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NIHILISM, AMERICAN-STYLE:

THE AMERICANIZATION OF THE IDEA OF CULTURE

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ABSTRACT

There are at least three major moments of nihilism in American intellectual history. Against European tradition, Emerson had advanced a conception of culture that was radically interpretive, pluralistic and anti-foundationalist, and this eventually worked its way back into the United States through the social sciences (via Nietzsche and then Weber). Likewise, American pragmatist philosophy, conceiving science as serving plural values rooted in human needs, originated with Emerson. The various European conceptions of value had always conceived value as objective and transcendent, and this was reflected in the European ideas of culture; the chasm between subject and object was a feature of the Western intellectual tradition. This notion of transcendent value was discredited, it led in the European tradition to a crisis of nihilism. In contrast, the early American culture idea united (subjectivity) values and culture with objectivity (science and technique); this revolutionary conception conceived value as immanent and not transcendent, and some critics felt that this was a nihilistic betrayal of eternal truths and ideals.

By the middle of the twentieth century, especially in the United States, the close union of subject and object characteristic of early twentieth-century American academic theory led to a new kind of nihilism, in the form of the technocratic subordination of values to technique and the negation of existential meaning by rationality in American thought and society. The early balance between an interacting subject and object was lost in positivist pragmatism and in the functionalist social sciences.

Since the 1960s, the response to this crisis was ultimately counter-cultural protest, and consisted of undermining the legitimacy of the technocracy by attacking rationality in general. On the theoretical level, this was accomplished primarily by collapsing the distinction between subject (culture) and object (science). However, this libertarian rebellion drew its values of self-expression and self-fulfillment largely from consumerism, and in its quest for greater individual empowerment laid the groundwork for the information age by equating technology with personal creativity. This is an ambiguous victory over the technocracy.

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PREFACE

The thesis of this study is that nihilism is a sociological phenomenon, ubiquitous in all societies, and that it consists of a loss or discrediting of the fields or spaces of a value system. Nihilism, however, is typically associated with the modern European intellectual experience, in which a transcendent and objective realm of value – be it of religious or scientific truth – is delegitimized and brought into doubt by the growth of science. The American experience of nihilism in the twentieth century is quite distinct from this.

In the United States, the classical pragmatist philosophical school conceived the objective realm of value as provisional and a product of inquiry at the service of human interests, not as an absolute truth. Likewise, the American social sciences at the turn of the century constructed a relativistic, anthropological conception of culture. Both of these philosophical and social science movements conceived valuation pluralistically, in terms of values. Unlike the Western intellectual tradition, which tended to portray the subjective and objective dichotomy as an irreconcilable antinomy, the subject-object relationship was conceived in this American framework as fundamentally dialectical and mutually influential. To many observers however, this was seen as a banausic rejection of high 'Culture' and transcendent 'value' – a kind of nihilism in the European sense of the term.

By the middle of the twentieth century, however, this relationship between the subjective and the objective in American philosophical and social theory began to alter. Subjectivity was either negated through the adoption of positivism, or was seen as derivative of objectivity. This can be seen in the fusion of European positivism in the

United States with the pragmatist school, as well as in the hegemony of Parsons' structural functionalism in the social sciences. In this theory, objectivity colonized subjectivity, in a sense, and this was made possible in the American context because the two had been brought into relation with one another, whereas in European thought they had been more distant antinomies. This represented a subtle kind of nihilism in that meaning and value were subordinated to or negated by a technocratic valorization of objectivity.

Beginning in the 1960s, there emerged a countercultural rebellion against the technocracy, a rejection of a materialistic and pragmatically objective conception of value in favor of an affective subjectivity. More than a simple negation of objectivity, however, the theme of this movement was the collapse of the distinction between subjectivity and objectivity. In philosophy, a kind of 'postmodern pragmatism' emerged, with spokesmen like Richard Rorty who proclaimed science as a genre of literature. In the social sciences, relationism emerged as the prominent movement that sought to sunder all kinds of traditional sociological dichotomies by establishing how these elements interacted. (Relationist theory bridged both the United States and Europe and marked the convergence of traditions.) The loss of the distinction, however, between subjective and object also implied in some ways the appropriation of subjectivity and rebellion by a newly reformed technocracy. For instance, Rorty argued that creativity and fulfillment were to be found in private life, whereas the technocracy would be left to run the public realm. Not only does the countercultural rejection of a pragmatic notion of objectivity represent a kind of nihilism but, in the resulting fusion of subjectivity and

objectivity within much of the theoretical discourse, the technocratic impulse remains, negating subjectivity.

Chapter one is a survey of theories of nihilism. Nihilism understood in sociological terms consists not just in the loss of value and meaning, but in the spaces in which a value system is situated. For example, Michael Allen Gillespie traces nihilism back to a tendency in Western thought since the Middle Ages to distinguish between God's will versus reason; the infinite power of God's will was later attributed to human beings by various European philosophical and political thinkers who were identified by their contemporaries as 'nihilists'. This represents a rejection of objectivity.

Nietzsche portrayed nihilism as existing in all value systems, caused either by a world-weary sense of exhaustion with upholding a particular value system or a rebellious vitality that rejected all current values. In the case of modern Western nihilism, Nietzsche argued that the Platonic and Christian imperative for truth spawned the scientific will to truth, which in turn through its sheer productivity in the modern world disenchanted the world and discredited both religion and the validity of the belief in an objective realm of scientific truth. Christianity and Platonism hypothesized a superior transcendent realm of value, and this consisted of a nihilistic denial of life's inherent value; the subsequent disillusionment that Europeans were suffering through that recognized the bankruptcy of religion was also a form of nihilism.

Heidegger argued that in valorizing the body and the realm of becoming and flux, Nietzsche did not so much transcend Plato so much as simply invert his schema. The early Heidegger argued that dividing the world into parts (like the division between the world of becoming and the world of being) was a nihilistic act of turning away from the

wholeness of the world, or Being, an expression of a technological view of the world that consisted in seeing it as consisting of unrelated beings or things. The later Heidegger argued that technological or calculative thinking distracted us from realizing through meditative thought the intellectual frameworks and cultural contexts of intelligibility within which the things of the world are perceived.

Recent thought on consumerism relates to theories of nihilism. William James had argued before the First World War in the essay 'A Moral Equivalent of War' that the rise of a consumer or 'pleasure' economy and all its temptations was eroding the traditional sense of the integrity of the self – leading to a 'fear of emancipation of the fear regime' or traditional discipline – and might lead to a backlash of militarism if a substitute discipline were not found. Likewise, Benjamin Barber in Jihad vs. MacWorld argued recently that the militant forces of tradition and the locality were locked in a contest with the homogenizing forces of globalization. Manuel Castells likewise claimed that there is a tension between 'the Self versus the Net', but the terms in which he set this conflict have a more explicitly nihilistic resonance. For Castells, the flows of global capital and information can negate local meanings, but the failure by the localities to capture these flows can result in a local denial of outside, non-local references.

Castells also recognized what could be considered another kind of nihilism that has surfaced toward the end of the twentieth century, what he called the 'culture of real virtuality'. According to Castells, the 1960s witnessed the rise of an anti-technocratic libertarian counterculture, and it is this ethos, especially in northern California, that led to the development of decentralized technology like the personal computer and the Internet. But this high technology itself became media which took on a life of its own, so to speak.

For example, the television sit-com *Murphy Brown* appropriated critical remarks of the show by then-Vice President Dan Quayle and made them a part of a running gag on the show.

This kind of 'postmodern' self-conscious reference is related to the more explicitly nihilistic observations of thinkers like Jean Baudrillard and Fredric Jameson. For them, globalism, high technology and the rise of a predominantly consumer society in 'late capitalism' has built a society based on the consumption of signs and symbols severed from their material references in objective 'reality'. The nihilistic implication of this were exacerbated by the rise since the 1960s of linguistic structuralism applied to all fields in academia, with its recognition that modes of knowledge are based on binary schemas and not actual relationships between things in the world. The nihilism of consumerism relates well to Heidegger's conception of nihilism as the loss of rootedness and wholeness in the face of an escape into technology and consumerism, but in many ways (as in Baudrillard and Jameson's work) it also relates well to Nietzsche's concept of a discrediting of an external realm of truth.

That there are social influences on the nihilistic tendencies found at the end of the twentieth century in economically and technically advanced societies is a thesis that can be equally applied to the classical theories of nihilism. Johan Goudsblom argued that the truth imperative that Nietzsche correctly identified as the source of nihilism is itself a result of the flourishing of the humanistic tradition in ancient Greece and in Renaissance Europe; this humanistic tradition was itself a product of urbanization. Goudsblom argued that although the truth imperative has disappeared over time, the nihilistic problematic has been popularized in a democratic milieu, so that even personal problems like

depression or a mid-life crisis are perceived in dramatically nihilistic terms, and subsequently attributed to things like the loss of meaning or the death of God, and so on.

Michael Novak claimed that there was an American brand of nihilism that emerged in the 1960s that rebelled against the classically American pragmatic location of meaning in an objective realm of practical value and sought meaning in a subjective world of affect. But, he claimed, this rebellion came from the same spirit of progress that pragmatism embodied, and it also exhibited a dangerous nihilism in its embrace of irrationalism. Whereas European nihilists tend to be fanatic because they are still engaged in a conception of truth and meaning that is transcendent, the American conception among both the Establishment and the counter-culture is immanent and pragmatic, and so even rebellion and nihilism in the United States take on an almost resigned, complacent, passive quality at times.

In **Chapter two** it is argued that all theories of nihilism share in common the idea that what is lost in nihilism is not just a value, but the space in which that value has meaning. For example, the American midlife crisis is a sociological phenomena linked to a loss of connectedness with family late in life. (Talcott Parsons argued as much.) This in itself is not a nihilistic experience, just a diminished sense of value and meaning: life is not fun anymore. However, as Goudsblom had argued, this personal crisis in the modern world is conceived in devastating nihilistic terms – that life is inherently meaningless and so forth. In a personal crisis, a sense of value or meaning can drop to near zero, but in a nihilistic crisis the realm of meaning is itself nullified. This is the difference between, on the one hand, going broke and, on the other, having ones currency totally devalued. The midlife crisis makes one feel lonely and long for what seems in hindsight to have been a

better time; the nihilistic crisis that this may spark goes further and makes one feel like maybe none of this effort was worth it after all. The various theories surveyed above all conceive the loss of meaning as the loss of a space, for example, of a reality external to the realm of becoming (Nietzsche) or of a holistic space of meaning (Heidegger).

'Space', however, is not a given but is, rather, a construct and a product of discourse. That is, victorious 'official' ideologies conceive a map of the world composed of different places, and impose this onto the world. This map is unconsciously internalized, as are the values it espouses, but these values apply only to particular spaces. For example, the Victorian bourgeoisie preached humanitarianism toward animals even while abusing animals and workers on the factory floor. This is because the discourses and values of humanitarianism did not apply to the spaces of the productive realm, but rather to the home and to the wilderness and its inhabitants. Discourses create spaces within which particular discourses and values are relegated. Moreover, these maps are homologous. For example, the traditional Western map of Western society distinguishes between the state, civil society and the home; this map is applied in the Western cartographic imaginary to the world, so that Westerners have envisioned the world as divided into the civilized and rational (and democratic) West, the barbarian 'despotic' patriarchal states of the Orient, and the primitive stateless societies of the tropics.

In sociology, field theory recognizes that fields of action like institutions within society come into and go out of existence all the time. But it needs to be recognized that it is discourse that produces these fields. Nihilism consists of the collapse of those fields (and the values within those spaces) that within a culture are most central to its value

system. For instance, in the late 1960s and early 1970s, it became apparent to the general population in the United States that public opinion had no influence on public policy. The discrediting of and collapse in faith in the political sphere, with its centrality in the American value system, led to a general collapse of belief by many Americans in the general fields of value in American life. Ultimately, faith in the realm of pragmatic objectivity collapsed, leading to an escape into subjectivity (sex, drugs, cults) by members of the mainstream that echoed the earlier counterculture.

It is Pierre Bourdieu who has most advanced field theory, arguing that each field has its own form of capital (prestige, money, education), but here it is argued that 'capital' is value when it is not invested. Ironically, something (for example, art or honor) is valued most when it is beyond calculation or trade, so the boundaries that exist between fields serve to elevate the worth of a value. Within a particular society, certain fields have preeminence – like the fields of culture, politics and economics among the elites in France, or the moral, political and economic spheres among the elites in the United States. The results of this are paradoxical, with a link in the American mind of high culture with snobbery (because it is outside the main fields of value, which are moralistic because they are connected to the moral sphere), but an association in the French mind of poverty with virtue (because morality is outside the main fields of value, which are amoral). And within those fields that are generally valued within the elite of a society, different factions will hold one field above the others in value, even though there is much exchange between them (like the trade between elite education and financial capital, with some valuing one over the other even while both are pursued and exchanged). This notion of value as inherent to fields and identical with capital helps to

correct misinterpretations of Bourdieu's theory, which some observers think is a brand of rational choice theory; rather, Bourdieu claims that people seek above all to maintain the illusion that their way of thinking naturally matches the structure of the world, whereas in reality both are arbitrary. People are conservative, and the recognition of value systems insinuates this.

Not only do discourses create spaces and fields, but some of these spaces or fields harbor discourses that challenge the status quo and offer their own subversive 'map' or alternative understanding of the social order that diverges from that of officialdom. Such classic spaces of reflection are the theatre and philosophy. These are the classic spaces of reflection that produce the fields or spaces of society through their critical discourses. Indeed, this study seeks to study those spaces like philosophy and the social sciences that debate the nature of valuation itself.

The concept of 'values' is in fact a recent invention of Nietzsche, who understood value to be pluralistic and culturally unique and who argued that virtue and morality were losing as much meaning as the Christian beliefs from which they sprung. This pluralistic notion of values entered the social science through Max Weber, and was subsequently adopted by American social scientists. In the appendixes of this chapter, classic historical philosophical and social scientific discourses on the nature of valuation are surveyed in order to illustrate the diverse ways in which value is conceived. That is, value is conceived in these theories as occupying different kinds of spaces, defining the nature of value.

In **Chapter three** the difference between theory and culture is explored. If ideological discourses impose their map of the world onto social agents who

subsequently internalize these maps and are generally unaware of them. This relationship between discourse and space is basically that between theory and culture. The social theorist Pierre Bourdieu emphasizes the distinction between theory and the *habitus* – the latter being the semi-conscious, common-sense patterned structures of dispositions that guide social agents. Our dispositions reflect our social positions, and critical sociologists must engage in a reflexive awareness of their own positions, including their position as scholars, since academics tend wrong-headedly to project their own calculating rationality onto social agents who are more likely to be acting in line with their unconscious *habitus*. For Bourdieu, the *habitus* relates to semi-conscious, problem-solving strategies, not to explicit rules, which have no part in his theory. The social theorist Anthony Giddens takes quite a different view of the matter, since he sees society as constituted by rules that are constantly under revision through action, the way language or linguistic structure is identical to and altered by improvised speech acts. For Giddens, concrete social systems and abstract structure or rules are two sides of the same coin; thus, the social sciences have had more impact on society because the theoretical discourses of academia change the abstract rules and thus feed back into the way people act.

There may be a middle ground between Bourdieu and Giddens. Rogers Brubaker claimed that theory itself involves its own *habitus* that is imposed on social agents, particularly through their education; a person's life experience therefore forms a kind of over-laying of various *habiti*. (Bourdieu expressed agreement with this.) Charles Taylor argued that the rules in a society (for example, those 'governing' marriage customs) were subject to interpretation by the *habitus* and would be altered accordingly.

But modifications to Bourdieu's and Giddens' notions of reflexivity can also be made. Against Bourdieu's argument that social scientists tend to project their own scholarly rationality onto those they study, this study argues that rationalistic theories are better described as idealized alter egos of the theorist. Against Giddens' conception of theoretical discourses feeding into social action, it needs to be noted that theoretical discourses which accord with an already internalized *habitus* do readily modify social action, but inquiry that seek to identify what the unconscious values and norms of an unconscious *habitus* are simply paralyze the ingrained *habitus* and are rejected by the status quo. (Examples of this include the hostile reception given to political theorists who seek to uncover the normative and moral assumptions and motivations of the ostensibly amoral discourse of the realist school of international relations, or the cool indifference of economists who advocate certain economic behavior toward sociologists who identify the normative and cultural aspects of economic behavior.) Whereas Giddens would emphasize the manner in which abstract or 'discursive consciousness' feeds into, informs and constitutes our practices, it needs to be remembered that critically self-conscious, when effective, also dissolves our practices, often without providing an alternative practice.

Finally, if theory possesses its own *habitus*, we need to determine what it could be. The subject-object dualism is, in a sense, the *habitus* of the Western intellectual heritage, from which all other of the many dualisms in Western thought emerge. A historical study of various dualisms, especially those connected to the various ideas of culture, reveals how they accord with the contemporary version of the subject-object dichotomy. Most classic early modern European conceptions of culture understood it as

a transcendent absolute opposed to some negative principle (ignorance, rationality, industrialism, etc.), but in the American tradition since Emerson it was not conceived as one element in an antinomy. This change reflects a deeper change in the subject-object relationship, since Emerson conceived the world as in flux and culture likewise to be a form of creativity that engaged with flux. There are a number of dualisms in social theory, and they tend to form hierarchies of dualisms; most recently, the culture-social structure dialectic has become the foremost dualism. The idea of culture and the idea of social structure are recent inventions and evolved unrelated to one another, as a historical survey show, so the propensity toward dualisms (and hierarchies of dualisms) is evident. Unlike an unconscious and embodied *habitus*, dualisms are explicit, and tend to generate not semi-conscious, common-sense strategies, but more elaborate theoretical schema (like tripartitions and so forth). Moreover, hierarchies of dualisms and other schemata (like tripartitions) tend to exhibit patterns of homologies, the way fractals in nature create a structure by recreating a simple pattern at every level.

In **Chapter four** the social structure correlates to the idea of culture are sought. Bourdieu asserted that the external social structures and internal cultural categories are similarly shaped by history so that they seem to be natural and normal, not contingent and arbitrary. The culture idea emerges as a product of the process of centralization by nation-state elites and the subsequent domestication of the nobility through the refinement of their manners as a source of symbolic distinction. The rise of the nation-state is facilitated not by the monopoly of physical violence but rather of what Bourdieu calls 'symbolic violence', especially the power of 'nomination' by the state to define what things are. States rely on the social sciences and their educational systems to do

this, and the various national ideas of culture are homologous to the character of the national systems of education, which are constructed by elites to promote cultural hegemony more than economic development or outright political domination. Theories of culture are, quite literally, philosophies of education at the service of the state and its elites.

