing humanism. As William Ray Arney and Bernard J. Bergen (following Foucault) have noted, "We may have to suspend the seemingly self-evident idea that to study power we must focus on exclusionary practices. Instead of asking why
medicine tries to keep patients alienated in the medical encounter (as if self-evidently it does so the argument would go), we may have to ask why medicine has started to include patients as partners in medical work." Instead of accepting medicine's appropriation of humanistic discourse as a token of its breach with its own past, it is important to investigate how its old powers are cloaked by appropriated discourse. In order to enact such an investigation, I understand medical power, just as I understand the humanities, to operate first through the assignment of humanity to bodies, even if it has traditionally bracketed humanity from its own studies. For it would be impossible to accuse medicine of cruelly forgetting the humanity of its patients if that humanity were not already invented and separated out from the body.

So the assignment of individuals to what Howard Brody calls the "sick role" is not the simple result of evil practitioners enjoying a power trip fueled by a perverse sense of personal gratification. Individuals instead find themselves assigned to the "subject-position" of a patient through a more complex set of discursive interactions. The more progressive scholars in the medical humanities have been replacing standard conceptions of the patient as a temporarily compromised, free-willed agent with this Foucauldian understanding of the patient as the marker of a person interpellated into a subject-position to great effect. By
eliminating individual motives or agency from the description of institutional developments, a sketch of the relationship between fields of knowledge, cultural commodities, and the medical institution may be developed. For instance, Edward Shorter, in Beside Manners: The Troubled History of Doctors and Patients, is able to suggest that it was the increasing importance of biochemistry and the miracle drug industry in twentieth century medicine, rather than the behavior or decisions of individual doctors, that originally encouraged the "scientific" rather than personal treatment of the patient. The benefit of this methodological focus on the institution of medicine is its understanding that all cultural or historical variants that occur in the practice of medicine remain social technologies—tools for an institution. In this sense, the basic function of medical discourse's power—the invention of patients as particular kinds of subjects—has not changed much even if subject-positions shift from requiring the patient to fill a "sick role" (the perfect consumer of miraculous biochemical products) to that of "mutual partner."

Yet the revelation that medicine proceeds from a textual basis as much as an empirical one is often presented as the final laying bare of scientific power. The fact that even this meta-discourse constructs the body in a certain way, namely as a text, and thus encourages the displacement of that body elsewhere as a body of texts is often overlooked. Thus
while Shorter describes the patient of the earlier 20th century as a consumer of miracle drugs and medicine's increasing biochemical prowess; I suspect this patient now metaphorically consumes the belief that acknowledging the discourses acting on and inventing the patient as a kind of text is a sufficient guarantee of humanization and a kinder, gentler medicine. The disciplinary and institutional conditions that would make such a thought thinkable are my interests here.

David Armstrong writes that this new, more socially aware medical gaze "identifies disease in the spaces between people, in the interstices of relationships, in the social body itself" and sees its manifestation in the increasing emphasis placed on public health and preventative medicine which disperses a medical power once concentrated in a specific physical space, the hospital, and relocates a pathology from a particular biological place, the body, to entire social spheres (one thinks of "at-risk" populations). 12

From a traditional viewpoint it might seem odd to find a science extending its claim beyond the physical world—yet it is this very extension of medical power to the social space that makes it a little easier to see that even modern medicine proceeds in a decidedly unempirical fashion from representation to observation rather than vice-versa. Armstrong, for instance, writes that the medical student is taught to see the anatomical atlas not as a representation of
the body, "but the body as a representation of the atlas" (2). Foucault has termed this dynamic the "medical gaze"—the process by which physicians construct patients by "seeing" some previously represented medical pathology inscribed on their body. While scholars such as Areny, Bergen and Armstrong have done a fine job of extending Foucault’s landmark analysis and examining the new medical technology and as part of the "medical gaze," I think that the over-extension of the visual metaphor obscures the complicity of the humanities in the construction of power. Understanding the gaze as the sole constructing agent of power runs the risk of once again too neatly aligning bodies with subjects, which leads to a binary model of power—she who is stared at and she who stares. Not only does such a model assume that the physician is an agent in a discourse where it is more appropriate to assume that she simply serves a different subject-position, but it also supposes that the invention of subjectivity unproblematically occurs completely and instantly through a single clinical glance.

Medical discourse is first textualized and often aestheticised before it becomes manifested in practice as a clinical gaze, and thus before corrective remedies may be undertaken. Because the medical student must look up from the "atlas" --the textual discourse of training--before she may set about the practice of medicine on bodies, an examination
of medicine's discursive practices, as those moments when medicine is most clearly reliant on notions of textual aestheticism, is most important in rethinking the similar ways in which the sciences and humanities establish power, and the similar way in which bodies become the stuff and site of that power. 14 I will examine the similarity in two types of texts associated with medicine: the medical training novel, and the case history.

II. The Book Doctors: Medical Training Novels and Medical Authority

Oddly enough, the medical discursive practice to earn the greatest amount of attention in recent years from both the commercial publishing market and from the New England Journal of Medicine is the proliferation of fictional and non-fictional accounts of a young doctor's first years in internship or residency. Many older professionals resent these "shrill" complaints that seem to have captured the public's interest over the "sedate and homely writings of country doctors." 15 Whether one regrets or celebrates the appearance of this genre, it is quite clear that the change is associated with changes in the expression of medical power—and many scholars are tempted to understand the change from memoir to critique as a parallel to the change from a medical paradigm based on doctors' absolute authority to a model of patient participation. This new style of critique, like the
shift in medicine itself, is often credited with astounding powers. One physician, writing for one of the country's most respected medical journals, understood the phenomenon in this way:

[Medicine] has held a mystique rivalled only by that of the Central Intelligence Agency. Unlike the CIA, the inner workings which have only been partly revealed by government reports and former agent's memoirs, medicine's hidden worlds have been progressively unveiled over the past twenty years in a large number of works. There is little that remains behind closed doors. 

It is easy to agree with the doctor's understanding that the attraction of these books is based on the intrigue of examining a powerful institution that creates its power and mystique through the delicate and provocative technique of partial disclosure. But what seems most surprising about this characterization of the genre is the implication that these works have already successfully stripped the medical profession entirely bare of its mystique and prestige once and for all.

Even the most optimistic humanities scholar would most likely blanch at the notion that a particular brand of texts could break an entire discipline overnight. Yet within the "new" medicine there is an amazing confidence in the powers of the written word—and ironically, the medical training genre is for many physicians the mark of the humanistic impulse of the discipline. "Ironic" because a genre that usually sees publication in small paperbacks with colorful and dramatic
pictures on the front cover is usually not credited (at least not by humanities scholars) with the range of humanization attributed to "higher" literatures. Yet many of the physician-authors of these novels are convinced of the genre's power. In the tenth anniversary edition of his enormously popular *House of God*, Samuel Shem includes an introduction which lists ten salient points on "How to Remain Human," suggestions which range from the importance of selecting a pleasant town in which to train to the imperative to "think globally and act locally" if "change" is to be made a priority. Many physician-authors have invoked the supposedly character-forming qualities of reading, and cite a list of cure-alls available to the general practitioner who embarks upon an appropriate and professionally directed reading program that includes everything from a greater understanding of the snarly ethical dilemmas of genetic engineering to the development of better administrative skills. Courses for medical students in the medical humanities are offered by an increasing variety of medical schools, and even those physicians who object to the idea of such courses do so not on the grounds that the humanities are unimportant, but because they are too special to be taught. While Gerald Weissmann implies that medical humanities courses are too wimpy for medical students ("by the time they arrive in medical school, students ought to be left alone to chew the
meat of our tough new science"), it is not because he doesn’t think that "culture" is unimportant to the physician, only that "We would be better advised to teach medicine to cultivated students rather than culture to medical students."

Yet the medical training novel, with its handy check-list for humanization, seems to have become an almost parodic—but understandably convenient—version of the impulse of medicine to seek the aid of culture.

Writing for a non-medical audience has itself come to serve as a testimony to the cultivation and humanity of the doctor-author. The creative act becomes the place to delcare that the young medico is successfully resisting dehumanization, and unlike other doctors, still cares about culture. One medical student-poet put it this way: "Every line of poetry I write while in medical school makes me proud of having retained the creative spirit for one more day against great odds."

Nor does this commitment to the higher things in life take a lot of time out of the aspiring physician’s busy schedule. Melvin Konner writes about reading the plays of Lorca as a medical student: "I had enough time to read only a few pages a day, on the bus, after studying my obstetrics manual. Yet this was enough to keep me in touch with the world of literature and thought. It gave me a sense of transcendence...."

Yet in its outraged exposure of medical cruelty and in its clear recommendations for a more human medicine, the
medical training novel often serves as substitute for actual institutional change. For if some physicians hold great confidence in the power of the "medical expose" to patrol the moral boundaries of the profession, the usual form of the genre itself is quite ill-suited to revolutionary reform. The basic, traditional form of the medical training novel follows almost exactly that of the Bildungsroman: the hero invariably transforms initial confusions and incompetence into an enhanced sense of individualism achieved through the performance of remarkable deeds. As such, then, the novels typically detail the process by which physicians purchase their own self-esteem at the cost of understanding their patients as anything other than the objects on which they work their science. In this sense we might be suspicious of the extent to which this genre serves as a radical critique of medicine as a discipline and the extent to which it creates the conditions for its existence. As a humanistic critique of the reductions and cruelties of empirical science, the genre might even be necessary for the protection of those very privileges about which it seemingly complains. Indeed, it is my argument that these books by residents and interns (and increasingly, even medical students) do less to bare the secrets of medicine than to participate in the changing medical discourse that articulates power even while it distracts with alibis—alibis largely borrowed from the humanities, alibis which understand self-reflection and
exposure to serve only humanistic ends and which fashion the sanctity of the medical mission. Yet as I plan to demonstrate, these alibis are not simply excuses borrowed from an otherwise innocent humanism—indeed, the image of "borrowing" is inadequate to the extent to which medicine and the humanities represent the same social technology. Although humanism is understood today as an opposition to science, humanism itself was conceived at least since Kant, along with science, as the rational alternative to religion. In this sense humanism has always borrowed the "grounds" for rationality from the sciences. We should not be surprised, then, to find them working together to invent the most visible ideological creation of our time--the bourgeois individual, perhaps the only historical subject arrogant enough to find in the body's literal singularity a sense of the uniquely human that might transcend all law—natural and historical.

Despite the growing suspicion of humanism's bedfellows (rampant individualism, for instance), most scholars of the medical humanities are prepared to praise works by young medicos on the grounds that stories about the medical profession serve to democratize the power base of medicine simply by providing a complete picture of the exhausted practitioners and poor service that endanger health care consumers. This notion that one might "read more about it" to regain a measure of control over an unexamined situation is, of course, as old as the humanities and as popular as consumer
advocacy. Indeed, Stephanie Kiceluk, one of the first scholars to explore these works from the perspective of the humanities writes, "There might be something subversive about the experience of literature—about telling stories and wanting to know the whole story; and there is something liberating, even therapeutic, in finally getting the whole story." But it is precisely what Kiceluk astutely notes, that there might be something therapeutic about stories, that alarms me. Often medicine and literature find themselves engaged in similar social technologies, and because of this it is naive to assume that the humanities might serve to effect a simple rescue of the scientific even as the scientific might enrich the scope of the humanities. Yet this is the model of the medical humanities as it is usually invoked—too often a simple prescription whereby literature provides the ethical component lacking in medicine, and medicine provides literary types with an invigorating dose of materialism, as if disciplinary blindspots are minor enough to be corrected by an additive model.

In short, there is no vast gulf between the individual and the institutional body, no distance between aestheticized discourse (literature) and clinical sciences, that makes it possible to talk of one without justifying the other. Aesthetics was originally a discourse grounded in the body. It was about, in Terry Eagleton’s terms, "the whole of our sensate life together." The grand struggle of Kant’s Critique
of Judgement both provides the model of modern critical theory as a meta-discourse and defines aesthetic judgement as that which serves as a bridge between bodily sensations and abstract notions of beauty or sublimity. Eagleton continues to describe aesthetics’ focus on the body:

The aesthetic concerns this most gross and palpable dimension of the human, which post-Cartesian philosophy, in some curious lapse of attention, has somehow managed to overlook. [The aesthetic represents] the first stirrings of a primitive materialism—of the body’s long inarticulate rebellion against the tyranny of the theoretical.²⁴

Aestheticizing representation bridges the gap between bodies and embodiment, and is in this sense the same thing as interpellation. As Katharine Young notes, the status of medical discourse depends on its success in banishing the grotesque or unembodied, uncontainable body from its purview. Medicine thus begins with an abstraction (a disease) which is then lodged, as empiricism requires, in some specific pathology of the body. If literary criticism seeks to extract meaning from the text, thus working in the opposite direction as medicine, both depend on the fantasy of embodiment. There is a certain sense, then, in which bodies and texts are the same things—semi-autonomous, bounded entities described and protected by the discourses that invent them. The corpse, the uninhabited body, is much the same threat a literary work without an author.

Medicine and the humanities, then, have shared this interest in creating bodies through description, medicine
inventing the physical body as the object of its clinical discourse while philosophy attempted to describe the body in such a way as to be of service to the bourgeois subject who imagines the human individual to be powerful, unique, and wholly idealistic. These disciplines do not merely create the need for each other but depend on each other's existence. The notion that the human subject transcends the body is unthinkable without attention first being drawn to the body. Hence it is when pathology is located in the body that the category of more-than-body becomes thinkable as a Cartesian soul or residual human essence irreducible to the physical.

As this unpenetrable, unanatomical idea of the human subject is invented, medicine claims the body while the humanities claim to safeguard all that is uniquely and unempirically human; even as they continue to lend, borrow and extend these privileges to constitute their own disciplinary authority.