In a nutshell, the four modern traditions of the culture idea are the French Enlightenment's notion of civilization as the progress to more rational social forms, German Romanticism's idea of Kultur as the embodiment in the spirit of a people in their arts and in the humanities, the elitist English notion of culture as personal refinement, and the American concept of culture as pluralistic and based on values. An imperialistic French state championed universal reason in the eighteenth-century heyday of French power and cultural glory. The resulting backlash to this in the German-speaking principalities involved the valorization (by highly educated and nationalistic commoners who were filling government posts because the Princes did not trust a Francophile nobility) of the arts of a people as an expression of their transcendent spirit. These German and French attitudes were both present in the English notion of culture as personal self-refinement. This notion grew up amidst the cultural and spiritual wasteland of the early industrial revolution and the growth of mass society. In order to maintain order, the new bourgeois elite would have to be assimilated into the refined sensibilities of the aristocracy through humanistic study. In America, Ralph Waldo Emerson conceived culture as 'self-culture', not in the English sense of self-refinement but rather in terms of the interpretive power of the sovereign individual – a kind of intellectual Protestantism. The public schools in the United States were likewise expanded and

'democratized' largely to assert the cultural hegemony of white Protestants over immigrants.

In **Chapter five**, it is argued that in the early part of the twentieth century in the United States, there was a revolution of sorts in terms of the basic assumption in various forms of academic theory, be it philosophy, social science or in the study of work and labor. In all of these fields, there is an underlying commonality of the subjective, valuing element in human nature being brought into relation with the objective, technical aspect of the social world. This constitutes a major paradigm shift, since historically the two were largely portrayed as antinomies.

Whereas previous philosophies typically divorced the objective realm from subjective intention, classical pragmatism drew them together in a dynamic that connected value or goals with the means to achieve them in a way that the two aspects were mutually influential. Moreover, the pragmatists understood values as pluralistic and relative, inquiry was understood to be a social process of problem solving shaped by cultural assumptions. In the American social sciences, a conception of culture as relative likewise emerged to become ascendant. In the world of work, the idea of creativity came into circulation, and was beginning to be accepted as relevant to the sciences as a source of ideas. In labor studies, the Human Relations Movement (preceded by the Personnel Management Movement, initiated in 1901) sought to rectify the harsh technical regimen of Taylorism by fostering communication and cooperation between management and labor in order to address worker needs and desires.

The greatest influence in this transformation of American thought is Emerson's thought. Emerson re-oriented inquiry away from contemplation and toward social

critique. Emerson was the origin of the pragmatist school of philosophy, but he was also a prime influence on Nietzsche's thought on culture and values; Nietzsche in turn was the main inspiration for Max Weber's sociology. It was Weber's brand of cultural sciences that American social scientists absorbed in their studies, which were centered on the German tradition at the turn of the century. But American social thought at the beginning of the century was remarkably inventive in its extension of the pluralistic idea of culture.

In **chapter six** it is observed how, in the middle of the twentieth century, a general change altered the relationship between subjectivity (involving values and culture) on the one hand and objectivity (involving social structure and science) on the other in American academic thought. In a sense, in the academic theory of philosophy and the social sciences as well as in the general society, values and culture became more segregated from the social order and from science. For instance, science was increasingly conceived as value neutral, and the society itself seemed to have become a paragon of technocracy; subsequently, American philosophy and social science came to reflected both these trends. In this way, culture and values were subordinated across many fields to the social order or to science, and the original balanced relationship established earlier in the century was thereby corrupted. Positivist philosophy negated values, the social sciences conceived value and culture as derivative of social structure, the concept of creativity was appropriate and promoted by technocratic government and business elites, the belief in fostering cooperative decision-making between labor and management in the workplace was abandoned by academic and corporate elites, and the social order of the realms of consumption and production were pervaded by an ethos of conformity.

This is, however, not to say that this period was not without the advancement or furthering of prior conceptions of subjectivity. It was at mid-century that the concept of creativity was 'democratized' so that all people and not just creative geniuses could see themselves as capable of creativity. Likewise, the pluralistic anthropological conception of the idea of culture is firmly established in American academia in mid-century and propagated around the world with the global hegemony of the American social sciences. Unfortunately, both the concepts of creativity and culture, despite their egalitarian aura, are closely tied to the interests of the technocracy, and their imposition throughout the world impacts and disrupts traditional cultures that have no such concepts, accelerating the process of global Americanization.

In **chapter seven** it is argued that underlying the changes in academic theory in the United States in the last third of the twentieth century, there was a fundamental shift in the relationship between subject and object that underwrites the Western intellectual tradition.

By the middle of the twentieth century, however, within all of these fields (philosophy, social theory, labor studies), value and culture were subordinated under the needs of technique and of the functioning social structure. There was a rebellion against this kind of technocratic tendency in theory, and in American philosophy, social theory and labor studies in the last third of the century, the subject-object distinction tended to collapse altogether. Most strikingly, for example, science was conceived as a cultural endeavor by the likes of Kuhn and later as a form of literature by Rorty.

However, although this deconstruction of the subject-object relationship at this time is motivated by an anti-positivist impulse, the ultimate significance remains

ambiguous. For example, in work studies, self-fulfillment and creativity ascend at this time to pre-eminent status, but they do so in terms of their potential to generate increased productivity. Likewise, Rorty's liberalism advocates the quest for self-fulfillment and self-expression, but as a private pursuit, leaving technocrats to run the society. Therefore, technocratic control is in some ways in recent theoretical discourses not so much undermined through deconstruction as it is disguised.

CHAPTER ONE

Towards a Sociology of Nihilism

The argument of this study is that nihilism as the denial of value and the loss of existential meaning is manifest in twentieth century American thought in manners distinct from that of the classic European experience of nihilism. Expressions of the European experience of modern spiritual crisis has dominated the literature, but it is asserted here that nihilism comes in varied forms and is ubiquitous. Twentieth-century American intellectual history can be better understood in terms of a broader, more sociological understanding of nihilism.

Nihilism is typically understood as a modern Western crisis, a loss of life's meaning produced by the disenchantment of the world. Typically, the term is associated with Nietzsche, and his critique of the 'self-dissolution' of Western religion (that is, Christianity engendered Western science, but this will to truth has, in turn, eroded religious faith as well as faith in science). However, as Nietzsche asserted in the Will to Power,[i] nihilism as a challenge to the dominant value system is also a characteristic of all societies at all times, and it exists in a multitude of forms. In fact, according to Nietzsche, the more vital and dynamic a culture, the more wracked it is by nihilism. Nihilism is typically understood as a specific spiritual crisis – that of the modern European intellectual – but following Nietzsche (ironically, the prototypical European nihilist) nihilism can also be seen more generally as a ubiquitous sociological phenomenon. This study seeks to identify nihilism as it has been manifested in diverse forms in the academic theory in the United States in the twentieth century, and to utilize

social theory to comprehend these American forms of nihilism as sociological phenomena.

Typologies of nihilism

Karen L. Carr, in The Banalization of Nihilism: Twentieth-Century Responses to Meaninglessness,[ii] traces the history of the term, which seems to originate in the first decade of the nineteenth century. The earliest reference seems to be Friedrich Heinrich Jacobi's critique of German transcendental idealism since Kant. Jacobi asserted that idealism dissolves the reality of the external world into 'nothingness' – a *reduction ad absurdum* in his view. Carr writes "in the first half of the nineteenth century nihilism was linked to the emergence of a particular intellectual movement – idealism, in either its philosophical or poetic form – in the second half nihilism tended to be linked to moral, religious, and political anarchism, usually grounded in a loss of belief in God. (The negative polemical connotations of the earlier usage remained.)"[iii] Nihilism, originally perceived by critics as a negative tendency in German literature, became a political program consciously adopted by a rebellious and potentially violent Russian *intelligentsia*.

But Carr's thesis is that even more ominous than its association with Russian anarchism is what has happened to the idea of nihilism in contemporary thought, particularly in the United States. Whereas nihilism was condemned and experienced as a wrenching spiritual crisis in an earlier European modernity, in the late twentieth century 'postmodernist' theory of American academia – of which Richard Rorty is, for Carr, quintessential – nihilism is apathetically, even cheerfully accepted as a matter of fact.

(This 'postmodern condition' emerged from a crisis of knowledge that stemmed from the rise of structuralism in the 1960s, which, like Kant's idealism, discredited and problematized the existence of an external reality.) For Carr, a shallow, facile and complacent attitude is far more insidious than outright despair, since the devastating implications of nihilism thereby go unaddressed.

There are for Carr, however, a variety of types of nihilisms, not just a variety of responses to the condition of nihilism of the modern West. Carr identifies a number of different nihilisms that have been lumped together for the past two hundred years. There is, she claims, 1) epistemological nihilism, or denial of the possibility of knowledge, 2) alethiological nihilism, the denial of the possibility of truth, 3) metaphysical or ontological nihilism, the denial of an independently existing world, 4) ethical or moral nihilism, the denial of the reality of values, and, perhaps the most commonplace, 5) existential or axiological nihilism, the feeling of emptiness and pointlessness that follows from the judgment that life has no meaning. Typically, however, in the works that address the subject of nihilism, all of these types implicate one another, and there is no mention of the distinctions that Carr is drawing.

In Nihilism Before Nietzsche,[iv] Michael Allen Gillespie suggests a useful distinction between two types of nihilisms – 'implicitly' and 'explicitly' nihilistic theories. Implicitly nihilistic theories are basically philosophies that have nihilistic ramifications for their critics, but the authors themselves make no mention of nihilism. One implicitly nihilistic theory would be that of the German Idealist philosopher J. G. Fichte, criticized by Jacobi as nihilistic (mentioned above and explained below). In contrast, explicitly nihilistic theories take as their central problem the experience of

nihilism in the modern world; classic examples of this would be those of Nietzsche and Heidegger.

Of course, it is up to scholarly critics to decide what an 'implicitly' nihilistic text might be. The 1952 work The Nihilism of John Dewey finds in Dewey, as the title would suggest, an implicit nihilist.[v] It's author attacks Dewey for being a nihilist because the latter's philosophies of logic, art and education supposedly deny external reality and subsequently retreat into subjectivism. Yet Dewey never (explicitly) 'confessed' to being a nihilist. He instead asserted that he did not deny the existence of reality, but rather that both subjectivity and objectivity are aspects of experience that emerge as byproducts of the process of inquiry. However, the implications of classical pragmatist philosophy in general were that values are products of human interest and do not represent transcendent truths; this was a revolutionary conception that shocked the intellectual establishment at the time – it even challenged the Western tradition. So while accusations of nihilism were rarely articulated against the classical pragmatists, the accusation that were cast against them by the likes of Lewis Mumford – that they denied transcendent values – were similar in tone and intensity to the charge of nihilism pressed against German Idealists (for example, Jacobi's charge that Idealism fundamentally denied the existence of a reality external to human experience).

In making this distinction between implicit and explicit nihilism, Gillespie is attempting to open up and expand the number of philosophers who can be conceived as nihilistic. Gillespie deeply disagrees with most explicit theories of nihilism, which he claims have been dominated by the theory of Nietzsche, and he seeks to find (implicit) threads of nihilistic thought prior to modernity, as far back as the Middle Ages. For

Gillespie, the obscure theological debates of the later Middle Ages were both implicitly nihilistic and of crucial importance in launching the modern project – a development unintended by medieval theologians and under-appreciated by modern intellectuals.

Gillespie's nihilism: Voluntarism overcomes rationalism

Medieval scholasticism had rested on the assumption that God and the cosmos are essentially rational. However, in the fourteenth century nominalists argued that it contradicted God's divinity to assume that God could be subordinate to nature or reason. The intention of this critique was to reaffirm the importance of scripture, but its effect was to sever reason and revelation. "It thus liberated natural science from the constraints of religion and opened the door for empiricism, but it also established an omnipotent divine will unrestrained by any rational notion of the good. The nominalist revolution thus fostered a growing doubt about the ground of science and morality in a cosmos ruled by a willful, transrational God."[vi] That is, now that science and religion were disentangled from one another, science needed to build ramparts against the possibility of divine caprice or malevolence.

The first philosopher to do so was Descartes, who dreamed of a universal science that would enable man to master nature, but this project was challenged by the radical skepticism stimulated by the possibility of an omnipotent God. Descartes had thought he found a ground to human knowledge in the principle *cogito ergo sum,* but this affirmation of thinking is, according to Gillespie, also an affirmation of willing, so that man's freedom is limited to his sphere of reason. That reason and freedom are not delusion is premised on God's not deceiving man precisely because He is infinite and omnipotent

and (unlike men) therefore has no need to deceive; this, in fact, guarantees the legitimacy of science. However, somewhat obscured behind Descartes' rationalism, human will is now conceived as infinite, and human freedom potentially absolute. Therefore, the element of caprice that philosophy attempts to contain reappears within man himself; for example, in Hume's empiricism, causality is merely a habit of thought, and for Rousseau, man has the creative freedom to transform and transcend nature that Christianity once attributed to God.

Kant tried to resolve the antinomy of freedom and natural causality by arguing that both seem mutually necessary yet mutually contradictory not because the world is antinomious, but because there are really two realms of reason: a phenomenal realm of pure reason governed by laws of nature and a noumenal realm of practical reason governed by the moral law of freedom. Yet the exact relationship between these two forms of reason remained murky. Fichte believed that he could establish a comprehensive philosophical system based on practical reason or freedom alone.

> For Fichte, the I is all. However, his I is not the empirical I of individual human beings but the absolute I of the general will or practical reason. This I is perfectly autonomous, positing itself as an empirical I, as the realm of subjectivity, and limiting or negating itself in establishing the not-I, the objective or phenomenal realm of nature.
>
> If the not-I cannot be reconciled with the I, the not-I must be abolished and absolute freedom established. ... [T]he phenomenal world is only an expression of the will of the absolute I that manifests itself in and through our emotions, instincts, and drives. This absolute will appears in us as a striving for the infinite. In striving for the infinite, however, the empirical I eventually comes to the end of its strength. At this point it seems to experience an external object, but in fact it experiences only its own weakness. The I itself is thus the source of the objective world.[vii]

> The traditional God of Christianity in this sense becomes superfluous. ... It was for this reason that Jacobi characterized Fichte's philosophy and idealism in general as *nihilism*. For Jacobi, idealism recognized no truth beyond consciousness and, therefore, lacked any objective standard

> against which to measure itself. It thus dissolved everything into subjectivity. Jacobi consequently locates the source of nihilism not in the diminution of the will but in its magnification, in the doctrine of an absolute human will and freedom.[viii]

Fichte's philosophy had a profound impact on the early German Romantics, so much so that they had been called 'poetic nihilists' by at least on contemporary. "These poetic nihilists find not God or nature but only a dark demonic force behind the phenomena, a force that reason cannot comprehend and that man can grasp only through his feelings. As in Fichte, the feelings are merely the expression of this absolute force or will in the individual. Access to this demonic will, however, can be attained only by shattering the constraints that customs impose upon us."[ix] Goethe's Faust attempted to repudiate this Romantic infatuation with tragic transgression by appropriating demonic temptation as a moment in the divine quest. Likewise, Hegel sought to appropriate the logical contradiction of antinomies, originating in Kant's thought, as a moment of the logical dialectic that governs world history. Yet these attempts at moderation did not hold. "The Romantics turned away from Faust and Byronic heros [sic] such as Manfred who like Lovell and Faust seek forbidden knowledge and in their search violate the most sacred laws. In contradistinction to the early Romantics, however, these heros [sic] do not repent but glorify their crimes."[x] The same kind of embrace of excess took place in philosophy. "The Left Hegelians similarly turned away from Hegel's speculative synthesis of the rational and the actual, but retained the Fichtean principle of dialectical development that Hegel sought to overcome" – only they applied these principles not to individuals but to classes and parties.[xi] "These revolutionaries became known in Germany as nihilists."[xii]

The Russian variant of political nihilism was even more optimistic about the omnipotence of the will, and was explicitly 'nihilist' as a result. "These Russians believed that instantaneous change was possible if only enough men of integrity willed it. They called such 'new men' the intelligentsia. Bazarov, the protagonist of Turgenev's Fathers and Sons, is the preeminent literary example of such a new man."[xiii] Although many nihilist revolutionaries were insulted by the portrayal of Bazarov, whom they saw as a caricature of their movement, Turgenev had attempted in Bazarov to create a flawed Faustian figure who attains redemption through his efforts. The nihilists' understanding of the 'intelligentsia' as a radical elite later became a part of the Leninist neo-Marxist legacy of Soviet socialism.

Gillespie's point is that what we now typically think of as nihilism really dates from Nietzsche's critique of science. There is for him, however, a long tradition of nihilistic thought in the modern West – both of theory that is judged to harbor implicitly nihilistic potential as well as theory that explicitly addresses the ramifications of nihilism. Nietzsche is, nevertheless, still the quintessential 'explicit' theorist of the nature of nihilism as both a ubiquitous human phenomena as well as a particular spiritual crisis in the West. He catalogued many different types of nihilism as part of this project.

Nietzsche's nihilism: Science eroding belief in a transcendental realm of truth

Nietzsche was the first thinker not just to focus on and elaborate the problem of nihilism, but to address it as ***the*** problem of the modern age. But even Nietzsche was (characteristically) less than systematic in his approach to defining nihilism. As Stephan White notes,[xiv] Nietzsche identifies a whole slew of various nihilisms in his writings:

active, passive, theoretical, practical, complete, incomplete, authentic, contagious, ecstatic, first, final, fundamental, genuine, philosophical, radical, religious, tired, and suicidal. White condenses these descriptions of nihilism by Nietzsche down to three types: ***religious***, ***radical*** and ***complete***.

Religious nihilism consists of the denial of the world of flux and becoming by positing the existence of a realm of purpose, unity and truth that gives meaning to and justifies the world of becoming. Yet this religious nihilism undermines itself; as Nietzsche writes in The Will to Power (in the second aphorism): "*Radical nihilism* is the conviction of an absolute untenability of existence when it comes to the highest values one recognizes; plus the realization that we lack the least right to posit a beyond or an in-itself of things that might be "divine" or morality incarnate. This realization is a consequence of the cultivation of 'truthfulness' – thus itself a consequence of the faith in morality." Ultimately, those who think and live through the logic of radical nihilism come to reaffirm the world of becoming as capable of being valued in itself. Nietzsche writes of himself as the first to complete this nihilistic cycle, to achieve what White calls complete nihilism.