The medical-training genre tends to replay this symbiotic dynamic with interesting variations. In each case, though, the harshness of the clinical gaze creates a category of humanity that comes to reside somewhere just on the edge of the visible. Consider Doctor X, an especially fine student of the bilsungsroman who wrote one of the earliest and most renowned examples of the genre, the 1965 expose, *Intern.* At the start of the book, and of his training (the pattern of this genre is usually one of a strict chronology) he is nauseated and overwhelmed by the invasive procedures he is
required to perform, and is barely able to make himself complete some of the nastier routine "scut work," including the insertion of an IV catheter into a baby's jugular vein. Soon, though, he is acting and talking like a real pro, and by the time he rotates to obstetrics and gynecology he cavalierly refers to patients as "babes" and has adopted a disarming way of rating women's personal worth on their demeanor while undergoing labor and delivery (actually it is still a part of contemporary house office slang to rate some patients as "NAT"--"Not a Trooper"). He says, clearly disapproving of one women's successful attempt to get through delivery without medication (given the hospital's tendency to prescribe amnesiacs in the place of anesthesia, this seemed like a good choice to me), "She was a good looking girl, too, about twenty three or twenty four years old, good looking girl too, but God! What an unyielding type!" And as he continues his classifications, "Another girl who did well was kind of a goon-girl who acted half-stupified all through her labor"(133). It is a little too pat to simply accuse Dr. X of not caring for these brave women. Rather, it is important to understand that if humanity is what is left out when medicine treats patients as mere conditions, it is understandable that this humanity would first manifest itself in the self-esteem of the medical practitioner; if humanity is discovered in the patient it is from some excess of the physician's: perhaps the doctor has an unexpected luxury of time during rounds, and
"discovers" the personality of his patient; perhaps the doctor is feeling especially pleased with his own role, and the result is a kind of transference of personality to the patient.

In Under the Ether Dome Stephen Hoffmann describes his early days as an incredibly enthusiastic intern: "I wanted to be up all night. I wanted to be called to see people who were having chest pain, who were bleeding, or who had arrested" (37). Part of Dr. Hoffmann's enthusiasm extended to making an extra round in the evening where he "harbored no ulterior intent" except to comfort his patients, and unsurprisingly, he represents both his patients and himself as most fully human only in these moments. Only the excess of this young intern's energy for playing doctor in rare combination with a perceived luxury of time could make such "humanity" possible. For the strange paradox of post-Cartesian thought is that, like Dr. Armstrong's anatomical atlas, the possibility of the transcendental individual (who understands a unique human quality that is definable only in opposition to transient bodily qualities) always requires the firm outline of the merely physical body on which to place its complex overlaying transparencies, and from which to deduce that the excess marks a supreme value.

The Bildungsroman formula, in so far as it uses the figure of the physician as extraordinary being as the most basic outline from which to build, then, has obvious
limitations as an instrument of health care reform. The genre, however, is changing as rapidly as the medical profession itself. No longer coherent narratives of a young hero's acquisition of knowledge and well-being, the typical expose of medical training today is more apt to resemble books such as *Year-Long Night: Tales of a Medical Internship* which provide confusing montages of incidents entirely without a narrative unity. The traditional medical Bildungsroman always relied heavily on the unifying presence of the doctor for its narrative coherency, which leant even the most unconnected listings a kind of logic, cohesion and even drama. It is tempting enough to read this as a sign of progress, as an indication that physicians are willing to sacrifice some of their prestige. Yet medical power is more a result of the outline which it inscribes for its patients than for its most privileged practitioners. There is some evidence that the Bildungsroman formulae lives on, not in the narratives that physicians make overtly about themselves, but in the ones they make overtly about patients, but in which they are nonetheless covertly inscribed as heroes: the case history.

III. Authorizing Medicine: the Case History

Pathology is not merely found, but inscribed, not only on, but as the human body. Pathology as a concept has been useful to society in providing both a convincing description of society's others (as mad, as dangerously ill, as
contagious) as well as isolating the danger of the pathological state to actual bodies which might in turn be isolated from society.27 Pathology first exists as a text, as an abstraction that can then be displaced to the physicality of the body. As often as not, in modern medicine, that text is the case history. We are not surprised, then, to realize that the case history is as often about the role of the physician as about the actual patient. In Under the Ether Dome, Stephen Hoffmann describes starting the day’s paperwork, thinking only how the patient’s cases would reflect his own role in the drama of their care:

Each day on call was a novel waiting to be written, a novel in which I would figure as both narrator and participant. Perhaps I could influence the outcome, I would tell myself, author favorable changes in the turn of events. Like as ghostwriter behind the voice of fate, I could try to slant the day’s story to advantage. I might initiate a medication on a patient in the hope of modifying his disease or take a seat at his side, hoping to alter his perception of the disease instead. Or maybe I would operate behind the scene.... (40)

It is not hard to read the case history as a summary of this narrative that the young Dr. Hoffman imagines for himself.

The case history is one of the chief medical genres, and perhaps the point at which the relationship between science and the humanities is most clear. The standard form for the case history, the Atchley Form, reminds physicians of their dual service to science and aesthetics: while it directs that the case should be described in so precise and quantitative a fashion that it would be possible to graph, it also instructs
the physician to "tell a story" in "graceful" English. 28 Here causality serves to both present an orderly history and tell a story about the efficiency and quality of the medical care provided. The traditional case history, then, is as much a persuasive and often fictional story about the fine quality of medical care being administered as it is a part or record of that care. Nor is this aspect of the case history simply a precaution in case of lawsuit. Consider Dr. Rosalie Slaughter Morton, summarizing the case of an artist-patient in 1937 in the traditional fashion, well before the age of malpractice:

Beatrice: 23 years old; history—pain growing progressively worse, recurring at regular intervals accompanied by three days incompetency, fatigue unduly increased by standing; examination—diagnosed extreme displacement of a pelvic organ; operation restored position to normal; results—symptoms disappeared; prize winner in a national competition; gratitude.... 29

That Dr. Morton would present her patient's professional accomplishments as an immediate result of surgery in a story where gratitude serves its own necessary narrative place, is indicative of the role of case history in shaping the patient as a subjectivity "freed" by medical intervention. The price of that freedom was first accepting the body as a prison from which deliverance of the higher human qualities was possible, and it is this ontotheological discourse of redemption which medicine secularizes.

Even if the new case history successfully understands the social context of the patient as a complex web that stops
neither at the body nor the hospital walls, the character of the case history as the textual place in which both a patient's oppression and redemption are fashioned remains. Consider an example of a "case history" concerned with social context:

Luis Fontana was triaged to the trauma section of the Emergency Room. A sixteen year old Hispanic, he had tried to kill himself by slashing his stomach in a long slit from one flank to the other. The wound has superficial, never piercing through protective layers of muscle....his girlfriend of five months had left him. His parents separated, and his family poor. His parents, who had been unmarried, had fought incessantly at home. I learned that he had no one to talk to. 

In many ways, this paragraph from Robert Klitzman's pseudo-fictional account of his internship is stylistically indistinguishable from that of a more traditional case history. From its strange implicated causalities ("A sixteen year old Hispanic, he tried to kill himself") to its crisp narrative efficiency, the passage resembles greatly the patient's history as retold by a physician, emphasizing what is of greatest importance. That this case history belongs to a "new" generation more interested in social history hardly matters in the basic construction of the genre. Although Klitzman does not present himself explicitly as the hero of his account, he has nonetheless given a case history that at every step promises the possibility of medical intervention in the chain of already overdetermined causalities, whether that narrative notes the progression of a bacterial infection to meningitis or the disposition of a young Hispanic man to
suicide attempts. Whether the case history includes social
details such as make up the fictional history of Luis Fontana,
or is a carefully constructed document meant to protect the
physician from malpractice, the result is still the textual
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precondition of treatment—the identification of a textualized
pathology that must be grafted on the body invented to house
it. In Samuel Shem's novel The House of God, Roy, the
besieged intern, learns his lessons from a savvy resident
called the "Fat Man" who teaches him what he didn't learn at
BMS (the Best Medical School). The Fat Man's basic
principle for medical survival (of the doctor, not the
patient—one of his maxims is THE PATIENT IS THE ONE WITH THE
DISEASE) is to treat texts, not bodies. The Fat Man conducts
rounds by flipping through index cards rather than seeing
actual patients, and teaches his "terns" (interns) to avoid
treating the older, sicker patients at all. As Roy and his
fellow "terns" start to use the patients' medical charts to
spin elaborate fictions about non-existent lab tests ordered,
results received, and treatments undergone, their patients do
indeed recover, and their faith in the Fat Man is cemented. In a final irony, the House of God has been so popular that contemporary house officers often deliberately tailor their own references to medical terms to match the slang in some cases invented by the novel (Konner 314).

The idea that science is a symbolically constructed and regulated (and in this sense aesthetic) system rather than a completely immediate description of reality is perhaps not that radical. Perri Klass, writing of her training in pediatrics, admitted that "Every person is a story, every patient is a story. When I admit a new patient to the hospital, I start writing the endings in my head...And if every patient is a story, then what am I, with my clipboard in my hand, my stethoscope around my neck? Am I the reader, am I the translator, maybe, or am I part of the narrative voice?" Yet the notion that the connection between medicine and the body is arbitrary, negotiated only by a slippery slope of texts and paradigms, case histories and "scientific" models, does work against the understanding of medicine as the practical application of science. If the scandal of medicine is that the patient body is connected to medicine not through a perfect empiricism but through an imperfect representation, then the medical discourse which suggests that the tie to the patient’s social sphere be strengthened, repairs rather than exposes medical legitimation strategies. 32
In the vigorous pursuit of the medical humanities, then, we need to remember that it is impossible to read medicine without constructing bodies. The bodies we construct are bodies of texts. As such they are no less coercive than the bodies upon which medicine works, no less a part of institutional sinew. The mark of textuality on the bodies medicine treats is not an indication of the triumph of the descriptive model of the humanities of over that of the empirical sciences. Yet such textualization might be used as a starting place for the study of the social technologies that mark our own complicit participation in the implementation of dominant paradigms we supposed we resisted.
NOTES


2. I am indebted to Amy Shuman, Katharine Young and George Hartley for their careful reading and helpful critical suggestions on various drafts of this paper. I am also grateful to David McArtor for valuable research assistance. James Allen, M.D. is responsible for allowing me access to medical education; I am no less grateful for being certain that we disagree about the results of my experience.


4. For a description of the societal shift, see David Armstrong, *Political Anatomy of the Body: Medical Knowledge in Britain in the Twentieth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983). Other authors note the same shift on a much smaller scale. According to one such study, it was on or about 1970 that doctors decided patients had the right to know if they were suffering from a fatal disease. See Barrie R. Cassileth, Robert V. Zupkis, Katherine Sutton-Smith, and Vicki March, "Information and Participation Preferences among Cancer Patients," *Annals of Internal Medicine* 92 (1980): 832-836; 832.


10. The term "subject-position" does imply that patients and other subjects are the end result of a network of power relations, yet the term itself evidences the increasing scholarly awareness that bodies are invented as certain kinds of subjects through entire networks of discursive power relations. For "subject-position" is Foucault's apt name for the result of the simultaneous construction of the body and the subject (equally fictitious) by various cultural and political forces. The intersection of these forces at the site of the body make it only seem as if the body were an individual agent—hence Foucault maintains the use of the word "subject." Yet persons are not so much real subjects as guises which obscure the agency of more subtle forces—hence they occupy "subject-positions." Foucault spells out his use of "subject-position" in Michel Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, trans. A.M. Sheridan Smith (1969; New York: Pantheon Books, 1972): Chapter Four especially.


14. I understand the "humanities" here to be the institutionalized form of humanism, much as clinical medicine might be understood as the institutional version of empiricism. For more on the similarity of the construction of texts in the humanities and bodies in medicine, and the institutional ramifications of this similarity for the locale of the humanities (specifically, university departments engaged in literary study), See Susan Ritchie, "The Anatomy of Autonomy: Books, Bodies, and Nazis," forthcoming.


21. As noted in Stephanie Kiceluk, "Revising the 'Two Cultures' Script": 242-261.


23. Consider, for example William Monroe’s review of Charles Anderson’s book on Richard Selzer—a review which depends very much on the disturbing portrait of a virile male scholar attacking a feminized body of knowledge: "Anderson’s writing could make surgeons better doctors, more effective healers. My hope is that Anderson’s book will also find its way into the hands of would be writers and teachers and critics. Those of us primarily concerned with the production, distribution and evaluation of culture and cultural artifacts would do well to ground ourselves...in the ligaments and tissues of bodies themselves. While the surgeon may commit rape with a scalpel, many poets in their impotence and suspicion have lost the desire to embrace, to touch what is there." William Monroe, "Desperately seeking Selzer." *Medical Humanities Review* 4:1 (Jan, 1990): 32-35; 34-35.


25. Doctor X. *Intern* (New York: Harper & Row, 1965). Doctor X has since come forth as Dr. Alan Nourse, author of the more recent novel *Practice*.


28. The Atchley Form, despite its name, does not provide physicians with a simple series of blanks to fill in like the medical history form that often awaits patients on the first office visit. Rather, as the directions make clear, the doctor is instructed to achieve both an objective standard and subjective finesse. The instructions read: "a good history should be so precise and quantitative that its essential features could be charted on graph paper with a time coordinate; a good history should be so comprehensive that succeeding physicians need not interrogate further; a good history should 'tell a story'...and orderly and interpretive chronicle written in graceful and concise English." The Atchley form is quoted and further discussed in Kiceluk, "Revising the Two Cultures," 255.


32. Lest I be understood as calling for an end to medicine altogether, I'd like to point out that the arbitrary relationship between medicine and bodies is only a scandal to medicine's legitimization strategies, and not to the idea of health care itself: no one would think to refuse to cash a paycheck, for instance, on the grounds that it represents only an abstract of actual hours worked, or for that matter, refuse money as it is only metaphorical of some imaginary gold standard. Bodies understood without the aid of a true empiricism might still be treated.
CHAPTER V

REPRESENTATIVE BODIES, REVOLTING BODIES:

THEORY, DEATH, AND THE POSSIBILITY OF OPPOSITIONAL DISCOURSE

This is in fact, the first chapter of my next book. I understand, of course what this chapter is supposed to be. The dictates of academic responsibility hold that the last chapter of a work must be that which points in a positive direction; that which, amongst so much critique, asserts a positive model; defines what is sometimes termed an "oppositional discourse." But "oppositional discourse" is finally an impossible paradox, implying as it does that some discourse is in substance hegemonic, other discourse (the kind that is hard to find, or difficult to create) oppositional.

I can only understand the insistence that an academic work demonstrate its originality by inaugurating a positive, discursive intervention as one more strategy by which difference is systematically erased and replaced by the homogenous quality that has in these liberal, critical institutions of late modernity that mark our profession so successfully masqueraded under the guise of the unique. My goal here has been, rather, to understand opposition as that which lies in the impossibly heterogenous voices and actants
which compose even the most hegemonic discourse; indeed; it is my contention that reading, the local technology of what I will call here representational ideology, continually discourages us from what might be our most valuable work. As the argument goes, if calls to political resistance are visible, they must not be subversive: an assumption which implies that subversion is finally and necessarily unrepresentable; that hegemony is unproblematically and homogeneously in complete control of everything, all the time; and that resistance only comes from the outside of a given system.  