> He that speaks here, conversely, has done nothing so far but reflect: a philosopher and solitary by instinct, who has found his advantage in standing aside and outside, in patience, in procrastination, in staying behind; as a spirit of daring and experiment that has already lost its way once in every labyrinth of the future; as a soothsayer-bird spirit who *looks back* when relating what will come; as the first complete nihilist of Europe who, however, has even now lived through the whole of nihilism, to the end, leaving it behind, outside himself. (WP, preface, #3).

Obviously, this cycle of nihilism refers to the predicament of the modern West – the subject of most of the literature on nihilism. However, there are interpretations of this modern, Western experience that diverge from Nietzsche's – perhaps most notably that of

Heidegger. But there are also those, like Michael Novak, who suggest that the American experience of modern nihilism is quite different from the one articulated by European intellectuals. And Nietzsche's own texts suggest that nihilism is present in societies outside the West and at periods prior to modernity.

This distinction in Nietzsche's thought between nihilism as a particular event in the history of modern Europe versus the nihilism found in all societies at all times needs to be emphasized. On the one hand, Nietzsche refers to nihilism as a particular historical event – the spiritual crisis and loss of meaning and belief in the modern West. On the other hand, he also refers to it as the general condition of humanity, a ubiquitous quality of human existence. As Phillip Fandozzi writes, "For Nietzsche, nihilism is 'a pathological transitional stage' in the development of the will to power which, in turn, has been present throughout history – wherever there has been a valuation of life."[xv] Nihilism in this ubiquitous sense consists of the rejection of the value system of any civilization either because those values are too demanding to a people who have slipped into decadence or because those values seem obsolete to a people who progressing toward new values. As Fandozzi goes on to say, "the response to nihilism is ambiguous: Nietzsche distinguishes between 'active' and 'passive' nihilism, a nihilism of strength and increase of spirit and a nihilism of decline and impotence." Nietzsche symbolizes 'active nihilism' or the will to reject current values as the spirit of the lion in his famous entry 'Of the Three Metamorphoses' in Thus Spoke Zarathustra:

> I name you three metamorphoses of the spirit: how the spirit shall become a camel, and the camel a lion, and the lion at last a child.
>
> There are many heavy things for the spirit, for the strong, weight-bearing spirit in which dwell respect and awe; its strength longs for the heavy, for the heaviest.

What is heavy? thus asks the weight-bearing spirit, thus it kneels down like the camel and wants to be well-laden.

What is the heaviest thing, you heroes? so asks the weight-bearing spirit, that I may take it upon me and rejoice in my strength.

[...]

The weight-bearing spirit takes upon itself all these heaviest things: like a camel hurrying laden into the desert, thus it hurries into its desert.

But in the loneliest desert the second metamorphosis occurs: the spirit here becomes a lion; it wants to capture freedom and be lord in its own desert.

It seeks here its ultimate lord: it will be an enemy to him and to its ultimate God, it will struggle for victory with the great dragon.

What is the great dragon which the spirit no longer wants to call lord and God? The great dragon is called 'Thou shalt'. But the spirit of the lion says 'I will!'

'Thou shalt' lies in its path, sparkling with gold, a scale-covered beast, and on every scale glitters golden 'Thou shalt'.

Values of a thousand years glitter on the scales, and thus speaks the mightiest of all dragons: 'All the values of things – glitter on me.

'All values have already been created, and all created values – are in me. Truly, there shall be no more "I will"! Thus speaks the dragon.

My brothers, why is the lion needed in the spirit? Why does the beast of burden, that renounces and is reverent, not suffice?

To create new values – even the lion is incapable of that: but to create itself freedom for new creation – that the might of the lion can do.

To create freedom for itself and a sacred No even to duty: the lion is needed for that, my brothers.

To seize the right to new values – that is the most terrible proceeding for a weight-bearing and reverential spirit. Truly, to this spirit it is a theft and a work for an animal of prey.

Once it loved this 'Thou shalt' as its holiest thing: now it has to find illusion and caprice even in the holiest, that it may steal freedom from its love: the lion is needed for this theft.

But tell me, my brothers, what can the child do that even the lion cannot? Why must the preying lion still become a child?

The child is innocence and forgetfulness, a new beginning, a sport, a self-propelling wheel, a first motion, a sacred Yes.

Yes, a sacred Yes is needed, my brothers, for the sport of creation: the spirit now wills *its own* will, the spirit sundered from the world now wins *its own* world.

I have named you three metamorphoses of the spirit: how the spirit became a camel, and the camel a lion, and the lion at last a child.[xvi]

These three metamorphoses of the spirit obviously resemble the three stages of nihilism that White identified as religious, radical and complete. But the point here is that the active nihilism displayed in the spirit of the lion can be found in all civilizations, as can passive nihilism. That active and passive nihilism are present in the world's 'nihilistic religions', not just in the West, is evident in this note in The Will to Power:

> What an *affirmative* Aryan religion, the product of the *ruling* class, looks like: the law-book of Manu. (The deification of the feeling of power in Brahma: interesting that it arose among the warrior caste and was only transferred to the priests.)
>
> What an *affirmative* Semitic religion, the product of a *ruling* class, looks like: the law-book of Mohammed, the older parts of the Old Testament. (Mohammedanism, as a religion for men, is deeply contemptuous of the sentimentality and mendaciousness of Christianity – which it feels to be a woman's religion.)
>
> What a *negative* Semitic religion, the product of an *oppressed* class, looks like: the New Testament (--in Indian-Aryan terms: a chandala religion).
>
> What a *negative* Aryan religion looks like, grown up among the *ruling* orders: Buddhism.
>
> It is quite in order that we posses no religion of oppressed Aryan races, for that is a contradiction: a master race is either on top or it is destroyed.[xvii]

Nietzsche writes in an ironic mode here, since by 'Aryan' he refers to Asian Indian religions, and by 'Semitic' he refers to Islam and Christianity. (Europeans, as members of the Indo-Aryan language group had, of course, embraced like no one else the ultimate 'slave' religion of Christianity.) He refers to these 'negative' religions as nihilistic because out of exhaustion (passive nihilism) they posit another 'real' world beyond the world of experience, whereas 'affirmative' nihilistic religions like Islam and Hinduism do so out of the spirit of the lion (active nihilism); in contrast, pagan religions tend to affirm the world. "The affirmation of the natural, the sense of innocence in the natural, 'naturalness,' is pagan. The denial of the natural, the sense of degradation in the natural,

unnaturalness, is Christian."[xviii] But even paganism was subject to nihilism – the 'religious nihilism' that leads to Christianity.

> The great lie in history: as if it was the *corruption* of paganism which opened the road to Christianity! It was, on the contrary, the weakening and *moralization* of the man of Antiquity! Natural drives had already been reinterpreted as vices![xix]

While the denial of a value system – whether out of passive exhaustion and decadence or from an active, restless dissatisfaction – is a ubiquitous phenomenon in human history, it finds its strongest form in Christianity, a religion Nietzsche described as 'Platonism for the masses'. The crucial belief in this tradition was in the existence of 'another world' that transcended human experience and provided standards of truth, unity and purpose. Yet the development of natural science that arose from this quest for truth eventually undermined belief in aim and totality, which came to be seen as mere subjective valuation; by the nineteenth century, 'truth' itself was suspected of being mere interpretation rooted in individual bias. Although science has severed 'value' from aim, unity and truth, the idea of value can be salvaged by creating new values that are rooted in the world of becoming and flux.

The 'will to power' is crucial to the creation of new values, and this is why the distinction between active and passive nihilism is so important – new values need to be created while the modern West still displays some vitality. But by the 'will to power' Nietzsche introduces a deceptively novel concept. By 'power' (*macht*), Nietzsche refers to 'making', creating or interpreting, and by 'will' he means an unconscious, embodied expression of unknown forces.

> Ultimately, we understand the conscious ego itself only as a tool in the service of a higher, comprehensive intellect; and then we are able to ask whether all conscious willing, all conscious purposes, all evaluations are

> not perhaps only means through which something essentially different from what appears in consciousness is to be achieved.... *Are* there really will, purposes, thoughts, values? Is the whole of conscious life perhaps only a reflected image? And even when evaluation seems to determine the nature of man, fundamentally something quite different is happening! In short: supposing that purposiveness in the work of nature could be explained without the assumption of an ego that posits purposes: could *our* positing of purposes, our willing, etc., not perhaps be also only a language of signs for something altogether different, namely something that does not will and is unconscious?...
>
> Put briefly: perhaps the entire evolution of the spirit is a question of the body; it is the history of the development of a higher body that emerges into our sensibility.... [C]onsciousness and evaluations in the body, all kinds of pleasure and displeasure, are signs of these changes and experiments. In the long run, it is not a question of man at all: he is to be overcome.[xx]

Thus the will to truth that drives modern science, sprung from moral and religious roots, reveals the fictitiousness of the existence of a transcendental realm of unity and purpose and therefore exposes the bankruptcy of the concept of truth itself. The world of becoming is fundamentally disordered and meaningless and requires the creation of value to give it meaning, and this is accomplished by the unconditional affirmation of the world of flux and chaos through *amor fati* – the love of one's fate.

> Such an experimental philosophy as I live anticipates experimentally even the possibilities of the most fundamental nihilism; but this does not mean that it must halt at a negation, a No, a will to negation. It wants rather to cross over to the opposite of this – to a Dionysian affirmation of the world as it is, without subtraction, exception, or selection – it wants the eternal circulation: – the same things, the same logic and illogic of entanglements. The highest state a philosopher can attain: to stand in a Dionysian relationship to existence – my formula for this is *amor fati*.[xxi]

The ultimate expression of the love of one's fate is the embracement of the idea of eternal return. If all of physical reality is so determinate and aimless that it recurs an infinite number of times, the joyful affirmation of this cosmological vision is the supreme valuation of the world of becoming and the greatest act of the will to power – despite

one's total lack of power over this absurd fate. However, for the philosopher Martin Heidegger, Nietzsche's concept of the will to power was in fact the ultimate nihilism. Heidegger had quite a different conception of nihilism from Nietzsche.

Heidegger's nihilism: Technology as a worldview, destroying a sense of wholeness

For Nietzsche, the notion of Being was a fictitious transcendent realm outside the real world of becoming. For Heidegger, however, the world of becoming ***is*** the world of Being from which Western civilization has turned away or forgotten since Socrates developed philosophy. That metaphysical tradition was premised on the opposition of Being and appearance, or of mind and body, and Heidegger claims that Nietzsche merely inverts these oppositions and privileges a world of becoming. The pre-Socratic philosophers properly understood Being as appearance, and he argues that Being emerges in appearance as a whole that cannot be reduced either to thinking (subjectivity) or to the totality of things (objectivity). Judgment in the Platonic scheme consists of representation, in which particular instances or beings are subsumed under ideal types and are no longer conceived as part of Being, that is, from the whole from which they emerged. Since this time, Heidegger avers, Western "man thinks in terms of the fact that the essence of truth is the correctness of the representing of all beings according to 'ideas' and esteems everything according to 'values'."[xxii]

For Heidegger, Nietzsche is the ultimate nihilist because of Nietzsche's supposed emphasis on subjectivity and on human agency and its imperative to control and dominate. This culmination of nihilism is technological – indeed, so is the nature of the modern age. Technology promotes an inauthentic attitude because it promises the

escapist illusion of endless possibilities through ceaseless 'wandering' and the endless quest for novelty; in contrast, authenticity secures definite possibilities by dwelling within the limits of the heritage of the past, as well as by facing the limits of one's own mortality. Rather than engage in community life, individuals pursue a private lifestyle that promises freedom through the purchase of material goods.

Technology, however, does not consist of equipment, but in the 'Enframing' of the world, that is, in viewing the things of the world instrumentally, and Being (the wholeness of experience) has been forgotten amidst this Enframing. Technology promotes an object-oriented, 'calculative' thinking, which seeks to master the logical terms of a procedure, whereas meditative or reflective thinking harbors a gratitude to Being (the word 'think' is related to the word 'thank' in English) and a calm attentiveness akin to poetry. By meditating on technology, and thereby becoming conscious of it as Enframing, we can liberate ourselves from its domination of our thinking and apprehend Being.

Heidegger, by redefining the meaning of nihilism, by reinterpreting the Western tradition, and by attempting to cast Nietzsche as the ultimate nihilist, is seeking to displace Nietzsche as the first philosopher to successfully think through the nihilistic ramifications of the Western tradition. However, in terms of the actual historical experience of modernity, both Nietzsche and Heidegger complement one another's theories of nihilism because they are writing of two rather distinct experiences of nihilism. For instance, the classic nineteenth century experience of meaninglessness is the loss of religious faith in the wake the rise of modern science; this is perhaps best illustrated in Turgenev's novel Fathers and Sons,[xxiii] in which protagonist, the self-

described 'nihilist' and amateur scientist Bazarov, proclaims a radical skepticism that denies the existence of any deity. In contrast, later twentieth-century fiction, especially American, of existential meaninglessness rarely seem to touch on the theme of religion undermined by science, but typically address the emptiness of prosperity and the atomization of society; the updated, American analog to Turgenev's novel of family division might be found in the movie *American Beauty*, in which the protagonist's mid-life crisis (that is, the experience of authenticity generated by an awareness of one's mortality) inspires him to renounce the rat race of suburban materialism and embrace family, health and spontaneity. The task is to find how these two types of nihilism, the loss of the transcendent and the loss of the sense of wholeness, overlap.

Consumerism, a veritable cult of the technological to Heidegger, has for some theorists eroded the belief in a transcendental realm of truth, an assertion more in agreement with Nietzsche's conception of nihilism. For instance, consumerism has traditionally been seen to undermine 'Culture' in the edifying sense as a transcendental truth in all modernized societies. But since the dawn of a consumer economy in the United States since the end of the Civil War, consumerism was also widely seen as the major threat to morality in the United States. In The Morality of Spending: Attitudes Toward the Consumer in America, 1875-1940,[xxiv] Daniel Horowitz documents this attitude toward consumerism as found in the household budget studies conducted by American scholars. Indeed, Horowitz himself confesses that he originally embarked on his study of consumerism with a bias against it, but that his research exposed him to the libratory potential of consumerism as a form of self-expression. Horowitz's initially

condemnatory attitude toward consumerism is typical, it seems, of scholars, and his reflexivity in this regard is remarkable.

In fact, as Roger Mason has illustrated in The Economics of Conspicuous Consumption: Theory and Thought Since 1700,[xxv] the academic field of economics still basically denies the existence of a consumer economy despite the fact that it is now the driving force of modern economies. Mason asserts that a consumer economy, although initially dwarfed by the producer economy, has been in existence in the United States and Europe since the 1850s. Yet the discipline of economics is still oriented toward a production economy and its individualistic model of agency, recognizing a tension between use value and ***exchange*** value, whereas consumer economies exhibit a tension between use value and ***display*** value, a social orientation academic economist insist is the province of sociology and psychology. (Meanwhile, economists outside academia, as well as marketers and advertisers, recognize consumer spending as central to their analytic concerns.) Consumerism has always been perceived as unsavory, largely because it was long associated with the behavior of the very wealthy, but the fact is that since the industrial revolution and the democratization of affluence, consumers have constantly been re-classifying what were once considered luxury items as necessities, without any self-consciousness of self-indulgence. Display value disguises itself as use value both in popular culture and in the stilted models of academic economists.

In sum, there is historical aversion to consumerism because it is perceived to erode the religious sensibilities. But the conditions of thriving commerce that are the precondition of consumerism also create a rather different kind of nihilism – ***the loss of meaning at the local level***. It was Herder, one of the first contributors to the modern

culture idea, who during the Enlightenment first warned of the dangers that cosmopolitanism and universal civilization harbored to what was unique in a people's life. But this form of nihilism – the loss of meaning at the level of the locality – is closely related to the other two types of nihilism elaborated by Nietzsche and Heidegger, just as those latter two types of nihilism are distinct yet interrelated and overlapping.

Consumerism, and four types of nihilism: Loss of transcendent truth, of wholeness, of local meaning and the rejection of the modern world

To restate the matter, the crisis of nihilism described by Nietzsche and that explicated by Heidegger can be seen to be two interrelated but distinct phenomena. The former pertains to the loss of belief in a transcendent world of truth, a loss generated by the growth of science; the latter relates to the loss of a sense of wholeness brought on by an instrumental view of the world. These can be seen to be two distinct species of modern nihilism, both of which can interact and have an impact on one another. In fact, a way of connecting the two can be found in developing the implications of an essay by William James, an essay that addresses the effect of modern consumerism on militarism. This also develops the possibility of identifying new types of nihilism that characterize the twentieth century.

In 'The Moral Equivalent to War', James argued that pacifism was both too Utopian and naïve in its 'soft' and idealistic appraisal of human nature and too uninspiring and un-heroic in its lack of valorization of the 'hard' martial virtues. What is needed is a peacetime 'army' of conscripted youth to wage a 'war on nature', since economic development could serve as a humane way to channel the aggressive spirits and

to provide a sense of heroism based on danger, hardship and sacrifice. Militaristic writers asserted at the time of the essay "that mankind was nursed in pain and fear, and that the transition to a 'pleasure economy' may be fatal to a being wielding no powers of defence against its degenerative influences. If we speak of the *fear of emancipation from the fear-regime*, we put the whole situation into a single phrase; fear regarding ourselves now taking the place of the ancient fear of the enemy."[xxvi] That is, to those who live in traditional societies and in economies of scarcity, the manifold of choices and freedoms afforded by a consumer economy (as bogus as they may be, as Heidegger pointed out) posed a threat of temptation to a self now unbound from a regime of harsh discipline. There will be a fraction of the population within a nation that will react against the freedoms found in prosperity, democracy and socialism.

> All these beliefs of mine put me firmly into the anti-military party. But I do not believe that peace either ought to be or will be permanent on this globe, unless the states, pacifically organized, preserve some of the old elements of army-discipline. A permanently successful peace-economy cannot be a simple pleasure-economy. In the more or less socialistic future toward which mankind seems drifting we must still subject ourselves collectively to those severities which answer to our real position upon this only partly hospitable globe. We must make new energies and hardihoods continue the manliness to which the military mind so faithfully clings. Martial virtues must be the enduring cement; intrepidity, contempt of softness, surrender of private interest, obedience to command, must still remain the rock upon which states are built – unless, indeed, we wish for dangerous reactions against commonwealths, fit only for contempt, and liable to invite attack whenever a center of crystallization for military-minded enterprise gets formed anywhere in their neighborhood.[xxvii]

Mark Selzer notes that at this period in American history, there was a conflation in the popular imagination of the pulmonary disease of consumption and the feminine consumption of shopping, both of which were to be cured by the manly life out of doors.