We do not need to invent a new oppositional discourse so much as we need to understand the oppositional components of hegemonic discourses that present themselves as homogenous (and by the same token, we need to understand the components of seemingly oppositional discourse that remains hegemonic). I have in the process of this exposition sought to avoid using what I will come to call "representational ideology" as a part of my own methodology; I have sought, instead, to replace representation with what Donna Haraway has called articulation.  

I understand, though, the necessity of indicating through the gesture to originality the existence of a scholarly frontier. "Original" scholarship, indicates, after all, if not invents, the landscapes of thought that might yet be colonized by this fin-de-siecle market of global intellectual production that has served as the raw material for so much of
its own generations. And so I trust in the almost obligatory gesture towards a future book. In this sense, I understand my project not as the blueprint for an oppositional discourse, but a document issued from "the menaced space of the emergent dominant." My next book will discuss the politics of representation as the logical extension of my treatment of reading as a social technology. Representation, after all, by convincing us that what we are presented with is always only a stand-in for some real thing, drives the chain of cause and effect that we call reading. Representation, then, remains the only ideological umbrella under which practice and theory (agency and symbol) are united. Critique, in its attempt to strip away the ideological layers of text to expose the "real" presence re-presented in the text, would seem to be an attempt to stop reading, to halt forever the incredible longing and dissatisfaction that keeps us turning the page and mining the social text for pure, hermeneutical nuggets. In this sense criticism is necessarily empirical. Empiricism, after all, is above all a name for the site where the bridge between the unrepresentable "real" and its symbolic expression in discourse is claimed as most accurate and direct (not to mention remunerative).

Yet as I have argued, criticism is in the business of both empiricism and humanism; for an ultimately successful empiricism left to its own devices would attempt to deliver
the Real which would finally be the death of the bourgeois knowing subject. As Stuart Schneiderman writes in his discussion of Lacan's conception of the real, "the real is most real when we are not there; and when we are there, the real does not adapt itself or accommodate itself to our being there. The concept of the real implies the annihilation of the subject." Criticism, in so far as it contextualizes texts into a larger and supposedly knowable but always incomplete history, insures the perpetual motion of reading as a continual production of meaning, discourse, and subjects by postponing forever any empirical certainty. Criticism's claim to knowledge requires both empiricism and the sublime's "unrepresentability." Reading must, after the logic of the Kantian sublime, invent the longing for the absolute presence of the unrepresentable even as it delivers substitutes.

Of course, there was never any danger of criticism or even the more traditional empirical sciences suddenly stumbling on the real; the real is the untheorized moment on which knowledge discourses of all kinds depend, but can never finally articulate. Yet after the fashion of aesthetic ideology, reading continues to traffic in the impossible Real, promising the empirical political, and inventing instead the social text. And yet as I argued in Chapter One, we should not think this textualizing to be a particular failing of contemporary cultural studies. The "social text" names all that which centuries, now, of modern criticism has delivered
within the boundaries of acceptable representation—in this sense "social text" is perhaps a name more honest about its exclusions than the earlier name for the object of critical study: "culture."

Clearly, though, it is not enough only to substitute an empirical model with a model based on social construction. There has been an increasing critical dissatisfaction with some of the dead end problems that a largely textual model of social construction have posed, especially for an explicitly political criticism. The representation of the social by the textual, as Donna Haraway has argued, is dangerous to a full understanding of alternative agencies because "representation depends on possession of a passive resources, namely the silent object, the stripped actant." Yet Haraway's proposals themselves constitute a return to representational ideology. She continues that "It is the empty space, the undecidability, the wiliness of other actors, the 'negativity,' that gave me the confidence in the reality and therefore unrepresentability of social nature that make me suspect doctrines of representation and objectivity." To suppose the unrepresentability of some "real," I have been arguing, is precisely the sentiment that launches one into representation's vicious tautologies, for so reinventing the gulf between the mind's concepts and body's perceptions creates the need for an aestheticized social text as the only possible bridge between the haptic and the noetic. And so
Haraway’s work remains in its own way committed to a most demanding form of representation—empiricism. In Andrew Ross’ words, Haraway still declares a need for "non-nonsense commitment to faithful accounts of reality."\textsuperscript{10}

Other cultural critics, too, have rejected the social-text model of representation as sufficient for the study of cultural politics. Art historian Barbara Maria Stafford, arguing the inherent logocentricism of the textual model, has compiled an impressive history of the social constructions of visual paradigms.\textsuperscript{11} Yet Stafford’s insistence on the importance of visual competence installs a methodology of social construction that rather than providing an alternative to representational ideology, merely explores another means than the textual of pursuing the obsessional, critical need to decode and expose that representation engenders. Indeed, much like Kant’s claims in the \textit{Conflict of the Faculties} that philosophy’s powers to get to the bottom of representational confusion make it both subversive and worthy of university and government funding, Strafford argues that art historians can use visual literacy to prevent the "lazy acquiescence to antiquated power structures" and to better serve an industrial complex increasingly dependent on image technologies (\textit{Body} 6-7). My goal here is not to name, expose or attempt to market the previously unrepresentable, but to articulate an alternative to representational thinking.
While representational ideological enables all disciplinary structures the use and history of representation as a critical concept has rarely been studied explicitly, and no alternatives to its epistemic violence have yet been proposed. Cultural studies has studied various specific instances of representational ideology, and the self-constructed task of cultural studies (and to a certain degree, new historicist thought as well) has been, at least in part, to specify the exact nature of the complex relationships (post) modernity has developed between political and symbolic representations. Indeed, this critical dynamic has become one of the means by which cultural studies presents itself to institutionalized disciplines as the model of exemplary interdisciplinary cultural scholarship. Note the clear directive in Gayatri Spivak's remark to a group of anthropologists: "Ethnography is now trying to break its disciplinary outlines, like literary criticism and all of the humanities. Just as literary criticism will have to re-examine the line between aesthetic representation and political agency, so anthropology will have to be concerned with subject formation, touched with authoritative psycho-biography--great narratives of history--if it wants to become more than it has been." Even in cultural studies, representation has not been studied as a determining, enabling, and finally perhaps blinding, ideology.
Cultural studies is still united and enabled by its own use of representational ideology, by its ability to string a line—however narrow and tight—between aesthetic representation and political agency. Correspondingly the task of cultural studies has been to conduct the search for the represented and representative Others of Western discourse who have been lost or disadvantaged by the conflation of the political and the symbolic that representational ideology entails. The search for otherness is still celebrated more than it is questioned. As Jonathan Culler as written, "A particular virtue of history, of anthropology is instruction in otherness: as vivid and compelling evidence of differences in cultures, mores, assumptions, values. At their best, these subjects make otherness palpable...."¹⁴

In its search for the mis- or unrepresented bodies of Others, though, cultural studies engages itself in an impossible and circular enterprise. For as of yet, we have no alternative agency to offer anyone. Only the first world male bourgeoisie was ever properly embodied in either bodies or bodies of texts; these other bodies—these bodies of the Other—can never be properly recovered or identified, within representational ideology, for they have never existed within the discursive real of bourgeoisie discourse. This does not imply that first world privileged critics should politely wait for these "other" subjects to achieve representation before proceeding with the postmodern dismantling of the subject.
Such an assumption would once again inscribe the trajectory of the Western subject as an idealized narrative of progress. Rather, I suggest that attention be paid to how what I call "representational ideology" only permits the articulation of certain subjects. And as long as we fail to understand the concept of representation itself as a problem rather than an enabling methodology, we fail to recognize how these "others" may not aspire to the position we envision for them within our global theory market.