> Seton, for instance, understands consumption as a symptom of a perverse turning away from the natural. As he puts it in the first *Boy Scouts of America* handbook, "Consumption, the white man's plague since he has become a house race, is vanquished by the sun and air, and many ills of the mind also are forgotten, when the sufferer boldly takes to the life in tents. Half our diseases are in our minds and half in our houses." Seton's account of the national of the national disease of consumption, its etiology and cure, invokes a familiar opposition of the artificial and female indoor space of domesticity and conspicuous consumption, on one side, to male and natural outdoor life, on the other. As Missouri Senator George G. Vest put it, in his 1883 defense of the founding of the first national park, Yellowstone would serve "as a great breathingplace for the national lungs." The return to nature thus appears as the antidote to consumption conspicuous in body and nation both.[xxviii]

One thing that James does not address is the degree to which the First World War (eight years away from when he first delivered the essay as a speech at Stanford) as well as the fascist movements of the Second World War ***were*** manifestations of the rejection of individual freedom found in democracy and the 'pleasure economy'. After all, in The True Believer[xxix] Eric Hoffer asserted that mass movements were refuges for those who felt that their self had been somehow spoiled or ruined, and that they needed to lose or dissolve this self in a dogmatic collective enterprise. The classic example Hoffer offers of this was the large number of failed artists like Adolph Hitler in the Nazi Party, creatively frustrated individuals who sought an escape from themselves and a scapegoat for their mediocrity.

But Hoffer's notion of the true believer is not exactly James's idea of the fear of emancipation from the fear regime. Of course, both the militarist and the true believer repudiate the self. But where James characterized the freedom of the self in the modern world as a threatening form of decadence to the traditional sense of order and morality found, quintessentially, in military discipline, Hoffer argued conversely that the militant mass movement was an escape from a soiled individuality. That is, where for James the

militarist typically fears the dissolution and decadence promoted by modern individuality and its temptations, for Hoffer the ruined individual can come to loath the self and seek its dissolution in a militaristic mass movement. Nevertheless, the link between these two is the rejection of individuality, and Hoffer serves as a bridge between the militarism that James warned against and ideology. Ultimately, individual freedom for the unprepared is not just a threat to the 'fear regime' of tribalism that James claims has dominated human history, but also the 'fear regime' of religious belief and ideology; because of this, the implications of the 'pleasure economy' are nihilistic.

That consumerism is a threat to religion and morality might seem at first glance the argument made by the political scientist Benjamin Barber in Jihad Versus McWorld.[xxx] However, Barber is quick to point out that by 'jihad' he does not mean 'Islam'. 'Jihad' in Barber's use of the term refers to the tribalism and factionalism that rends the world in the age of globalization. The forces of globalization weaken the power of the nation-state, and, once weakened, tribalism challenges both the prerogatives of the state and the homogenizing influences of the expanding market. And yet the 'McWorld' – that is, the market forces – rely upon the variety and richness of local cultures and countercultures (like rap music) as a source of raw material to sell to a mass market. In turn, 'jihad' or the local forces that resist globalization, appropriate the technology (like the Internet) that is used to promote globalism. "Jihad not only revolts against but abets McWorld, while McWorld not only imperils but re-creates and re-inforces Jihad. They produce their contraries and need one another."[xxxi]

In Barber's notion of 'Jihad', we encounter the loss of meaning at the local level that Herder warned against, but not exactly the threat to transcendent meaning. A

narrative of the loss of moral and religious feeling at the hands of consumerism is found instead in the controversial works of the 'Orientalist' Bernard Lewis, who coined the phrase 'clash of civilizations' to describe the supposed conflict between the modern West and Islam. According to Lewis, more threatening to the Muslim world than the expanding power and cultural hegemony of the West are the liberties promised by Western democracy and the personal indulgences promoted by modern consumerism. In the Islamic tradition, he notes, Satan is known as 'Shaytan', or 'the Tempter', and is not the force of malevolent conspiracy that Christians harbor in their image of the demonic but is, rather, all too appealing. The temptations of modernity in some quarters of the Muslim world lead to a 'fear of emancipation from the fear regime' of religion, which, in the Muslim tradition, is closely tied to the social and political order. In fact, this fear of freedom is most intensely felt among the educated and prosperous elite.[xxxii] Historically, there has been, it has been noted above, an aversion on moral grounds to consumerism even in the United States, so this aspect of Lewis's thesis gains credence not so much on the clash between the East and West, but between the modern economy and traditional moralities.

The connection between nihilism and consumerism has been elucidated in other places, but usually in regard to the consumer economy of the late-twentieth century and not to the early part of the century, and to the loss of external references of meaning and not to the collapse of morality. The nihilistic implications of postmodern consumer culture are famously articulated by Fredrick Jameson and Jean Baudrillard; for them, consumerism ultimately fosters the loss of a belief in an external 'true' reality. But the connection of consumerism to telecommunications development and the globalization of

capitalism is especially evident in the social theory of Manuel Castells. Moreover, Castells defines the nihilistic ramifications of this process differently, as the assault on local meaning rather than the loss of a transcendent realm of truth.

In the case of Jameson and Baudrillard, consumerism and technology in 'late modernity' work together to create an economy based on the production, circulation and consumption of images, so that material goods are really secondary to the symbolic import assigned to them in advertising and by the social context: the sign has itself been commodified. This generates a sense – rather, a ***realization*** – within the society that any kind of 'other world' or reality external to the symbol system is a fiction. Moreover, in Baudrillard's theory, the emergence of a postmodern simulational world is based not only on advanced commodity production, but the development of information technology as well. As Mike Featherstone states, "Baudrillard's (1983a) depiction of a postmodern simulational world is based upon the assumption that the development of commodity production coupled with information technology have led to the 'triumph of signifying culture' which then reverses the direction of determinism, so that social relations become saturated with shifting cultural signs to the extent that we can no longer speak of class or normativity and are faced by 'the end of the social'."[xxxiii]

> The major addition to Baudrillard's (1970) theory is to draw on semiology to argue that consumption entails the active manipulation of signs. This becomes central to late capitalist society where sign and commodity have come together to produce the 'commodity-sign'. The autonomy of the signifier, through, for example, the manipulation of signs in the media and advertising, means that signs are able to float free from objects and are available for use in a multiplicity fo associative relations. Baudrillard's semiological development of commodity logic, entails for some an idealistic deflection of Marx's theory and movement from a materialist emphasis to a cultural emphasis (Preteceille and Terrail, 1985). This becomes more noticeable in Baudrillard's (1983a, 1983b) later writings where the emphasis shifts from production to reproduction, to the endless

> reduplication of signs, images and simulations through the media which effaces the distinction between the image and reality. Hence the consumer society becomes essentially cultural as social life becomes deregulated and social relationships become more variable and less structured by stable norms. The overproduction of signs and reproduction of images and simulations leads to a loss of stable meaning, and an aestheticization of reality in which the masses become fascinated by the endless flow of bizarre justapositions [sic] which takes the viewer beyond stable sense.[xxxiv]

For Baudrillard, this entails a certain kind of nihilism endemic to the postmodern era.

> For Baudrillard, however, this discovery of the nihilism at the heart of the logic of the capitalist commodity form – of Nietzsche as the completion of Marx (Kroker, 1985) – is such to break all 'referential illusions'. To use one of Baudrillard's (1983a) favorite metaphors: all the privileged domains of finalities – labor, use-value, sex, science, society, human emancipation and their theorizations (what Lyotard (1984) refers to as metanarratives) – are sucked into a 'black-hole'. For Baudrillard, then, the logic of commodity production has produced a particular reversal in which culture once determined, now becomes free-floating and determining to the extent that today we can talk about the triumph of signifying culture, to the extent that we can no longer speak of class or normativity which belong to the prior stage of the system as people are reduced to a glutinous mass which refuses to stabilize in its absorption, reflection and cynical parody of media images. It is neither manipulated nor manipulable according to Baudrillard (1983b).[xxxv]

There is some overlap between Jameson and Baudrillard. Postmodernism was explained by Jameson as a product of a couple of developments in the advanced economies since the 1970s – namely, the domination of the Western economies by consumerism, and the migration of industrial production from the developed to the developing world. Baudrillard recognized the growth of a consumption-based economy as a factor, but he also noted the growth of information technology, such as television. Likewise, the sociologist Manuel Castells identifies globalism and information technology as the primary features of the 'information age' at the turn of the century, from which a postmodern culture has emerged. But he also notes that there was a revolt against bureaucracy in the 1960s that made possible the information age, a cultural

movement that is to the information age what Max Weber asserted the Protestant ethic was to early modern capitalism.

First, Castells claims that in the 1960s there emerged in both the capitalist and communist worlds a revolt against bureaucracy in the name of individual autonomy, a libertarian movement that emphasized the politics of identity, culture and subjectivity and largely abandoned politics based on objective criteria like class. (Indeed, within academic literature the concept of identity began to appear in fits and starts in the mid-1950s, blossoming fully in the psychoanalytic writings of Erik Erikson, largely in reaction to the alienation of mass society. And as Rick Perlstein has argued in Before the Storm,[xxxvi] even the reactionary Goldwater presidential campaign of 1964 was essentially counter-cultural and anti-technocratic.) This libertarian movement sunk deep into American culture, particularly in the milieu of northern California, and it became a catalytic force in the information technology revolution that began in the 1970s and that re-defined the computer as a personal device located in an anarchic, de-centralized telecommunications network.

However, the resulting new communications system is historically unique in that it comprises a 'real virtuality'. Although human experience has always existed as a form of virtual reality because it is mediated by symbols, Castells argues, *real virtuality* is a recent condition in which a communications system now exists "in which reality itself (that is, people's material/symbolic existence) is entirely captured, fully immersed in a virtual image setting, in the world of make believe, in which appearances are not just on the screen through which experience is communicated, but they become the experience."[xxxvii] Castells' classic example of this 'real virtuality' is the way former Vice

President Dan Quail's public scolding of the television character Murphy Brown's liberal morality led to a rebuke not by the actress Candice Bergen, who played Brown, but by Brown the character who, as a news anchor on a sitcom, rebuked Quail. In other words, his public chastisement of the show was thus appropriated into the show's script as an attack on the character, a move that ultimately contributed to the defeat of the Bush administration. Not only was the reality of political campaigning sucked into the medium of television when it attacked television, but that political reality was seriously impacted in doing so.

While this 'Murphy Brown debate' is a quintessential 'postmodern moment' in its self-conscious dematerialization of a political text and its open re-combination with a fictional text, the historically specific material roots for such postmodernist texts are accounted for differently. As stated above, Fredrick Jameson accounted for the postmodern by citing the economic crisis of the 1970s and the subsequent globalization of capital and the consequent growth of consumerism and its valuation of the signs of consumption over the substance of the goods purchased, creating a culture of disembodied symbolism. Castells' theory does not contradict that of Jameson, but he illustrates how this process was concomitant with the development of information technology, and he implicitly situates the postmodern within this technological context. These two accounts both offer structural correlations – one economic, the other technological – explaining the bourgeoning of the 'postmodern' in popular culture in late twentieth-century America, but the historical specificity they assert conflicts with Livingston's association of the initial development of the consumer society in early

American industrialism with the emergence of classical pragmatism as a supposedly postmodern philosophy.

The information age, for Castells, harbors its own kind of nihilism, embodied in the conflict between 'the Net and the Self', as he puts it. If the counter-cultural movements of the 1960s that championed individual autonomy against the technocracy spawned both the information age and the politics of identity, those kinds of identity and sources of meaning at the local level are both threatened by globalized flows of capital and information and threatened by their absence. On the one hand, those who cannot either filter or contain these flows will lose the unique and meaningful characteristics of local life, a new brand of nihilism.

> The new techno-economic paradigm imposes the space of flows as the irreversible spatial logic of economic and functional organizations. The issue then becomes how to articulate the meaning of places to this new functional space. The reconstruction of place-based social meaning requires the simultaneous articulation of alternative social and spatial projects at three levels: cultural, economic, and political.[xxxviii]

On the other hand, those in the developing world who cannot attract or harness them will sink ever deeper into the reactionary politics of identity. He writes of this phenomenon of sour grapes among the have-nots of the developing world:

> There seems to be a logic of excluding the excluders, of redefining the criteria for value and meaning in a world where there is shrinking room of the computer illiterate, for consumptionless groups, and for under-communicating territories. When the Net switches off the Self, the Self, individual or collective, constructs its meaning without global, instrumental reference: the process of disconnection becomes reciprocal, after the refusal by the excluded of the one-sided logic of structural domination and social exclusion.[xxxix]

Castells warns here really of two distinct types of nihilism that potentially afflict the globalized information age: a nihilism of lost meaning at the local level and a nihilism

that rejects a modernization that is out of reach anyway. And it is clear that both can afflict the developing world simultaneously, with the loss of traditional lifestyles taking place without the emergence of any of the more democratic and empowering aspects of modernization. Nihilism, in fact, is no stranger to the effects of consumerism and cosmopolitanism, and these effects of these two forces have long had the kind of impact on Western society that recent commentators have attributed to them.

Consumerism, therefore, can be seen to involve at least four variants of nihilism. The first two forms of nihilism are those typically associated philosophical discourse on nihilism. First, there is a loss of Being or wholeness that stems from a technological worldview that divides up the world into things, as Heidegger theorized. Second, consumerism erodes the foundations of belief – much as Nietzsche articulated the erosion of faith and truth by scientific inquiry. Consumerism does this in two ways. It generates a 'fear of emancipation from the fear regime', be it a regime of militarism, of morality or of religion, since consumerism tempts individuals away from these traditional bastions of self-discipline and identity. But consumerism also, as Baudrillard, Jameson and Castells theorize, erodes a sense of transcendent or external truth since; that is, through the modern media, consumerism commodifies signs and images and the display value of products over their use value and their existence as material goods. Therefore, the erosion of morality, religion and truth by the consumer society resembles Nietzsche's critique of the nihilistic effects of science more than it resembles Heidegger's lamentation of modern rootlessness.

But consumerism also relates to two aspects of globalization that are not usually understood as nihilistic, namely the erasure of local meanings by global flows of capital

and information and the reactionary denial of non-local references. (These two forms of nihilism are represented above in the work of Benjamin Barber and Manuel Castells.) Yet even these developments can be brought into relation of Heidegger's later thought (in which he had modified his conception of Being). For example, sample of a 1955 speech given by Heidegger illustrates how his concern with the rise of the media in modern life is not so much a postmodernist recognition of dematerialization of experience as it is a deeply conservative, even provincial dread of losing a local rootedness.

> Many Germans have lost their homeland, have had to leave their villages and towns, have been driven from their native soil. Countless others whose homeland was saved, have yet wandered off. They have been caught up in the turmoil of the big cities, and have resettled in the wastelands of industrial districts. They are strangers now to their former homeland [of village life]. And those who *have* stayed on in their homeland? Often they are still more homeless than those who have been driven from their homeland. Hourly and daily they are chained to radio and television. Week after week the movies carry them off into uncommon, but often merely common, realms of the imagination, and give the illusion of a world that is no world. Picture magazines are everywhere available. All that with which modern techniques of communication stimulate, assail, and drive man – all that is already much closer to man today than his field around his farmstead, closer than the sky over the earth, closer than the change from night to day, closer than the conventions and customs of his village, than the tradition of his native world.
>
> We grow more thoughtful and ask: What is happening here – with those driven from their homeland no less than with those who have remained? Answer: the *rootedness*, the *autochthony*, of man is threatened today at its core! Even more: The loss of rootedness is caused not merely by circumstance and fortune, nor does it stem only from the negligence and the superficiality of man's way of life. The loss of autochthony springs from the spirit of the age into which all of us were born.[xl]

The evolution of Heidegger's thought provides a philosophical background for understanding the relationship between the forces of globalization and the locality. There was a change in Heidegger's philosophy that revised what he meant by Being. Heidegger himself wrote "I have forsaken an earlier position, not to exchange it for another, but

because even the former position was only a pause on the way."[xli] For example, earlier in his career he had compared his notion of Being to Aristotle's concept of substance – a kind of undifferentiated wholeness of things. (Aristotle's interpreters later turned away from Being by corrupting this idea of substance into 'actuality' – the instantiation of a universal typology, a surprisingly Platonist conception.) In his later work he seeks to renew the search for a 'new ground of meaning', and this objective is interchangeable with his earlier use of the word 'Being'.[xlii] In cultivating a non-willful, non-calculating, non-representational way of thinking – ***meditative*** thinking – the thinker does not focus on objects but on the open horizon or 'region' within which they appear. In this later work, Heidegger now uses the term 'that-which-regions' instead of Being; by it he seems to refer to the interpretive frameworks that establish the horizons of man's understanding, and that thus define what 'man' considered to be at any given point in history. History is therefore not to be understood as composed of events, but of the subject-object relation or in the sciences understood methodologically. That is, things (including humanity) are to be contextualized within interpretative frameworks as their Being.

> *Scientist:* Earlier we began by illuminating the relation between the ego and the object by way of the factual relation of thought in the physical sciences to nature. The relation between the ego and the object, the often mentioned subject-object relation, which I took to be most general, is apparently only an historical variation of the relation of man to the thing, so far as things can become objects...
> *Teacher:* ...even have become objects before they attained their nature as things.
> *Scholar:* The same is true of the corresponding historical change of the human being to an ego...
> *Teacher:* ...which likewise emerged before the nature of man could return to itself...
> *Scientist:* ...providing we do not regard the coining of man into the *animal rationale* as final...
> *Scholar:* ...which would hardly be possible after today's conversation.

Scientist: I hesitate to decide upon this so quickly. However, something else has become clear to me. In the relation between ego and object there is concealed something historical, something which belongs to the history of man's nature.
Teacher: Only so far as man's *nature* does *not* receive its stamp from man, but from what we call that-which-regions and its regioning, does the history you presage become the history of that-which-regions.
Scientist: I can't follow you that far yet. I am content if some obscurity in the relation between ego and object is removed for me by this insight into its historical character. For when I decided in favor of the methodological type of analysis in the physical sciences, you said that this way of looking at it was historical.
Scholar: You strongly objected to that statement.
Scientist: Now I see what was meant. The program of mathematics and the experiment are grounded in the relation of man as ego to the thing as object.
Teacher: They even constitute this relation in part and unfold its historical character.
Scientist: If any examination which focuses on what is a part of history is called historical, then the methodological analysis in physics is, indeed, historical.
Scholar: Here the concept of the historical signifies a mode of knowing and is understood broadly.
Teacher: Understood, presumably, as focused upon a history which does not consist in the happenings and deeds of the world.
Scholar: Nor in the cultural achievements of man.
Scientist: But in what else?
Teacher: The historical rests in that-which-regions, and in what occurs as that-which-regions. It rests in what, coming to pass in man, regions him into his nature.[xliii]

If Nietzsche meant for the most part by the 'will to power' the unconscious processes of creative interpretation, Heidegger came to mean by 'Being' locally rooted yet evolving unconscious heritages of interpretation (that-which-regions). On the one hand, our indigenous worlds are under assault by the forces of modernity (globalization, mass media, consumerism), but on the other hand our 'horizons' are supposed to remain open because our traditions are evolving. Heidegger would thus reject Barber's 'jihad' (what Castells calls the denial of external points of reference) as much as he would 'McWorld' (the erasure of local meanings).

There is a remedy, for Heidegger, to these globalizing forces. We must engage in meditative thinking and transcend calculative thinking, thinkers must observe their interpretive horizons and not the objects within them. In doing so, we realize that 'man' is a historically situated product of interpretation, and history must focus on the evolution of the subject-object dichotomy and the changing methods of science to come nearer to that-which-regions or Being. Heidegger not only gives some depth to an analysis that involves categories like 'jihad' versus 'McWorld', but he also offers the prescription of meditative historical thinking for emerging from both of these forces. In essence, historical thinking is an act of genealogy as Nietzsche and Foucault practiced it, an unearthing of forgotten prior grounds of meaning or dominant interpretations. And this is very much what this study seeks to do. (For instance, this chapter is, in a sense, a genealogy of nihilism.)

If this Heideggerian perspective portrays the rootedness of culture under assault by the forces of modernity, a more Nietzschean view – stressing the self-overcoming of nihilism – would locate nihilism in the emergence and flourishing of culture. For Nietzsche, the loss of religious faith is a product of the truth imperative of Christianity, ironically, that feeds the disenchanting worldview of science; likewise, science itself leads to its own discrediting because, in a sense, the more we know about physical reality the more we realize that we know nothing. Along the lines of this logic of irony, Johan Goudsblom argues that urbanization in ancient Greece and Renaissance Europe fed the growth of the Western humanistic tradition – and of (skeptical) philosophy in particular – which in turn produced the truth imperative that Nietzsche warns lies at the heart of modern nihilism.

Nihilism and culture

In Nihilism and Culture, Johan Goudsblom follows Nietzsche in identifying the 'truth imperative' as the source of nihilism in the modern West. But Goudsblom diverges from Nietzsche in locating the source of this truth imperative not in science, but in the emergence of the Western humanistic tradition. Goudsblom's own interpretive framework is Parsonian, and he consequently distinguishes between the three systems that are autonomous from yet homologous to one another: social organization, cultural ideas and values, and personality development. Cultural developments like the rise of humanism are tied, for Goudsblom, to the 'civilizing process' described by Norbert Elias[xliv] that transformed the psychological and social structures of Western Europe.

> Toward the end of the Middle Ages larger and larger areas were pacified and subjugated to one central authority which had a monopoly of organized power through the use of force within its territory. An increasingly fine mesh of social relationships of mutual dependence spread within the expanding territorial units. Correspondingly, a gradual transformation took place in patterns of behavior and in individual attitudes and emotions. The metamorphosis of the unruly knight-warriors into the elegant aristocracy of the courts of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries was symptomatic of the changes in mentality and life-style which were taking place among larger and larger sections of the population. The omnipresent pressures exerted by an increasingly dense network of social interdependencies compelled every man to watch those around him carefully and prompted him to guard against betraying his intentions by spontaneous outbursts of feeling. The individual was forced to exercise caution, to be circumspect, to adopt a more 'rational' attitude. Increasingly, a distinction was made between public and private behavior; and as a substantial part of everyone's life was concealed in the wings of the social theatre, the gap widened between the 'conscious' and the 'unconscious'. More and more activities were governed by deliberate controls; concomitantly, those urges which were deemed socially undesirable became 'unspeakable' and were relegated to deeper and deeper levels of the 'unconscious'.[xlv]

Goudsblom attributes this kind of burgeoning rationalism and integration to the ancient Greek city-states as well, and finds the invention of philosophy in particular to be symptomatic of the quest for a neutral and objective grounds for evaluating the multitude of social and political conflicts that would be rife in a self-governing yet cosmopolitan commercial city like Athens. Of course, this Greek response to urbanization and social mobility was unique; similar conditions in Chinese and Indian history that gave rise to a deep vein of skepticism produced instead a resigned Confucianism and Buddhism, respectively.[xlvi] Moreover, skepticism is not nihilism, since even in the West faith – including a faith in science – was often premised on acknowledging the limits knowledge of God or nature.[xlvii] Yet the truth imperative launched by Greek rationalist philosophy ultimately culminated in nihilism.

The social conditions of Renaissance Europe fostered a return to this humanistic ideal. "The conditions which encouraged its spread in both epochs had so much in common that Alexander Rüstow was able to write: 'It is extremely remarkable to what extent the recurrence of a very similar sociological situation after an interval of two millennia should have produced surprisingly similar cultural consequences.'"[xlviii] Yet in the modern age this vein of nihilism is more powerful for at least three reasons, according to Goudsblom. First, the idea of culture that arose in the eighteenth century in Western Europe as the culmination of the civilizing process, albeit varied according to context, was ultimately dedicated to the perfection of human life to a degree that would have been considered hubristic in ancient Greece. Second, and related to this, philosophers in ancient Greece were generally admired but often persecuted as troublemakers, whereas the rationalistic ideals of early modern Europe were accepted by the status quo. Third,

the diffusion of democracy and social mobility in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries allowed nihilism to be more than an elite or esoteric phenomena.[xlix] Moreover, once nihilism becomes popularized, even though the truth imperative diminishes (or rather, as Nietzsche asserts, it discredits itself) the actual problematic of nihilism continues to rage on.[l]

Goudsblom noted that when the idea of culture emerged in eighteenth century Western Europe, every national culture tended to have its own distinctive idea of culture. The obvious implication of this, unexamined by Goudsblom, is that every national culture potentially has its own variant of the nihilist problematic. At least one author, Michael Novak, has stated that nihilism in American culture has had a distinctly different cast from the European brand that is usually what is thought of in discourse on nihilism.

American nihilism

In The Experience of Nothingness, Michael Novak asserted in 1968 that American society was afflicted with a brand of nihilism quite distinct from that which had plagued Europe since the nineteenth century. In his words, "in the United States ... an articulate fraction of the population no longer believes in the American way of life: not in competitiveness, not in America's moral goodness, not in the automatic blessings of progress, not in the veracity of even the highest public officials, not in the people's basic decency or commitment to democracy."[li] Although American intellectuals at this time were engaged in criticism of popular American culture, Novak notes, they themselves (and their universities they were ensconced in) were never subjected to critique.

> Four basic stories shape the sense of reality in American universities in 1968. The first is the story of enlightenment through hardheaded, empirical intelligence (and in psychology through behavioral methods). The second is the story of the solitary, autonomous individual. The third is the story of achievement through arduous competitive work. And the forth is the story of working within the system and concentrating upon one's own functional tasks until recognition comes. The most realistic man, in the eyes of the university circles I am describing, would be a hardnosed scholar, whose "lonely and heretical toil" (warmly supported by his colleagues) challenged the values of the community, but who persevered until the system itself turned and rewarded him with a Nobel Prize.[lii]

Behind the collapse of these narratives cherished by American intellectuals are the underlying delegitimization of two major myths that "have slowly been losing their power. [These are] the stories of Judaism and Christianity [and] the stories of scientific, technological progress".[liii] There are two stages in this disillusionment, according to Novak. "The stories of Christianity about creation and man's role in nature are thrown into confusion by the stories of world process as imagined by science."[liv] And this displacement of religion by science gives higher education a certain stature, since "the university in 1968 is what the church once was, the guardian of conservative [scientific] myth and indispensable supporter of political and economic power."[lv] But the modern American university, in all its newfound sophistication, becomes the site in which scientific objectivity is itself questioned when "an academic revolution challenges the pretensions to objectivity of liberal scholarship."[lvi]

The scientific mode of thought in its most optimistic form has been at the heart of academic inquiry since the dawn of the twentieth century, and yet contact with other cultures and the experience of American technocratic hegemony have disillusioned Americans with this national philosophy. Science, it is now known, is not necessarily at the service of humanity.

> The American character has always favored optimism, action, concrete effectiveness. At the turn of the century, Charles Sanders Peirce, William James, and John Dewey succeeded in a remarkably short time in formulating the American's instinctive sense of reality in a rather powerful philosophy called "pragmatism." That philosophy became the directing spirit of American academic inquiry and instruction. Unless I am mistaken, America's encounters with other world cultures since 1940, and especially since 1960, have placed the sever limitations of our national philosophy in a scouring light. We have been obliged to face the concrete effects of courses of action undertaken in unflagging optimism: unplanned technological progress, the repression of spontaneity, the exploitation of the natural environment, imperial misadventures, the dominance over American life in 1968 of the Department of Defense. The revulsion is profound. Nothing less than the orientation of the American character, the American sense of reality, the national philosophy is in question.[lvii]
>
> Our educational system favors pragmatic, conventional, cognitive intelligence rather than creative, imaginative, and affective intelligence. The costs in alienation are hardly measurable.[lviii]

It was this pragmatism and its optimistic faith in progress – a faith that was dissolving in the 1960s – that originally rendered the American character blissfully ignorant of the kind of malaise that swept through Europe. Because American reason in its pragmatic aspect was different from European reason, Americans were largely immune from the European strain of nihilism that raged on for so long in Europe.

> From 1870 to 1940, the experience of nothingness swept through the educated class of Europe. The "disease" hardly seemed to touch well-fed, active, busy Americans. Recent philosophers like Sydney Hook and Charles Frankel find existentialist literature on the subject vague, foreign, and self-serving. In America things are always looking up.[lix]

In fact, there was more than one uniquely American variant of nihilism (that is, other than the doubt that was taking hold of the intellectuals and the youths in 1960s America). Novak claimed that the rejection of science by the youthful American counterculture of the 1960s could lead to a new kind of nihilism when it embraced a mindless and potentially violent irrationalism.

> If they imagine the self to be a seeing eye, a fierce and mastering awareness – Reason – then they stand accused of the barbaric rationalization of human life.... If they imagine the self to be a center of feeling, they will certainly be drawn to darkness, blood and destruction. (The "gentle revolution" is innocent when no threat faces it. The young have learned to cope when they are shown approval. Denied their will, their aspect is terrifying. Events, inevitably harsh, will surely make them bitter; filled with resentment, distrustful, they will feel trapped, a thousand times betrayed.) Apollo sheered from Dionysus yields two tribes of beasts.[lx]

And yet even this counterculture and its activism exhibited a classically American brand of escapism – that is, escapism in the form of frenetic activity – that the young protested in their elders. The pragmatist spirit of progress ran deep even in those who rebelled against it.

> I want to set a question before them [the young]: Have not you, too, sometimes tried with your theater of the streets, your frantic politics, to escape the feeling of nothingness? Have not you, too, like your parents, frequently turned to action as if it were a position of forgetfulness? Are you not true children of your parents, clinging to the belief in essential human goodness, in love with quick solutions, dreaming of a gentle paradise?[lxi]

In contrast to the hopeful practicality of the Americans, the Europeans were typically unpragmatic and zealous even in their nihilism. "European thinkers, of course, immediately turned the experience of nothingness, which began to 'infect' Europeans with increasing frequency, in the nineteenth century, into an 'ism'; they spoke of it ideologically, as nihilism."[lxii] The European rejection of rationalism had an almost religious quality, scorning the American sense of utility.

> In general, earlier [European] critics [of rationalism] like Buber, Weber, Tillich, Sartre, Heidegger, and others attacked the lack of reverence, metaphysical wonder, and sense of mystery in empirical, pragmatic objectivity. They asserted that the American sense of reality was too matter-of-fact, automatic, and functional; that American scientists and intellectuals accepted the limitations of human reason as they accepted

> the limitations of a piece of machinery; thus they had lost an appropriate admiration for the human person.[lxiii]

The Americans, in being more practical, were both more resigned and hedonistic in their reaction to nihilism when it did emerge on the American scene. If European nihilism was a reaction against rationalism that was philosophical (that is, still somewhat rationalistic) in its response, the nihilism of 1960s America was a rejection of pragmatism, and its response was social, personal, embodied, emotional.

> In the classic French myth, the center of consciousness is a clear eye, focusing on "clear, distinct ideas." "I *think*, therefore I am." Hence the painful clarity of French sensibility and consciousness. In the United States, in an ever growing sub-culture at least, the equivalent affirmation is simply: "I feel." No "therefore" is available, or needed. The eye of consciousness yields to affect, percept, kaleidoscope. The self is a recipient of stimuli in a darkened room. I know I am alive when a warm body is next to mine. Connections come through the skin.[lxiv]

If European nihilism could be described (in Nietzschean terms) as the will to truth turned against itself, the American nihilism that Novak articulated could be described as the will to action turned against itself. And in the final analysis, the will to truth is much more powerful than the will to act, since the former is absolute while the latter is always oriented toward negotiable, practical purposes.

> Somehow the European hungers to possess his own being, to be the cause of his own existence, to be God. When he discovers that his own being is partial and invaded by nonbeing, he feels an icy threat. But the experience of nothingness in America is more often a peculiar and quiet vulnerability, a dead stillness at the center of activity, a lack of drive, an ignorance of Being and Life and Faith, a bafflement that a future that should have so lovely turns out so bleak. The American experience of nothingness is a certain sadness. We do not have, despite our reputation, the European willfulness; behind our frenetic activity and self-assurance lurks a soft, purring, wounded kitten. We are not metaphysical but sentimental.[lxv]

This study argues that there were several distinct American types of nihilistic theories. These theories were ***implicitly*** nihilistic (in Gillespie's terms), since they did

not explicitly address the topic of nihilism but, rather, had what can be seen to be nihilistic implications. Also, these theories, which all relate to the subject-object dichotomy as it is found in classic American manifestations in philosophy and the social sciences, trace their lineage back to the writings of Ralph Waldo Emerson.

Against European tradition, Emerson had advanced a conception of culture that was radically interpretive, pluralistic and anti-foundationalist, and this eventually worked its way back into the United States through the social sciences (via Nietzsche and then Weber). Likewise, American pragmatist philosophy, conceiving science as serving plural values rooted in human needs, originated with Emerson. European transcendental conceptions of the culture idea, although modern and recent, were classic manifestations of the Western tradition – dichotomous, metaphysical and 'phonocentric' – that privileged a foundationalist subjectivity over objective, empirical phenomena. (For instance, the French Enlightenment idea of 'civilization' as the universal progress of rational sociopolitical structures, opposed to tradition and religion; the German Romantic idea of Kultur as the transcendent spirit of a folk embodied in their art, opposed to reason and science; the English notion of culture as elitist personal refinement through humanistic learning, opposed to mass culture and industrialism.) In contrast, the American culture idea united values and culture with science and technique. In some quarters (for instance, in the writings of Lewis Mumford), this led to a sense that 'Culture' as absolute and transcendent was collapsing.

By the middle of the twentieth century, especially in the United States, the close union of subject and object characteristic of early twentieth-century American academic theory led to a new kind of nihilism, in the form of the technocratic subordination of

values to technique and the negation of existential meaning by rationality in American thought and society. Since the 1960s, the response to this crisis was ultimately counter-cultural protest, and consisted of undermining the legitimacy of bureaucracies by attacking rationality in general. On the theoretical level, this was accomplished primarily by collapsing the distinction between subject (culture) and object (science). However, this libertarian rebellion drew its values of self-expression and self-fulfillment largely from consumerism, and in its quest for greater individual empowerment laid the groundwork for the information age by equating technology with personal creativity. This is an ambiguous victory over the technocracy.

In identifying so many different types of nihilisms, this study is attempting to portray nihilism less as a crisis particular to modern European intellectuals and more as phenomena that is ubiquitous and varied. This study will later attempt to understand the phenomena of nihilism in the terms of contemporary sociological theory. Then again, as it has just been explained, that social theory can be understood in terms of nihilism.

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[ii] Karen Carr, *The Banalization of Nihilism: Twentieth-Century Responses to Meaninglessness* (NY: SUNY Press, 1992).
[iii] Ibid., 14-15.
[iv] Michael Allen Gillespie, *Nihilism Before Nietzsche* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995).
[v] Paul K Crosser, *The Nihilism of John Dewey* (NY: Philosophical Library, 1952).
[vi] Ibid., xiii.
[vii] Ibid., xvi.
[viii] Ibid., xvii.
[ix] Ibid.
[x] Ibid., xviii.
[xi] Ibid.
[xii] Ibid.
[xiii] Ibid., xix.
[xiv] Alan White, *Within Nietzsche's Labyrinth* (NY: Routledge, 1990).
[xv] Phillip Fandozzi, *Nihilism and Technology: A Heideggerian Investigation* (Washington, D.C.: University Press of America, 1982), 71.
[xvi] Friedrich Nietzsche, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* (London: Penguin Classics, 1969).
[xvii] Nietzsche, *Will to Power*, 93.
[xviii] Ibid., 94.
[xix] Ibid., 94-95.

[xx] Ibid., 357-358.
[xxi] Ibid., 536.
[xxii] Heidegger, in Fandozzi, 17-18.
[xxiii] Ivan Turgenev, *Fathers and Sons* (NY: WW Norton and Co., 1966).
[xxiv] Daniel Horowitz, *The Morality of Spending: Attitudes Toward the Consumer in America, 1875-1940* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins UP, 1985).
[xxv] Roger Mason, *The Economics of Conspicuous Consumption: Theory and Thought Since 1700* (Northhampton, MA: Edward Elgar, 1998).
[xxvi] William James, *The Moral Equivalent of War, and Other Essays* (NY: Harper and Row, 1971).
[xxvii] Ibid., 7.
[xxviii] Mark Seltzer, *Bodies and Machines* (NY: Routledge, 1992), 153.
[xxix] Eric Hoffer, *The True Believer: Thoughts on the Nature of Mass Movements* (NY: Harper and Row, 1951.)
[xxx] Benjamin Barber, *Jihad Versus MacWorld: How Globalism and Tribalism Are Reshaping the World* (NY: Times Books, 1996).
[xxxi] Ibid., 5.
[xxxii] Bernard Lewis, *What Went Wrong? The Clash Between Islam and Modernity in the Middle East* (NY: Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 2003).
[xxxiii] Mike Featherstone, *Consumer Culture and Postmodernism* (London: Sage Publications, 1991), 6.
[xxxiv] Ibid., 15.
[xxxv] Ibid., 55.
[xxxvi] Rick Perlstein, *Before the Storm* (NY: Hill and Wang, 2001).
[xxxvii] Manuel Castells, *Rise of the Network Society* (Cambridge, MA: Blackwell Publishers, 2000), 373.
[xxxviii] Manuel Castells, *The Informational City: Iinformation Technology, Economic Restructuring, and the Urban-Regional Process* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1989), 350.
[xxxix] Castells, *Rise of the Network Society*, 25.
[xl] Martin Heidegger, *Discourse on Thinking* (NY: Harper & Row, 1959).
[xli] Ibid., 21.
[xlii] Ibid., 20.
[xliii] Ibid., 77-79.
[xliv] Norbert Elias, *The Civilizing Process: Sociogenetic and Psychogenetic Investigations* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2000).
[xlv] Johan Goudsblom, *Nihilism and Culture*. (Totowa, NJ: Rowman and Littlefield, 1980).
[xlvi] Ibid., 152.
[xlvii] Ibid. 178.
[xlviii] Ibid., 157.
[xlix] Ibid., 179.
[l] Ibid., 186.
[li] Michael Novak, *The Experience of Nothingness*. (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 1998).
[lii] Ibid., 15.
[liii] Ibid., 33.
[liv] Ibid., 34.
[lv] Ibid.
[lvi] Ibid.
[lvii] Ibid.
[lviii] Ibid., 35.
[lix] Ibid., 2.
[lx] Ibid., 5.
[lxi] Ibid., 3.
[lxii] Ibid., 9.
[lxiii] Ibid., 36.
[lxiv] Ibid., 4.
[lxv] Ibid., 8.