First, then, I will turn to a brief explanation of the dead-ends that representational ideology runs up against when applied to subject-formation. Then I will direct my attention towards a history and description of how representational ideology, when practiced by cultural critics, engenders its own particular inscriptions on the body politic. What remains underexplored in the current critical discourse, then, is how critical methodologies, with representation as their alibi, have mined the social text and plundered its natural resources for its own coffers. My focus here, then in my new work, will be on how current critical methodology has appropriated certain strategies once available only to the subject-positions that it has plundered. Intellectual property, for instance, and the conceptions of academic freedom and work that it enables, is an elaborate rewriting of the basic Marxist (and 19th century) concept of work that understood labor as the property of the worker. And as Spivak
has suggested, deconstruction's affection for inessentialism is often presented as a certain envy—and raiding of—the feminine subject position. Meanwhile, postcolonial studies claims for itself the political urgency (even as it disguises its own reliance on global marketing) that was once the imperative of the postcolonial economic subject. My theme will be *bricolage* as *brigandage*.

An understanding of the critical uses of representational ideology and its permanent alliance with a certain type of subject will led to me explain the particular epistemic violence that takes place when we suppose that the "Others" silenced by our own representational ideology wish for nothing as much as a voice. While our own Western critical paradigms are serviced by imagining that all others are clamoring for representation within our paradigms, we have no reason to believe that a truly egalitarian cultural politics are possible under such an assumption. Finally, it is my hope that this articulation of representational ideology will serve in itself to suggest a model for a new mode of cultural critique.

The problem of the "other," is of course, not easily abandoned. The otherness that results when some human subjects are deprived full agency provides to a great extent, as Culler pointed out, the "wealth" of the human sciences, and serves as the very basis and cost of western self-reflection. The collusion between the original imperialist relationship
between representation and wealth and the current philosophical one is only dangerously forgotten. As slaves were legal written as property into the founding documents of this nation in order to solve the problem of representation and taxation (the wealthy slave owners of the south achieved fuller representation for their taxation to the extent that slaves could be counted as wealth), so too does the richness of post-enlightenment philosophical representation depend on its literal incorporation of others. Schelling put it this way: "the idea (of the state) represents not the nobility or the people...but the entire body of free citizens; the individual material things are the slaves and the bondsmen. There is a similar hierarchy in sciences. Philosophy lives only in Ideas: it leaves dealings with particular real things to physicists, astronomers, etc...."17 Like the state, philosophy uses its understanding of representation to increase itself, and while the state does so by stripping human agents into "individual material things" so cultural criticisms has deemed some things important, and others real. That philosophy's others are often the state's others as well is hardly surprising.

When Said opened Orientalism with Marx's statement about the post-1848 revolutionary French proletariat ("they cannot represent themselves, they can only be represented"18), it was simply assumed that the analogy with the situation of the postcolonial subject was obvious and theoretically productive
(just as now women are often likened to postcolonial subjects). In our postmodern world, there are no distinct others, only a threatening mob that threatens to break down the scene of the first worlds social (this, indeed, is the panic of the apocalyptic "panic theory" of a Baudrillard). In the new millennium, we will require new fears to replace these distracting, invented fears vestigial of revolutions long past.

The Dead Sciences of Man

Humanist-based critique, of course, has always been concerned with the imminent death and resurrection of the bourgeois individual. For it is the sordid business of criticism to be continually reinventing the bourgeois subject—animating its corpse—in its conflation of "man" as the subject and object of the human sciences; and in its participation in the very dynamic of representation. Representation and its resultant nostalgia and longing can only represent what is already present; what Paul Bov( calls "emergent subjects" (by which he usually means postcolonials) are precisely not possible. Only the bourgeois individual—the individual who was already capable of representing interests (of their own and of others) in the public sphere—can be invented in the representational process.

Within humanist critique as we know it, within an epistemology based on and obsessed with representation—there
are no new subjects. Even if we now understand the subject to be an inessential and changeable effect, rather than an agent of absolute truth and action, that knowledge continues to pass through pretty much the same bodies as before. Foucault inadvertently demonstrated this in a interview published posthumously, saying that "Nothing much would change if I and my books didn't exist. I rather like that feeling--I find it almost physically pleasurable to think of the causes I'm concerned with just passing through me."19

The absolute limit of representation—death—and the alliance that critique, humanism and all of the human sciences have with death, determines that theorizing can only take place in a temporary separation of a subject and object that finally must admit they are the same, and perish. Theory is thus inscribed within and limited to the space that defines the career of an individual subject. As Paul Boyé has written in his discussion of Kant's *Anthropology*, "Only death constitutes a science in which man is subject and object."20 Thus the autopsy remains the model for all the human sciences: anthropology and literary studies no less require death as the basis for their methodology than the biological sciences. Death seals off the boundaries of representation that creates the knowable objects of Enlightenment rationality. It also insures that the objects about which it is possible to have certain knowledge remain restricted to those which its subjects can imagine.
Lacan's spectacular achievement was to perform the autopsy on the circular and dead-end semiotic structure of this half-dead and un-real subject born of representation. In Lacan's description, the subject's only possibility for self-knowledge lies with the Other. Thus, the Other is "the locus in which is situated the chain of the signifier that governs whatever may be made present of the subject" (203). Yet the Other is, by definition, a constituted lack. The knowledge seeking subject is on one hand committed to seeking the signifiers that will reveal herself to herself in the Other; in this sense she trusts and seeks after representation. Yet this very seeking is a death drive and limits radically how much of the subject might be made self-present. Full realization of the Other, and therefore also of the subject, is impossible. But lack draws the subject to the Other, and lack itself is a partially realized death. This "unreal" lack "takes up the other lack... situated at... sexed reproduction...(that) lack is real because it related to something real, namely, that the living being, by being subject to sex, has fallen under the blow of individual death" (205).

Within this modern epistemological-empirical scheme based so thoroughly on the freedoms and limitations of individual agents, we must be suspicious enough to understand how the seemingly catholic character of representation serves as the chief alibi for a very specific project. On the most literal
level, Kant's work on anthropology, after all, was less the result of his thinking through how human beings might achieve liberation through symbolic discourse as much as it was an answer to the question posed by the 1763 Berlin Academy of Sciences: "Are the metaphysical sciences amenable to the same certainty as the mathematical?"