CHAPTER TWO

Nihilism and Space

What do the various theories of nihilism share in common? It is argued here that nihilism is not simply the loss of meaning, value, purpose, certainty, faith, and so forth. As it was seen earlier, for example, skepticism was not synonymous with nihilism, since skepticism is often seen as condition of faith or belief (that is, faith assumes uncertainty). Furthermore, one can experience a deep existential crisis of lost meaning and value – say with one's work or in one's marriage – without engaging in what would be recognizable as nihilistic sentiment. Not every personal crisis has nihilistic implications; depression is not nihilism. Moreover, the self-proclaimed nihilist is usually not the grim, gloomy character one might expect. For example, Nietzsche described his philosophy as a 'joyful pessimism' that embraced the entirety of life, Turgenev's nihilistic protagonist Bazarov was a determined and hopeful altruist, and Richard Rorty adopts a cheerfully complacent attitude toward what he describes as the postmodern condition of nihilism.

That being said, it needs to be recognized that nihilism is nevertheless entangled in personal crises that seem to have little to do with classic philosophical descriptions of nihilism. Goudsblom argued that the malaise of nihilism in a democratic society has detached from its original cause – the truth imperative of the Western humanist tradition – and can exhibit a more 'spurious', less 'authentic' form, so that "it is questionable whether in such cases we can still talk of nihilism without depriving the word of all comprehensible significance."[i] Yet Goudsblom ultimately concludes that although the truth imperative is often no longer the primary element in contemporary crises of nihilism, the sense of crisis over the sense of 'nothingness' or the meaninglessness of

existence and the devaluation of all values is very real nonetheless, since personal feelings fuse with and take the form of the contemporary nihilistic problematic; the motives may differ, but form of the crisis is patently nihilistic and modern.

> When people become entangled with the problematic to the point of despair, the cause is generally to be found in their social or psychological condition. Their discomfort is shaped by culture; they cling to the nihilist problematic and graft their personal problems on to this element of culture.
>
> We cannot, therefore, simply brand the truth imperative as the 'cause' of nihilist doubt.[ii]

As an example of how personal emotional states feed into and inform philosophical disquisitions, Goudsblom quotes Maxim Gorky's observations of Tolstoy.

> It appeared now and again in allusions in his conversation, and it is also referred to in two entries in his diary, which he gave to me and L. Sulerchinsky to read; to me it seems something akin to 'a denial of all that is established': the deepest and most malignant nihilism, grown on the soil of an infinite, unstaunchable despair and loneliness which had probably not been experienced with such alarming immediacy by anyone before him.[iii]

Similarly, the modern midlife crisis can be an occasion for a nihilistic crisis, as it was noted in the first chapter that the protagonist in the American movie *American Beauty* experienced what seemed close to Heidegger's account of nihilism as a 'turning away from Being' as a loss of holism. But this is account of a midlife crisis is anomalous in that the protagonist challenged and rejected a materialistic and competitive American value system; typically, the midlife crisis of the American male takes the form of a regression into the past.

The American sociological theorist Talcott Parsons had noted the uniqueness of the American midlife crisis in contrast to the German experience. The midlife crisis tended to affect the most accomplished and successful middle-aged men in the United

States, since although they were at the top of their game they found themselves unable to relate to their wives and children. Suddenly alone in the world, they reverted to their earliest memories of intimacy or 'being' with an other (with an ontological emphasis on a sense of *Being*), which was with their old high-school sweetheart; they soon enough would find a younger mistress and fit themselves with the trappings of youth: new youthful clothes, a sports car or motorcycle, new youthful hobbies, etc. This was, Parsons noted, quite different from the German experience, since the German male cherished instead memories of comradeship with his clique of childhood buddies, and he did not necessarily find himself severed from such relationships at midlife. But precisely because the midlife crisis is culturally and historically bounded, it can fuse with other cultural and historical phenomena – such as the crisis of nihilism. Goudsblom takes as a paradigmatic case of nihilism Anton Chekhov's A Dreary Story, which "depicts a man who finds himself facing old age, after a productive and successful life, overcome by an ineluctable sense of not-knowing."

> Every feeling and every thought exists apart in me; and in all my criticisms of science, the theatre, literature, my pupils, and in all the pictures my imagination draws, even the most skillful analyst could not find what is called a general idea, or the god of a living man.
>
> And if there is not that, then there is nothing.
>
> In a state so poverty-stricken, a serious aliment, the fear of death, the influences of circumstance and men were enough to turn upside-down and scatter in fragments all which I had once looked upon as my theory of life, and in which I had seen the meaning and joy of my existence....
>
> I am vanquished. If it is so, it is useless to think, it is useless to talk. I will sit and wait in silence for what is to come.[iv]

In this case – that of an upper-class Russian intellectual – the midlife crisis indeed led to a crisis of nihilism. But nihilism itself, as it was explained in the first paragraph above, is

not simply depression, or the diminution of a sense of value. At this point, what is needed is a sociological definition of what nihilism consists of.

Nihilism is not the loss of a thing of value, but rather a loss of the general space in which all things were given value, that is, a loss of the 'spaces' of a value system. For Nietzsche, the spiritual crisis of the modern West arose when science disabused Westerners not just of their belief in a transcendental realm of religious faith, but in the faith that underlay science itself – that there was an objective realm of truth outside the realm of flux and change. (For Goudsblom, the nihilism Nietzsche described emerged out of the humanistic tradition of ancient Greece and the Renaissance, both of which were products of the emergence of rationalistic city-states.) Heidegger asserted, in turn, that Nietzsche's philosophy was merely an inverted Platonism that shifted valuation away from a transcendent realm toward the imminent, physical realm of flux, even while maintaining that Platonic division. For the early Heidegger, it was this division of reality into a true and an apparent realm that was the original nihilistic turning away from or forgetting of a holistic Being; for the later Heidegger, nihilism consisted of not recognizing the horizons of the interpretive frameworks within which things exist. For Gillespie, nihilism can be traced back to fourteenth century nominalist theology which, by insisting that God's will is not constrained by reason, eventually opened up the possibility that neither was human will; this culminated in Fichte's formulation of an idealism that rejected the constraints of an external reality in favor of a magnified will and an expanded subjectivity (of which phenomenological reality was but a manifestation). This nihilistic sundering of an external reality resembles the postmodern condition of the dematerialization of reality in the late twentieth century by

telecommunications, consumerism and globalization, a process described by Fredrick Jameson, Jean Baudrillard and Manuel Castells.

Yet Castells, as well as the likes of Benjamin Barber, also describes a couple of other related forms of nihilism in the late twentieth century. The first is the loss of local meaning amid the global flows of information and capital, and the second is the denial of a non-local, modern reality by those who cannot attract or deal with those flows. These two forms of nihilism involve the loss of the local space or, alternatively, the rejection of the non-local world. In some ways, these two nihilisms ('jihad' versus 'MacWorld', in Barber's terminology) as well as the nihilism of the postmodern condition ('real virtuality', as Castells describes it), resemble the nihilism described by the later Heidegger, who as a conservative lamented the unrootedness of the modern world, especially the influence of the media in the turning away from the local. Heidegger's prescription was a 'releasement' from things that would be gained by a 'meditative' (as opposed to 'calculating') thought that pondered the 'horizons' of the historical interpretive framework ('that-which-regions' or Being) within which the things of the world were comprehended; for Heidegger, even the subject-object dichotomy of the Western intellectual tradition was itself a historically bounded intellectual phenomenon.

For Novak, a peculiarly American form of nihilism emerged in the 1960s that consisted of the rejection of a pragmatist attitude of instrumental rationality. According to Novak, American pragmatism (both the academic philosophy and the popular attitude) had already relocated values away from a transcendent world toward a realm of practical use, so the American experience of nihilism lacks a certain European zealotry. Nevertheless, the counter-cultural movement of the 1960s sought to relocate value away

from this banausic realm of objective value and into the subjective realm of emotion and affect. That there could be an American brand of nihilism introduces a crucial distinction in identifying a realm or space of value as objective and external. In the European tradition, the 'truth' had a religious quality, since it supposedly existed in a transcendent realm. In contrast, in the pragmatic American conception of truth, objectivity is associated not with transcendence, but with the realm of action that is objective in that our consciousness or awareness as sentient beings is presupposed by the need to solve problems in the world and to achieve goals or 'objectives'. That is, as in the European theories of nihilism that saw nihilism as derived from the truth imperative, nihilism in America typically involved the denial of an objective realm of value in favor of a subjective realm, but in America the 'objective' realm was not transcendent and absolute but worldly.

Nihilism, then, consists in the collapse and discrediting not of values or meaning, but in the 'spaces' within which these values and meanings exist. Whether the discredited and denied space in question be an objective transcendent world (Nietzsche, Jameson, Baudrillard, Castells), or an objective pragmatic realm (Novak), or the wholeness of the world in experience (the early Heidegger), or the interpretive horizons that are the conditions of experience (the later Heidegger), or the locality (Heidegger, Barber, Castells), or the non-locality (Barber and Castells), nihilism consists in the rejection of a space of meaning and value. But 'space' in this sense is not so much a literal physical place but an abstract conception that was produced in prior discourse and later both internalized and projected onto physical reality. For example, the Platonic realm of forms, the quintessentially transcendent objective realm of ideas, is now widely

seen to be an imaginary product of Socrates conversations, but some theorists – for example, mathematicians – continue to see this as an actual realm of real beings of which they have cognitive access. That space is to be seen as a product of discourse, and that different spaces or social contexts harbor their own discourses and values, is a staple theme in much postmodernist theory.

Space as a construct of (theoretical) discourse

In this 'postmodernist' understanding, competing worldviews or ideologies project onto the social world (and onto the world in general) a kind of map, with each realm or sphere in that map representing the location in which a particular discourse, activity or value is relegated. For example, in the nineteenth-century United States, the bourgeoisie promoted the discourse of humanitarianism in the interest of wild animals and pets – yet these capitalists had no inhibitions toward exploiting and destroying either work animals or workers. This paradox can be dissolved by noting that the value of respecting animal life was observed by the upper classes only for those animals situated in the wild or in the home, but not for any forms of life found in the sphere of production. This humanitarian ideology and its conception of space served to legitimate the ruling class and to distinguish it from a working class whose attitudes toward animals in the wild and in the home were less sentimental and more pragmatic.[v]

A similar example of the spatial contextuality of values can be found in an analysis of the American value system conducted by the sociologist Robin Williams. Williams.[vi] Robins asserted that there were at least 22 values typically associated with American life, but he struggled to explain how these values, like equality and

individualism, could co-exist and yet so often contradict one another. However, Williams' own text explains these seemingly contradictory values by recognizing their spatial context. For example, he noted that inequality is accepted within the realm of the market, whereas equality is valued within the spaces of the home and the schools, as well as by the laws within the realm of the state. Related to this, he noted that competitive individualism reigns within the economic and political realms, but that social and cultural life in America is marked by a striking conformity and uniformity. Although he never reached the conclusion that his text points toward, his own narrative suggested that these seemingly contradictory values are each specific to its own space. And as we have seen in the (seemingly inconsistent) bourgeois valuation of humanitarianism, perhaps the best model of the broad American map of society is provided by the classic Hegelian distinction between the public and the private, further elaborated by Hegel into the tripartition of the state, civil society (the market) and the home. That is, the contradictions Williams found in the American value system are largely resolved by situating each of these values in its own space, the general contours of which were most famously articulated by Hegel.

However, there is one value in particular that does not fit into this tripartite schema, and its very existence disturbed Williams, so profoundly at variance is it with all the other American values. Williams identified this value as 'racism and group supremacy'. Supremacism, however, can be accounted for not by locating it within any particular sphere, but by locating America and the West more generally within a tripartite Western map of the world rooted in the Western tripartition of society into the spheres of state, society and home. Since the ancient Greeks, the cartographic imaginary of the

West has long maintained a division of humanity into three regional and cultural types: Western civilization, governed by the rationality of civic (and religious) life; Oriental despotisms, in which the state is a kind of patriarchal household or harem writ large; and the stateless 'primitives' or 'savages' of the tropical world.

This Western vision of the non-Western world explains how the American value system, so democratic in orientation, can harbor such a patently anti-democratic value like race supremacism. And despite its plethora of contradictions, these American values do exist in a *system* as Williams describes it – and that system is classically democratic. After all, although the contradictions between the various values discussed by Williams can be resolved by recognizing that they apply to different contexts (particularly along the lines of the distinction between the home, society and the state), these are, nevertheless, all democratic values that may contradict one another but are still typical of democratic societies. For example, Williams observes that foreigners have long found Americans to display a remarkable degree of both individualism and cultural conformity. But this contradiction has been explained by the likes of Tocqueville as typical of the democratic culture of the United States, since this involves public conformity to the majority matched with a private self-absorption.[vii] (This is quite different from European life, which involves a greater public eccentricity as well as a greater involvement in community life.) The point here is that, in a sense, Western supremacism has democratic roots. This is because Western supremacism is premised on the belief that non-Europeans are incapable of the public use of reason, and are therefore inferior, exotic, feminine, desirable and in need of domination (to paraphrase Edward Said). Again, this assumes that there is a traditional Western cartographic imaginary that consists in a

tripartition of peoples, and that this tripartite civilizational typology reflects a deeper tripartition of society into the state, society and the family.

That there are different realms or spaces in a society is widely recognized thanks to the pervasiveness in sociology of 'field theory'. But to understand these spaces or fields as ***products of discourse*** that harbor their own discourses and values is a new direction. For example, field theory, formally referred to as 'new institutional theories', focuses on the concept of local social orders, or fields of action, and how they come into existence, remain stable, or are transformed. Society consists, in this theory, of a potentially limitless number of fields that are constantly being created and destroyed. For example, Fligstein's examples of field creation involve the transformation of institutions by skilled leaders creatively adopting innovative programs on an improvised basis. (His examples include the embracing of Keynsian economics by the New Deal Democratic Party, the acceptance of non-violent protest by black civil rights leaders, and the invention of the 'multidivisional form' or decentralized corporate governance by General Motors in the 1920s.)[viii] But nowhere is it mentioned in Fligstein's text that this institutional genesis is a fundamentally discursive process.

The creation of fields as well as their collapse relates directly to the issue of nihilism. While most theories of nihilism take place at a philosophical level and pertain to unique historical processes of modernity, this study seeks to give a broader sociological bent to such theories by suggesting that nihilism ***as a ubiquitous phenomenon*** consists of the collapse of the fields that are central to a value system, leading to a general loss of meaning or intelligibility. This is because the fields that collapse in a nihilistic crisis are the generalized fields or spheres – like those that were

identified in Robin Williams' study of the American value system and its otherwise puzzling contradictions – in which the particular kinds of institutions (say, FDR's Democratic Party, General Motors) exist and have meaning within a value system. In this case in particular, the more generalized fields would include those of the classic Hegelian tripartition of society into the state, civil society and the home, within which particular institutions (political parties, corporations, political movements) are situated. Like a house of cards, the collapse or discrediting of one field of value can bring down all the other most important fields of value within a value system.

Moreover, in the case of nihilism in the United States as identified by Novak, these social spheres are linked with and homologous to broader philosophical structures, like the subject-object dichotomy of a pragmatic American value system. This is evident in Novak's identification of an American nihilism of the 1960's counterculture that rejected the (seemingly) banausic objectivity of twentieth-century American political culture grounded in pragmatist philosophy. This rejection of an objective realm of action in favor of a subjective realm of feeling and affect is directly related to the collapse of the political realm, a breakdown at the center of Todd Gitlin's study of the 1960s.[ix] Gitlin claimed that as the 1960s wound to a close, it became evident to the general American population that public opinion had no impact on government policy – that is, civil society had no influence on the state – and this disillusionment manifested itself in the early 1970s in a hedonistic retreat into the self by the mainstream American public, a withdrawal that the idealistic 1960s counterculture had pioneered in its pursuit of sex, drugs and rock-and-roll. But this '70s ethos was dark, pessimistic and introspective, marked by religious cults and self-help fads, terrorism, and what Gitlin termed 'the music

of private conciliation'. The collapse of the political realm had triggered – at first in the counterculture and then later in American society more broadly – a decadent nihilism that, as Novak observed, rejected objectivity. This involved the discrediting of the particular institutions that Fligstein describes as fields, such as corporations, the state, political parties, and so on. (This nihilistic moment did, however, lead to the creation of new libertarian values and a new technological society, as Manuel Castells has argued.)

The collapse of a democratic political field in the 1960s in the United States therefore led to the discrediting of both the technocratic state and civil society, and with it a loss of faith in science, technology and a pragmatic 'objectivity' in favor of an affective subjective realm. Unfortunately, the literature of field theory does not link itself either values or to forms of discourse the way postmodernist theory does. However, a bridge between field theory and postmodernism can be found in perhaps the most famed practitioner of field theory, the social theorist Pierre Bourdieu. Bourdieu claimed that every field has its own form of 'capital', and this study seeks to show that capital and values are really a 'duality' – two aspects of the same thing.

Modifying Bourdieu: Fields contain values, not just forms of capital

Bourdieu claimed that the various fields in a social order, although each possessing a unique logic and varying degrees of autonomy, are homologous because they are similarly shaped by the *habitus* (that is, by cultural dispositions transposable to various fields). But each field has its own form of capital: in the economic realm, financial capital or money; in the social realm, social capital or prestige; in the cultural realm, cultural capital or manners and education. It is argued here that a quality that is

valued is not always capital – although when it is used as an investment (consciously or not) it ***becomes*** a form of capital. For example, honor is the ultimate form of capital in politics – although to maximize its political cachet, honor must, paradoxically, seem divorced from considerations of gain. Likewise, artworks attain their financial worth as capital insofar as they are, paradoxically, seen as above 'mere' financial evaluation.