But it is also necessary to foreground how difficult it is to "just say no" to the appeal of representational ideology. Foucault is perhaps the only scholar who has vigorously pursued an examination of the only term—death—both human and representational—that is capable of destroying the humanistic illusions of infinite possibility and growth on which representation depends. Bov, of course, in noting that humanism depends first on a transcendental idea of death, was but echoing Foucault's observation in the Birth of the Clinic that both positivism and the study of "man" was first of all dependent on the cutting up of corpses. Foucault's magnificent technique was to expose death as the untheorized teleological hinge of the representational dynamic (his other topics: discipline, homicide, sexuality, and insanity are all simply smaller deaths, smaller collapses of the subject of knowledge into its object). Yet even Foucault's career began with an investment in representational ideology. One of Foucault's two dissertations was a translation of and introduction to Kant's Anthropology, where enthused by the Kantian promise of a new science, Foucault makes a call for a
new anthropology—a new representation of man. It was only later that Foucault turned towards death and the limits of representation, and forbade that his essay on Anthropology be printed, the sole copy of which now lies buried in the archives of the Sorbonne.23

A Brief History of Representational Ideology

How did the very concept of representation achieve the status of a dominant ideology, determining as it has the realm of the thinkable and the doable? Those who do study representation point to a unfortunate conflation of political and aesthetic representations as distinguished in the German by vertreten (political representation achieved through agency) and darstelllen (discursive representation achieved through symbol). Gayatri Spivak began this work, suggesting that the conflation of the political sense of representation with the aesthetic sense of representation in the work of Foucault and Deleuze/Guattari is what causes them to be blind to the international division of labor in the postmodern world that they nonetheless claim to analyze with political complexity.24 Since then Mira Kamdar, in "Subjectification and Mimesis: Colonizing History," has used Spivak to argue that it was the conflation of political and aesthetic representation in the Enlightenment project of mimesis that "regulates non-Europeans to a position of mutism under the regime of Enlightenment philosophy."25
Blind European philosophies that cause peripheral mutism; these have been the metaphors that have been employed to indicate the damage done to the social body when the senses of representation converge. The rescue of the social body then hence demands, according to Spivak, the separation of these two "related but irreducibly discontinuous" senses of representation (275).

Kamdar's metaphor of "mutism" indicates the desire that lies behind these calls for a critical separation of the senses of representation. "Mutism" is only a problem within a world where individuals deserve to have a voice—in other words, it is only a problem within the social, democratic world that is precisely the creation of the ideology of representation. The task of positive criticism which supposes that providing the mute with voices will improve their political or social position takes place within the representational ideology it supposes it critiques. The task becomes as it did in Zakia Pathak and Rajewsawri Sunder Rajan's application of Spivak's article "Can the Subaltern Speak," "Shabano," to use critical displacements so that "a space is created from which a woman can speak." And the space which is created is not a new space, but that of capitalism masquerading as democracy.

How did the invention of this authentic speaking subject/citizen become the task of democratic criticism? Self-presentation of one's own personal interests are
impossible as long as the world is so staged in representation—for that staging of the political world in representation is necessarily contingent on first deciding the impossibility of some natural one person-one vote democracy. Thus pro life groups do not ask "who speaks for the fetus?" in order to prepare the way for the fetus' self-expression or even fetus suffrage; they do it to strip representational agency from the mother, who after all, was claiming to speak for her body, not for the fetus. Arguments over representation are not made in order to make way for, but rather to disrupt, attempts at self-presentation. Hannah Pitkin's excellent study of the history of representation in political though, The Concept of Representation, says simply that is "to act for another" and that darstellen is to "stand for another." We should remember that self-expression is a impossible symbolically as it is politically; we should also understand, though, that it is through the complicity of these two senses of representation that agency is authored.

To disrupt the ideology of representation, we must learn to stop rewriting Kant; the strategy of articulation demands that we give up the representation project. When David Lloyd argues, then, that it is possible to take certain passages of the Critique of Judgement as "a blueprint, if not the blueprint, for the political function of aesthetic culture" (Examples 34), he writes a history that favors both blueprints and Kantian representation. Other critics as well--critics as
diverse as Lyotard, Jameson, and de Man invoke the Kantian sublime in the deliberate construction of their reading methodologies—and interestingly enough, each maintain the promise a future, representational methodology (Lyotard, realistic art; Jameson, cognitive mapping; de Man, a reading of language’s material resistance). Each, in their own part, then, have served to reinscribe the indebtedness of the subject to representation for any presentation at all of the social text.

And it is my argument that the political function of aesthetic culture, ironically, is precisely that which invents the space—called by some the social text, others the public sphere—where political representation might be staged; darstellen inventing. Yet this return to the power of Kant is also, necessarily, a return to his representation project. For the third Kantian critique also provides the methodological means for mapping one aesthetic’s most enduring creations—the real.

In this return to mapping, the alliance between the bourgeois culture and its aestheticians are continuously proclaimed. In addition to the dualities that we know Kant to have attempted to bridge with the concept of judgement: the representable and the sublime (another name, merely, for the living and the dead), the sensible and the ideal; he also uses the Critique of Judgement to tacitly hammer out the details of
a compromise between the aristocracy’s increasing inability to serve as a convincing representative in both political and cultural processes, and the ways in which the impressive educational capital of the bourgeoisie might serve as more effective representation for an increasingly national culture.

This Kantian alliance is constantly reinscribed by contemporary theorists even as they claim a new political criticism. Habermas, whose methodology continues to articulate a democracy that can only be understood as a means of protecting culture from contamination of the masses. Habermas continues to elevate critique as the principle of democracy (read, "capitalism") as the ultimate achievement of the public sphere: he misconstrues critique’s policing of symbolic expression as the opportunity for all (bourgeois) citizens to participate in discourse and therefore achieve representation. This misconstrual, in turn, constructs democracy (perhaps the ultimate name and alibi for inherently unequal institutions of representation) as the police’s most powerful alibi. The public sphere, Habermas supposes, was in the early stages of bourgeois power an arena of rational debate effectively removed from either state or private interests—therefore it was capable of providing a space for the exercise of and showcase for disinterested democratic ideals. But according to Habermas, something went horribly wrong with the public sphere: it eventually became the place where private interests could be articulated. Sometime in the
middle of the nineteenth century, Habermas argues, the dangerous intermingling of state, public, and private interests that continues to threaten the democratic autonomy of the public sphere occurred. The public sphere, by actually becoming a place where interests might be articulated, was losing the careful balance of symbolic and political discourse that invented the political-social text, making it available to bourgeois analysis and exploitation. He writes that the public sphere began to change with the Chartist movement in England and the February revolution in France. Because of the diffusion of press and propaganda, the public body lost not only its social exclusivity, it lost in addition the coherence created by bourgeois social institutions and a relatively high standard of education. Conflict hitherto restricted to the private sphere now intrude into the public sphere. (Public Sphere 52)

In this gesture, then, in this invocation of the barbarians knocking at the gates, Habermas effectively and categorically excludes the masses from rationality and the right to representation. Critique serves to distinguish between symbolic expressions that arise from the masses and those which arise from the bourgeoisie: the former are judged as mere action, the latter as acts of rationality and democracy. "Laws which obviously have come about under the 'pressure of the street,'" he goes on to write, "can scarcely still be understood as arising from the consensus of private individuals engages in public discussion" (52).

Of course, Habermas presumes to be describing an actual history, a history that places the bourgeois public sphere in
some danger. And to do so he plays rather fast and loose with some standard historical ideas: treating as he does the mid-nineteenth century France and England as similar moments in the history of the bourgeoisie. The mid-century in England is generally characterized by historians as the replacement of the revolutionary bourgeoisie with nerveless philistines; the mid-century in France, in contrast, is depicted in history as marking the French bourgeoisie's triumphant ascendancy. My point here is not to insist on some actual history, but to note how the only distinctions Habermas can make are those made towards the end of constructing this mythically rational democracy as the endangered hero of his own narrative. For Habermas there is no point in distinguishing between French revolutionaries, who truly attempted to force issues with the pressure from the streets, and the Chartists, who by this time were pretty safely absorbed into the new hierarchies of a more industrialized England as what some historians have called the "labor aristocracy." Both threaten to disrupt the carefully closed circle of the bourgeois public sphere.