By observing the duality of values and capital, this study seeks to integrate Bourdieu's conception of capital (and his theory more generally) with traditional notions of value systems. The central premise here is that in a particular value system, certain forms of capital can simultaneously be valued as ends in themselves and yet be exchanged for one another. In France, high culture, money and political power are typically in circulation with one another among the elite, whereas 'moral capital' is eschewed. Among the elite in the United States, money, social status and morality are typically interlinked, and high culture is often disdained as useless snobbery. Yet those most valued forms of capital in any given culture are, as Michèle Lamont's research shows, given priority over one another according to any particular faction of the elite, so that some elite Frenchmen value art relative to power or wealth, and some elite American men value morality far above money and prestige; there is a rank ordering within a faction of a national elite over what form of capital is the greatest among those that are characteristically valued in that society.

Moreover, even those forms of capital or values largely disdained by a particular elite – say, moral capital among the French elite – takes on a sacred air, since it is so distant from the hardscrabble world of gain. Lamont notes that if the poor are given greater succor by the French welfare system, it is because those who lack financial capital

(although they are assumed to lack culture and power as well) are not assumed to be lacking in moral capital; this is quite different from a powerful strain in American sentiment that assumes that the poor deserve their fate. Each field not only has its own form of capital, but its own boundaries with other fields, and the higher those boundaries, the less 'trade' between forms of capital but the more esteem they enjoy as incorruptible values.

Bringing the notion of a value systems into Bourdieu's theory – meant here to show how fields harbor particular values – also helps to combat a prevalent misunderstanding of his theory, especially by those who utilize the concept of a 'value system'. For example, a classic misinterpretation of his work is evident in the assertion by Michèle Lamont that "Bourdieu shares with rational choice theorists the view that social actors are by definition socioeconomic maximizers who participate in a world of economic exchange in which they act strategically to maximize material and symbolic payoffs. This universal worldly maximization logic is applied to cultural producers as well as to businessmen."[x] Contrary to Bourdieu, Lamont's research concludes that each form of capital is associated with its own value system, and that these values systems tend to dedicate individuals almost exclusively to the pursuit of one main type of capital and to scorn the others. Associated with value systems, forms of capital are not just means to an end, she states, but an end in itself.

> He (Bourdieu) argues that all apparently disinterested acts, including the consumption of culture and the display of moral character traits, are in reality "interested" because they are ultimately oriented toward the maximization of one's social position. By contrast, my interviews suggest that respecting one's moral obligations, particularly vis-à-vis one's family and friends, is often valued as a goal in itself. Also, ... a large enough number of successful upper-middle-class men mentioned in interviews that they do not respect phonies, social climbers,

> the intellectually dishonest, and the "salaud", to lead me to believe that high moral status is crucial resource that is valued in and of itself. From these points we can only conclude that moral boundaries are one of the blind spots in Bourdieu's theory.[xi]

In fact, Lamont's research concludes that the most accomplished members of society tend to be committed almost exclusively to one particular form of capital – moral, economic, or cultural – and tend to find the other forms of capital uninteresting or even repulsive, as if their devotion to one particular form of capital was directly proportional to their investment in and success in securing it. (Her comparative survey research is of upper-middle class professionals in France and the United States). In effect, she claims, the accumulation of capital tends to shore up boundaries between different fields rather than provide bridges and channels of trade between them.

For Bourdieu, social agents are not motivated by the pursuit of capital, but by the need to reproduce the social order – that is, to perpetuate their way of life. The social order and the cultural categories of the *habitus* are normally patterned after one another, so as to avoid cognitive dissonance, social actors tend to adjust themselves to the status quo of both their cultural categories and their environment, which seem to them to manifest a natural fit. However, social change, exposure to foreign cultures and the efforts of critical social scientists to present a new vision of the social world all work to expose the dominant *habitus* as arbitrary, contingent and complicit with the current power structure. By assimilating the concept of a value system (as the interaction of fields) into Bourdieu's theory helps to reinforce the normative, conservative nature of social actors that Bourdieu is trying to present.

For Bourdieu, history shapes the cultural categories and the social order to share a similar pattern, and above all else people – particularly those who dominate a social order – tend to try to maintain the illusion that neither is arbitrary, that both are natural, normal and necessary. Bourdieu is worth quoting at length here, considering the general misinterpretation that greets his work, and that this chapter must deal with below. In his own words in his chapter in Bourdieu: Critical Perspectives:

> As I demonstrated in an old article entitled "The dead seizes the living," being – that is to say, history – exists in the embodied state as habitus and in the objectified state as fields. Habitus being linked to the field within which it functions (and within which, as is most often the case, it was formed) by a relationship of ontological complicity, the action of the "practical sense" amounts to an immediate encounter of history with itself, through which time is engendered. The relation between habitus and the field through and for which it is created is an unmediated, infraconscious, practical relation of *illusio*, of investment, of interest in the game, which implies a sense of the game and a sense (with the twofold meaning of orientation, direction, and signification) of the history of the game; in short, a practical anticipation or inclination not to be mistaken for a conscious project or a calculated scheme. This investment, realized only in the relation between habitus and field, is the specific libido, the socially constituted and fashioned principle of every action. Both habitus and field (and also the specific form of capital produced and reproduced in this field) are the site of a sort of *conatus*, of a tendency to perpetuate themselves in their being, to reproduce themselves in that which constitutes their existence and their identity (for instance, in the case of the bourgeois habitus, the system of differences and distances constitutive of distinction). This I hold against a finalist, utilization vision of action which is sometimes attributed to me. It is not true to say that everything that people do or say is aimed at maximizing their social profit; but one may say that they do it to perpetuate or to augment their social being.[xii]

In other words, human beings are primarily motivated not by profit but by the sense of meaning they get when their subjective understandings and the objective structures of the world – both of which are arbitrary products of history – seem to have a natural fit with one another. As an example of this, Bourdieu notes a debate in France over the French

state's attempts to reform the French writing system, a system the state had set in stone, so to speak, long ago.

> Correct spelling, designated and guaranteed as normal by law, that is, by the state, is a social artifact only imperfectly founded upon logical or even linguistic reason; it is the product of a work of normalization and codification, quite analogous to that which the state effects concurrently in other realms of social life. Now, when, at a particular moment, the state or any of its representatives undertakes a reform of orthography (as was done, with similar effects, a century ago), that is, to undo by decree what the state had ordered by decree, this immediately triggers the indignant protest of a good number of those whose status depends on "writing", in its most common sense but also in the sense given to it by writers. And remarkably, all those defenders of orthographic orthodoxy mobilize in the name of *natural* spelling and of the satisfaction, experienced as intrinsically aesthetic, given by the perfect agreement between mental structures and objective structures – between the mental forms socially instituted in minds through the teaching of correct spelling and the reality designated by words rightfully spelled. For those who possess spelling to the point where they are possessed by it, the perfectly arbitrary "ph" of the word "nénuphar" has become so evidently inextricable from the flower it designates that they can, in all good faith, invoke nature and the *natural* to denounce an intervention of the state aimed at reducing the arbitrariness of a spelling which itself is, in all evidence, the product of an earlier arbitrary intervention of the same.[xiii]

What we see here is, in effect, an attempt by the literati to stave off a collapse in value of the field of orthography. But the 'value' of this field exists not just as the capital that professional 'symbol manipulators', whose status is built upon their mastery of literary form, have invested in it, but 'value' in the sense of meaning. And the 'meaning' of this field, likewise, exists as both the sense of intelligibility or coherence that the writing system provides for those socialized into it, as well as the deeper poetic sense of significance a writing system can express. As Baudrillard has pointed out, the self-conscious awareness of the arbitrariness of symbol systems leads to the general nihilism of the postmodern condition – but the debate over orthographic reform in contemporary France does not reach that level of insight even among professional intellectuals.

Therefore, orthographic reform is a tempest in a teapot compared to what Baudrillard recognized the nihilistic ramifications of the popularization of the structuralist revolution by Levi-Strauss and the ascendancy of the media and consumerism in the contemporary West.

Again, this chapter asserts that Bourdieu's theory can be modified so as to better rid his notion of capital of the taint of rational choice theory. Borrowing a term from Giddens, capital and values form a kind of 'duality', since they are the same thing in different spaces. As the political scientist John Kane observes below, when 'capital' is not being utilized, it is not really capital – it is simply wealth or property. Capital is capital only when it is mobilized for eventual exchange for other forms of capital, like when art or education or other forms of cultural capital are pursued ultimately for financial capital. But this process is largely unconscious, even to those engaged in such an investment. And the valuation of something as an end in itself is, ironically, the basis of its worth as a means, as ***capital***. Political capital, Kane writes, derives largely from a cultivated image of an absence of interest in self-promotion, so that ones 'honor' grows in proportion to ones lack of concern for safety on the battlefield or indifference to personal gain in social life. We erect a strong border between the moral sphere (with honor as its object) or the cultural sphere (with art as its object) with the other spheres (with money, prestige, etc., as their objects) in order to protect their contents from any taint of being forms of capital, and yet we do this (largely unconsciously) precisely in order to raise their capital value so we can engage in smuggling between different fields.

Lamont identifies three main fields as the basis individual value systems in the French and American upper-middle class – the cultural, the socioeconomic and the moral

– and she finds that members of this class tend to subscribe to one set of values and are repulsed by those of the other realms. For example, top businessmen and artists tend to be not merely disinterested in, but actually hostile to one another's lifestyle. There are also national differences – for example, in the diminished moralism of the French, and in the devaluation of high culture in American society. Even in a single realm, that of socioeconomic competition, the ambitious Frenchman prefers political power won through eloquence, whereas the plainspoken American places more value on affluence gained through practical action.

But elites also erect boundaries between fields because we may not value the content of a particular field while we engage in traffic between other fields. In fact, cultures differ in their traffic patterns, so that there will be much traffic between certain fields and none between them and another. In France, high culture, politics and economics engage in heavy inter-field traffic, yet the moral sphere is largely disdained by the elite. Subsequently, there may be a certain cynicism or amorality to French society (seemingly in direct proportion to the valuation of high culture), but there also exists a certain sympathy toward the poor, who are regarded as unfortunate in their exclusion from the elite spheres of money, art and power – and as even somewhat virtuous because of this poverty. In the United States, the fields of moral, social and financial capital are linked, yet high culture is scorned as snobbery. As a consequence, in the United States, material success is seen as a sign of virtue and accessible to all who work for it, and because of this the poor can be often regarded as at fault for their condition, even as morally inferior. Also, culture is generally not valued as highly in the United States as it is in France – not just as a form of capital, but as an end in itself.

But perhaps Lamont's work can be welcomed as a complement to – and not as a refutation of – Bourdieu's social theory. By stressing the boundaries that exist between fields, her work serves to emphasizes how forms of capital are valued in themselves and relate more generally to deeply held value systems, and are not simply akin to crassly accumulated poker chips, and are not simply traded like baseball cards or stocks on Wall Street. Indeed, Bourdieu's theory does not seem to deeply explore the idea of 'moral capital', which does not seem readily fungible for other forms of capital, yet which perhaps has ***the*** most powerful hold on human emotions. This may be an example of Bourdieu's diminished reflexivity on this subject, as Lamont suggests:

> Also, when in Distinction, he analyzes the structure of the 'bourgeois ethic and aesthetic' in terms of bipolar oppositions (à la Lévi-Strauss), the oppositions he looks at rarely have to do with morality: he opposes the heavy to the refined, the dull to the brilliant, the obscure to the intelligent, the ordinary to the rare, and the bland to the sharp. Terms such as *common* and *crude*, or *coarse* which could in principle be opposed to moral terms, are instead contrasted with *unique*, *elegant*, and *fine*, which pertain more to cultural than to moral distinction. In addition, moral referents such as *honest*, *truthful*, *fair*, *good*, *peaceful*, and *responsible* are altogether absent from Bourdieu's semiotic analysis.[xiv]

Oblivious to the importance of moral capital, Lamont writes, Bourdieu dismisses moralizing as mere 'sour grapes', the grumblings of the "'losers' who make a virtue of necessity". In her own research on the American upper-middle class, she finds that moral capital and socioeconomic status are conjoined in the popular consciousness. For Americans, there is a conjunction between prosperity and morality, whereas for the French the two are regarded as inversely related.

> [I]f Americans attach great importance to success-related traits such as ambition, dynamism, a strong work ethic, and competitiveness, it might be because these traits are doubly sacred because they are read as signals of both moral and socioeconomic purity. By contrast it seems that in France moral status is not as directly read from social status. Consequently, the French who are not 'successful' in worldly terms might

> have a greater sense of personal worth, while those who are 'successful' might have a less self-righteous and meritocratic view of their social position, with important political consequences for their support for welfare programs, for instance. On the other hand, socioeconomic status might be more easily converted into moral status in the United States than in France.[xv]

In this account by Lamont, she finds a genuine respect for morality exhibited both within the American and French cultures, although morality is defined in proportion to worldly success in the former and is marked by its dearth in the latter. What we ultimately find in pockets like this in Lamont's text (regarding the joining in the American imagination of morality and material success) is recognition that different forms of capital are not always mutually exclusive. Moreover, not only are they sometimes exchangeable for one another, but certain forms of capital can actually be *alloyed* or fused with each other within a (national) value system. That is, not only does Lamont ultimately acknowledge the exchangeability of capital, her research also suggests how various forms of capital are sometimes conjoined.

But Bourdieu can likewise be defended, in that his theory, on closer inspection, is much more complex than Lamont's portrayal of it. The whole point of Bourdieu's extension of the critique of capital from its origins in Marxist theory is not to make 'capital' uniform, but diverse, so that different forms of capital are understood to be irreducible to one another – even while they can be exchanged for one another. That is, even though different forms of capital (money, honor, education) are valued as forms of capital exchangeable for one another, this also implies that each form can be valued above another. There is, therefore, a tension between the boundary practices that surround and separate the different social fields – each with its own jealously distinctive value system, as Lamont would assert – on the one hand, and the potential for commerce

between these different fields with the exchange of capital on the other hand. This tension between the integrity of structures and the flow and exchange of capital is neatly illustrated in an interview with *New Yorker* article (April 23 & 30, 2001), on the business tycoon Ted Turner, whose father sent him the following letter when Turner was an undergraduate at Brown and had declared himself a 'Classics' major at Brown. (The letter was published anonymously in the student newspaper.)

> I am appalled, even horrified, that you have adopted Classics as a Major. As a matter of fact, I almost puked on the way home today.... I am a practical man, and for the life of me I cannot possibly understand why you should wish to speak Greek. With whom will you communicate in Greek? I have read, in recent years, the deliberations of Plato and Aristotle, and was interested to learn that the old bastards had minds which worked very similarly to the way our minds work today. I was amazed that they had so much time for deliberating and thinking and was interested in the kind of civilization that would permit such useless deliberation.... I suppose everybody has to be a snob of some sort, and I suppose you will feel that you are distinguishing yourself from the herd by becoming a Classical snob. I can see you drifting into a bar, belting down a few, turning around to a guy on the stool next to you -- a contemporary billboard baron from Podunk, Iowa -- and saying, "Well, what do you think of old Leonidas?" ... It isn't really important what I think. It's important what you wish to do with the rest of your life. I just wish I could feel that the influence of those odd-ball professors and the ivory towers were developing you into the kind of man we can both be proud of.... I think you are rapidly becoming a jackass, and the sooner you get out of that filthy atmosphere, the better it will suit me.[xvi]

The delicious irony of how unmerited his father's anxiety was over the son's interest in the Classics is evident in an interview later in the article, when Ted Turner attributes his phenomenal success in business precisely to his education, and to a certain Classical role model in particular.

> They laughed at me when I started with CBS. They laughed at me when I started CNN. They laughed at me when I bought the Braves. They laughed at me when I bought M-G-M. I spent a lot of time thinking, and I did not fear, because of my classical background. When Alexander the Great took control when his dad died, he was twenty years old. He

> took the Macedonian Army, which was the best army in the world at the time, and conquered Greece, got the Greeks to all join with him, and then marched across the Hellespont and invaded Asia. They didn't even know where the world ended at that time. And he was dead at thirty-three, thirteen years later. He kept marching. He hardly ever stopped. And he never lost a battle.[xvii]

Again, there is a tension between, on the one hand, the boundary practices that separate fields from one another and, on the other, the flows and exchange of diverse capital that connect them, and this seems to accord with the basic assumptions of Bourdieu's theory of cultural capital.

The idea of moral capital, admittedly neglected by Bourdieu, and the relationship between the boundaries between the various forms of capital and the flows of capital between the different fields is addressed in John Kane's The Politics of Moral Capital.[xviii] Kane notes that moral capital is not just an important asset to a politician, it is ***the*** single most important asset. This assertion, Kane notes, consists in a challenge of the traditional conception of the political field as amoral, since even the most sociopathic political actor needs to comprehend and manipulate the normative, ideological context in which politics takes place. Kane also challenges the conception of politics portrayed by rational choice or game theory as a form of pure calculation, since politics is always implicated in ideologies, which "can be described as structures of argument and explanation that assert a set of political values, principles, programs and strategies allegedly deduced from arguments about religion, metaphysics, history, sociology, humanity, economics or justice."[xix] Moreover, the derivation of political agendas from abstract systems of thought also implicates the political actor as a staunch believer in his or her agenda. Kane's example of this is Adolph Hitler and his Nazi cohorts who, although the paragons

of cynical power politics, were also true believers who sacrificed much the war effort in order to channel resources instead into a mad campaign of genocide.

A paradox of political involvement is that while moral capital is very much the ultimate asset in the political arena because it connects with a society's normative presuppositions, nothing erodes a sterling reputation faster than a sojourn into the ruthless and vulgar winner-take-all world of politics. This is, in turn, related to a greater distinction in defining 'capital', and is implied in the definition of capitalism as a modern phenomenon. Although there has always been commerce and trade and manufacture, and its fruit – wealth – has always been a thing to be sought and saved and enjoyed, wealth only becomes ***capital*** with the will to plow one's earnings back into further investments, a phenomena on a mass scale that distinguished modern capitalism from more complacent earlier economic forms.