Habermas finally ends up suggesting a kind plurality of better represented private interests as the way of invigorating democracy even in an age when the ideal public sphere no longer seems possible. I can only read this as another call, one that has been issuing from other critics as well, for intellectuals to reactivate their role as the superior representatives of private interests to the public
sphere. I, for one, refuse to become one of these Bush-era thousand points of light. It is time to forge an intellectual subject-position that works on the underside of representational ideology.

It is time to make a few desperate moves aimed at bursting through the growing sense of fin-de-siecle critical ennui that makes us nostalgic for such a position. I suppose that each critical epoch installs its own set of attendant horrors. The age of mimesis (which, to my mind, might be said to have fallen at the precise moment it achieve its most eloquent articulation in Abrahms) produced a fear of imitation and the cult of genius. The age of representation, with its insistence on providing stand-ins for the subjects that are themselves banned to the margins of culture, has done a great deal to create the sense of the unmanageable proliferation of canons, methodologies and bodies that marks modernism and postmodernism both. The claustrophobic politics of a (post)modernism that imagines an increasing number of groups (women, ethnic and racial minorities, welfare recipients, fetuses, postcolonial citizens of the McWorld, trees), facilitated in their competition for limited natural, political and cultural resources through intellectual representation, is no longer appropriate to the interested articulation of and respect for cultural difference.
NOTES

1. The Spring 1992 Issue of the Journal of the Midwestern Modern Language Association (25:1) was devoted to this topic.

2. Critics such as Paul Morrison have suggested that if at one time poststructural theory was genuinely politically subversive, the orthodox omnipresence of that very claim would suggest that such is no longer the case. Given these assumptions, it is interesting that Morrison vents his disgust not on theory itself so much as at theory's claims for literature. Morrison is most upset at those theorists who have used Althusser's idea of "internal distance" to suggest that literature, through a strategic use of representation, place ideology at a distance, a distance which can be used for subversive ends. Louis Althusser, "Letter on Art in Reply to Andre Daspre," Lenin and Philosophy and Other Essays, trans. Ben Brewster (1966; New York and London: Monthly Review Press of New Left Books, 1971): 221-229. Morrison cites Pierre Macherey's development of this idea in A Theory of Literary Production, trans. Geoffrey Wall (London, 1978). For further support he cites D.A. Miller's comment that "Even if it were true that literature exercises a destabilizing function in our culture, the current consensus that it does so does not" (Morrison 52). [The Miller quote is from D. A. Miller, The Novel and the Police (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988): xi.] Morrison makes a number of odd groupings here: first of all by equating all poststructuralists with this Althusserian rescue of literature ignores the fact that a huge number of poststructuralists find the idea of internal distancing suspect for its failure to understand that all ideology, not just the ideology in art, is a representation. Moreover he seems to imply that the claim that literature is subversive is synonymous with poststructuralism, an odd assumption given a widespread interest in those who would describe themselves as poststructuralists in deflating literature's elevated stock. Paul Morrison, "Paul de Man: Resistance and Collaboration," Representations 32 (fall 1990): 50-74, passim.


4. Of course the future work need not even make a worldly appearance for this move to be effective: Gayatri Spivak has made a career out of promising books that have not yet appeared: for years it was a book on "Feminism and Deconstruction," then one entitled "Native Informant," and most recently, she even outlined the chapters of an almost completed work called "Deconstruction in
the Service of Reading." This last work described in "The Intervention Interview," Gayatri Spivak, The Post-Colonial Critic: Interviews, Strategies, Dialogues, Sarah Harasym, ed. (New York: Routledge, 1990): 113-132. Meanwhile, we are left with collections of individual essays and interviews.


8. Christopher Herbert has constructed an excellent history of the development of "culture" as a category, a history which he suggests is important because of its continued use in cultural studies. I am grateful to Jean Gregorek to pointing out to me how this attempt to sully contemporary cultural studies with the colonialisanthropological origins of "culture" precludes understanding the radical refunctioing that cultural studies has worked on the concept. Indeed, it is my argument that we can be grateful to cultural studies for providing this term "social text" to betrayed the authored character of culture even as we seek to understand the possibilities for an even more radical idea. Christopher Herbert, *Culture and Anomie: Ethnographic Imagination in the Nineteenth Century* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991).

9. "Promises of Monsters," 313. Interestingly enough, in the interview with Andrew Ross and Constance Penley ("Cyborgs at Large"), she mistakenly equates social construction with relativism. Using the argument that people do not choose their histories and that political action relies on a vision of a shared world, she rejects social construction. Yet the model of social construction might very well serve to articulate the construction of our deterministic histories, and help explain the categories—social and conceptual—that we share. Haraway makes her mistake here by assuming that social construction meant only a radical textual model.


12. Stephen Greenblatt, for instance, begins his most recent work with the observation that "in the modern world order it is with capitalism that the proliferation and circulation of representations (and devices for the generation and the transmission of representations) achieved a spectacular and virtually inescapable global magnitude." Marvelous Possessions: The Wonder of the New World (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991): 7.


15. This is the mistake of supposing that capitalism and democracy are exchangeability and equivalent, the mistake made by conservative commentaries on the developments in Eastern Europe, who suppose that this "fall of communism" is the same thing as the end of history or ideology itself. Of course, the grand irony of such presentations is the immense debt they have to Marxism, from which they appropriate their own readings of Hegel to construct a historical progression of ideological systems of which capitalism serves as the ultimate example--not because capitalism is understood as some equality achieved after struggle, but as some state of quietude and acceptance expressed as the absence of visible struggle, and the belief that even Soviets were Born to Shop. See Francis Fukuyama, "The End of History," National Interest 16 (Summer 1989): 3-18.


21. Like Lacan, I would agree that the "Unreal is not imaginary. The unreal is defined by articulating itself on the real in a way that eludes us, and...the fact that it is unreal does prevent (it) from embodying itself." Yet the elided material from the above quote simply describes this definition of the unreal back into the personal mythology of the knowledge-subject; Lacan is not so
interested here in defining new subjects, but describing the anatomy of the bourgeois individual with which we are so familiar. In the process, of course, he also grounds his own legitimacy as a knowledge-seeking agent. He writes, "it is precisely this that requires that (the unreal's) representation should be mythical, as I have made it." Jacques Lacan, The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psycho-analysis, Jacques Alain-Miller, ed., Alan Sheridan, trans. (1973; London: The Hogarth Press, 1977): 205.


27. And even should that one person-one vote democracy be possible we have to remember that even so, such perfect representation is not the same thing as the right to govern. As Hannah Pitkin reminds us, "representation is one thing, and governing another." Hannah Pitkin, The Concept of Representation (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1967): 64.

28. Mapping has served as a privileged metaphor for the kind of unfair carving up of territory that takes place under the alibi of empirical objectivity and representative fairness. Hannah Pitkin quotes Bluntschli, a late nineteenth century legal theorist: "Truly, as the map represent mountains and valleys, lakes and rivers, forests and meadows, cities and villages, the legislative body, too, is to form again a condensation of the component parts of the People, as well as of the People as a whole, according to their actual relationships. The more noble parts may not be crushed by the more massive one....The relationships are organic, the scale is national. Hannah Pitkin, The Concept of Representation (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1967): 62.

29. "Anderson, Wiener and others locate the moment of cultural and moral collapse of the bourgeoisie in the mid-nineteenth century. This of course is precisely the historical moment of the demise of Chartism and the incorporation of the working class with a new

30. Derrida hammered out this connection between mimesis, nature, genius, and post-Enlightenment theoretical economies in "Economimesis."

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