> Whatever the merits or otherwise of these postulates, the idea is generally the same: things valuable or pleasurable in themselves – people, knowledge, skills, social relationships – can also be resources that enable the achievement of other social, political or economic ends. The presumption is that people, corporations and societies that develop these forms of capital possess investable resources capable of providing tangible returns. Implicit here is the venerable distinction between wealth and capital. Wealth may be loved for itself, used for consumption or display or hoarded against future calamity, but only when it is invested in some productive enterprise for the sake of profitable returns does it become capital. Mere money, then, is not necessarily financial capital, nor skill necessarily human capital, nor knowledge necessarily intellectual capital, nor a network of social relationships necessarily social capital. They become so only when mobilized for the sake of tangible, exterior returns. Capital, in other words, is wealth in action. The same holds for moral capital. Moral capital is moral prestige – whether of an individual, an organization or a cause – in useful service.[xx]

To a degree, this distinction resolves the tension between Bourdieu's conception of capital as exchangeable with Lamont's claim that value systems are incompatible.

Bourdieu is describing individual properties 'in useful service', mobilized to acquire other types of resources, whereas Lamont captures in her survey research the French and American elites when they are contemplating what it is they enjoy as an end in itself.

An even more controversial philosophical position that asserts that morality itself exists as an economy is found in Nietzsche's Genealogy of Morals.[xxi] As Gilles Deleuze and Felix Gauttari write in Anti-Oedipus:

> The great book of modern ethnology is not so much Mauss's *The Gift* as Nietzsche's *On the Genealogy of Morals.* At least it should be. For the *Genealogy*, the second essay, is an attempt – and a success without equal – at interpreting primitive economy in terms of debt, in the debtor-creditor relationship, by eliminating every consideration of exchange or interest "à l'anglaise."[xxii]

For Nietzsche, there were two fundamental succeeding moral economies in Western history. The first was the ethos of the 'master' or aristocrat, evident in ancient Greek society, that conceived proper behavior as the imitation of the overflowing generosity of the nobleman that disdained the base, mean or 'bad' qualities of the resentful lower classes. This was rejected and supplanted by the later 'slave' or 'herd' morality of Judeo-Christianity and Platonism, which conceived morality as upholding universal (group) laws against the 'evil' transgressions of the unconstrained individual (epitomized in the freedom of the aristocrat). Christian notions of 'redemption' and 'forgiveness' (financial terminology) are not refutations of but rather are innovations extending this moral economy, which describe sin or crime as incurring a 'debt' that must be repaid to society. By describing ethics in economic terms, Nietzsche effectively deflates the pretensions of the moral sphere, in effect destabilizing the boundaries between it and the socioeconomic sphere.

Nietzsche's understanding of moralities as economies is, however, interesting with respect to the idea of moral capital not only in his historical treatment of the birth of the Western Judeo-Christian moral system, but also with respect to the modern crisis of nihilism as a sociological phenomenon. Nietzsche noted that an exaggerated form of moralism ('moral capital' in the terms used here) emerged in full force in Victorian era Britain and more generally in the West as a response to and substitute for the loss of faith in Christianity and the devaluation of religious 'spiritual capital'. As Weber would trace, this efflorescence of moral capital fed the 'spirit of capitalism' as a 'worldly asceticism'. But the culture idea also emerged in this era as a surrogate for the disintegration of religious faith; indeed, Nietzsche's early valorization of art is exemplary of this. Moral capital, beneficiary of a crisis in spiritual capital, became a fungible asset in the modern political economy; conversely, cultural capital, developed as an instrument of domination by European elites in the context of state formation, became a surrogate religion as religious capital lost its value. Hence, just as Nietzsche used economic concepts to illuminate the history of morality, philosophical concepts (like Nietzsche's theory of nihilism) can serve to elucidate social processes.

But the historical eclipse of Christian faith is also relevant in the American context, albeit in a different manner. For instance, C. Wright Mills observed in Sociology and Pragmatism[xxiii] that the pragmatist movement emerged in the universities just as American higher education was shifting away from a theological to a natural-science research focus. That is, as the power of the spiritual capital of the Christian religion was diminishing after the Civil War, the financial and political capital of the corporations and the federal government was burgeoning.

Space as the location of (critically reflective) discourse

Bourdieu's theory therefore illuminates postmodernist theories of the constructedness of space by illuminating how each space (field) maintains its own values (or capital), and how spaces are typically conjoined with one another to reproduce the patterns found in theoretical discourse. But postmodernist understandings of space also enrich Bourdieu's theory. First, not only does each field (space) harbor its own values (capital), but each field or space contains its own form of discourse as well. That is, if a worldview or ideology or value system unconsciously projects its cartographic imaginary onto the world, not only is this a construction of space(s) through discourse, it also means that each particular space or field within this map is, in a sense, assigned its own type of discourse and activity. But we forget that the social world is comprised of various fields or spaces, and that certain conversations (or values) are limited to particular spaces (fields), and that these spaces are themselves discursive creations projected by ideologies, so that the social world (for example, in Williams' account of the American value system) seems ridden with paradox, teeming with contradictory imperatives. As Shapiro writes:

> Because "space" is constituted by the way locations are imagined or given meaning, it is always a largely discursive phenomenon. For this reason the domains or spaces within which conversations take place can be thought of as "protoconversations", for they amount to the already established, if now silent, conversations that shape the voluble ones taking place. And because they are a silent force in conversations, they are difficult to draw into discursive processes.[xxiv]

Second, postmodernist theory is sensitive to how certain spaces (or times) are especially oriented toward critical reflection. Shapiro's narrative goes on to state how the

two classic spaces of critical reflection are those of the theatre and philosophy. But he notes that since antiquity, these two endeavors have had quite different trajectories in terms of their spatial practices. The theatre of ancient Greece was a paragon of the intersection of contemplation and public involvement, whereas today the theatre is privatized and commercialized, limited in its audience and oriented toward elite (and academic) criticism. By way of contrast, classical philosophy was exclusive and private, even secretive, conceived by Plato and Aristotle after the death of Socrates as an enterprise always at odds with the social order, requiring a strong boundary between society and the realm of reflection. Moreover, homologous with this segregation of public and private space typical of philosophy was philosophy's transcendental orientation, its imagining of an abstract, ethereal realm of order that would provide standards of intelligibility by which the material world of flux and chaos could be judged, evaluated, and negotiated.

But modern philosophy has, in various and often contradictory ways, taken a turn away from these tendencies. For Leo Strauss, philosophy was indeed exclusive and esoteric, containing intentionally hidden meanings, intelligible but to a few select souls capable of deeper understanding. But Strauss did not see these esoteric truths as transcendental, but as interpretive, as disguised textual messages from historical philosophers to their latter-day peers that did not really refer to any transcendental realm of contemplation (the discourse of which in philosophical texts was merely part of the disguise). For Jürgen Habermas, the public realm of Western bourgeois democracy represents a realm of reflection, discussion and debate. But his notion of a public, political sphere is highly idealized. Since he assumes that such a realm is premised on

the potential for full agreement, he valorizes the project of building an 'ideal language community' in which social consensus is ultimately reached by putting aside partisan political interests. Although this is a quintessentially modern project, it echoes the idealized realm of transcendental forms that is a hallmark of the Western philosophical tradition. While Strauss's vision of reflection is modern in its worldliness and traditional in its privacy, Habermas is modern in his public orientation and traditional in his idealism.

Spaces of reflection like philosophy and the theatre would be a subset of what Foucault referred to as 'heterotopias', or places of otherness that lie outside of normal space. Heterotopias are not necessarily reflective or particularly libratory. In fact, the modern world, according to Foucault, is characterized by repressive heterotopias like the prison, the psychiatric hospital, retirement homes and 'other' places where what is abnormal or deviant is shunted aside and hidden from plain view yet put under a centralized surveillance that is internalized by the population as a kind of self-supervision. This is in accord with Foucault's main thesis that in the modern world, power consists not in the display of brute force nor in the spectacle of punishment by authorities, but rather constitutes itself in the subtle cultivation and dissemination of the discourses of normality to which the population adheres without being cognizant of its own resulting self-subordination (particularly in the insidious notion that these heterotopic institutions serve a 'rehabilitative' or 'therapeutic' function of correcting what is 'deviant'). There are, however, libratory heterotopias for Foucault, such as the ship, which Foucault posits in his famous essay on heterotopias is the 'greatest reserve of

the imagination'. "In civilizations without boats, dreams dry up, espionage takes the place of adventure, and the police take the place of pirates."[xxv]

Indeed, Foucault maintains that it is those heterotopias that most stimulate the imagination that manifest the greatest critical potential. Such a heterotopia exerts a 'counteraction' on the positions people occupy by serving as a mirror that compels reflection on their normalized lives. Not just the space of boats, but travel and, more generally, the encounter with the strange and exotic famously provokes the foreigner to recognize the strangeness of his own culture: the encounter with what is unintelligible forces one to reflect back upon one's own modes of intelligibility. For Shapiro, a classic example of such a heterotopia is found in the example of Disneyland. In popular discourse and in literary tropes, 'the Magic Kingdom' has become a metaphor for death in its construction of itself as idealized and otherworldly.

But even those heterotopias explicitly dedicated to expressing rebellion and dissent serve an ambiguous function, in that while they do protest the social order, they are nevertheless permitted and even promoted by authorities because they also buttress the power structure they critique. This has been true for theatre and philosophy, but even much more openly seditious social institutions also strike a balance between subversion and complicity. One such space would be *Crokodile*, the official Soviet newspaper of dissent, in which voices of dissatisfaction were allowed expression on the condition that they submit to full supervision by the state. But there are even *times* of sanctioned mutiny, such as the annual carnival, which in many societies consists in a day in which all social conventions are overturned and the authority structure inverted. While the likes of M.M. Bakhtin celebrate this as an age-old Dionysian peasant uprising,[xxvi] the

anthropologist Abner Cohen lamented that it represents a kind of safety valve, the effective appropriation and neutralization of protest by authorities in traditional societies.[xxvii]

Heterotopias (like the theatre or philosophy) therefore represent 'abnormal' discourses embedded in spaces that were themselves, as a protoconversations, created by previous discourses, usually those of the official ideology. And, indeed, the critical heterotopia (for example, the university) is typically regulated by an ambivalent officialdom that distrusts but needs, for various reasons (as a safety valve, for surveillance or feedback, to promote research or thinking skills), spaces of potential dissent. But what is of interest here, however, is how this heterotopic discourse is potentially creative and generative in its very strangeness and novelty. That is, despite its sanctioned position in the social order, the heterotopic discourse can produce an imaginative geography or map of the world distinct from that promoted by the status quo. This imaginative vision can serve as a kind of critique of the social world – the imperative of the social thinker that Durkheim posited and Bourdieu endorsed.

In the survey above of contradictions in ethical codes (such as Williams' description of the American value system, or the selective humanitarianism of the early industrial bourgeoisie) particular values are found to be relevant to specific spaces, and the boundaries that define these spaces are invisible and forgotten. Moreover, it is discourses (largely the official ideologies) that create and map out these spaces, with each space assigned its own distinct discourse. This begs the question of whether (and if so, how) theoretical discourses ***on the nature of valuation*** – like the discourses of philosophy and social theory – create spaces. Theoretical discourses of valuation

explicitly address the nature of values, and these discourses (largely obscure and academic) are generally not conceived as creating new spaces.

It is argued in this study that the various conceptions of valuation produced in the philosophical tradition and in social theory represent widely divergent visions of the location and nature of meaning and value, that is, very different maps of the world. Typically, in philosophy and the social sciences, value is conceived either as objective and existing in a realm independent of human desire, or as subjective and reflecting human interests. Also, value is conceived as either empirically verifiable (naturalistic) or scientifically unknowable (non-naturalistic). For example, in the Platonic conception, value is at once objective and non-naturalistic, since value exists in an independent realm of forms that is known intuitively. In this sense, different theories of valuation produced in the heterotopias of philosophy and social theory actually create different fields of value.

The production of critical discourses that are also creative in that they present a radically different vision of the social world from that of the status quo is another sociological imperative that Bourdieu's reflexive sociology demands of the sociological practitioner. (He also demands that scholars reflect on how their social position is reflected in their intellectual disposition, and demands as well recognition of how cultural categories are typically patterned after the social order in a way that normalizes and naturalizes the status quo.) In doing so, Bourdieu affirms Durkheim's demand that social thinkers critically portray society in a way that diverges from the popular, common sense, taken-for-granted image of the social world. This would seem to reflect the critical potential of structural theories that challenge common 'subjective' impressions with

unfamiliar 'objective' interpretations, and thus accords well with Durkheim's structuralism, which analyzes human action (for example, forms of social solidarity, or statistics of suicide in France) as guided by forces which exist independently of the consciousness of the actors, apprehensible only to the social researcher. As Terry Eagleton observes about literary structuralism,

> [S]tructuralism is a calculated affront to common sense. It refuses the 'obvious' meaning of the story and seeks to isolate certain 'deep' structures within it, which are not apparent on the surface. It does not take the text at face value, but 'displaces' it into a quite different kind of object.[xxviii]

Of course, this rather imaginative mode of critical reflection also happens to mesh well with Giddens' conception of reflexivity in his structuration theory, in which the often counter-intuitive discourses of the social sciences ultimately feed back into and alter the cultural categories. (Giddens will be dealt with in the final chapter.) But there is yet another powerful form of critical analysis, that of the genealogy, which situates all conceptions within a historical context. And one thing this study has not done as of yet is to critically reflect on the idea of 'values' – so central to the analysis of this chapter – as a recent invention.

Reflection on the idea of 'values': Virtue made relative by Nietzsche

The concept of 'value', it should be noted, is not a universal – not even in the 'Western' tradition. It belongs to the Western intellectual tradition as it stemmed from the ancient Greeks, but this Greco-Roman is not the only pillar of Western thought. There is, in a sense, a repressed Other in the Western tradition – that being the Judaic heritage of the West. Ironically, the Hebraic tradition is itself not oriented toward value,

but toward the ethical imperative of recognizing the fundamental difference of the Other. Even a recent Jewish thinker along these lines, Emanuel Levinas, who expands the Hebraic tradition using a Heideggerian framework, poses a challenge to his gentile interpreters since he writes from a radically different tradition, a fact that many fail appreciate. "To confront Levinas is to be faced with a wholly different ethical tradition. In Levinas's ethical thinking/writing, morality is not an experience of value (as it is in the Kantian tradition and in Alasdair MacIntyre's post-Kantian application of anthropology of ethics), but a recognition of and vulnerability to alterity."[xxix] Although the idea of value dominates the philosophical tradition from the Greeks onward, it is not the only Western tradition of ethical thought. However, not only is the idea of 'value' not a universal, even within the Western ethical tradition, but the idea of '***values***' as plural is even ***less*** universal, in a sense, in that it is of recent vintage. Nevertheless, this study has adopted it as identical with Bourdieu's concept of forms of capital, which he applies as a universal. In this case, the idea of values requires historical analysis in order to engage in a more reflexive form of scholarship.

The idea of values (plural), according to the historian Gertrude Himmelfarb, is a recent invention. In her conservative paean The De-Moralization of Society: From Victorian Virtues to Modern Values,[xxx] she explained that the Victorian Britains did not have, so to speak, a value system. That is, the concept of 'values' did not exist for them. Rather, they subscribed to a more absolutist and universalistic notion of *virtue*, more particularly, the classic bourgeois virtues now associated with the so-called Protestant ethic, like industry, frugality and cleanliness. (Himmelfarb asserted that the middle

classes did not impose these ideals on their subordinates; instead, the working class cultivated these virtues on their own as a source of genuine empowerment.)

Despite its efficacy in promoting the social standing of those who adhered to its austere discipline, the ultimate source of this Victorian moralism was, according to Himmelfarb, religious crisis, and not economic opportunity. Ironically, the loss of faith that had been endemic in the Victorian era had led to the exaltation of the moral system of Christianity. Virtue was a substitute for lost belief, and filled a spiritual vacuum. She quotes Nietzsche: "They are rid of the Christian God and now believe all the more firmly that they must cling to Christian morality."[xxxi] The paradox is obvious, and its consequences damning, as Nietzsche again observed. "When one gives up the Christian faith, one pulls the right to Christian morality out from under one's feet."[xxxii] This exaggerated moralism was ultimately doomed.

The foundation of this emergent secular culture was the British cult of domesticity, in which the home was officially sacralized as a (feminine) refuge from the (masculine) marketplace. As the prime minister, Benjamin Disraeli remarked:

> England is a domestic country. Here the home is revered and the hearth is sacred. The nation is represented by a family -- the Royal Family; and if that family is educated with a sense of responsibility and a sentiment of public duty, it is difficult to exaggerate the salutary influence they may exercise over a nation.[xxxiii]

One lasting effect of this domestication of the idea of virtue, according to Himmelfarb, is its contemporary narrow association of the term with womanly rectitude, particularly with chastity. (Chastity itself originally meant *modesty*, and applied to men and women equally). If, in the ancient world of the Greeks and Romans, virtue was the essence of manhood and of public life in all its robust fullness, today it implies a quaint prudishness.

The term "virtue" has been displaced in our vocabulary by the term "values", Himmelfarb argues, virtually without our awareness. Even cultural conservatives speak of "family values" without realizing the relativism implicit in their discourse.

> This is all the more curious because the inspirer of the revolution and the creator of the new language was acutely aware of the significance of it all. It was in the 1880s that Friedrich Nietzsche began to speak of "values" in its present sense – not as a verb, meaning to value or esteem something; nor as a singlular noun, meaning the measure of a thing (the economic value of money, labor, or property); but in the plural, connoting the moral beliefs and attitudes of a society. Moreover, he used the word consciously, repeatedly, indeed insistently, to signify what he took to be the most profound event in human history. His "transvaluation of values" was to be the final, ultimate revolution, a revolution against both the classical virtues and the Judaic-Christian ones. The "death of God" would mean the death of morality and the death of truth -- above all, the truth of any morality. There would be no good and evil, no virtue and vice. There would be only "values". And having degraded virtues into values, Nietzsche proceeded to de-value and transvalue them, to create a new set of values for his "new man".[xxxiv]

According to Himmelfarb, Nietzsche's invention of the idea of values derives from his program to transform the Western value system. However, contrary to Himmelfarb, the 'transvaluation of all values' is not for Nietzsche the 'most profound event in human history'. He warns us that the most profound event has already happened: the death of God and the consequent delegitimization of absolute standards of judgment. The 'transvaluation of all values' is not a program by Nietzsche to undermine either morality or the belief in truth, but is, rather, a heroic attempt to find alternatives to what is falling apart of its own accord. The modern world is afflicted by nihilism because science and its will to truth (products of the Western religious tradition) are undermining the very foundations of belief.

In fact, in the philosophical literature on values, it seems that it has been science that has so often driven values out of a metaphysical realm of logic that is both abstract

and objective (like either the Platonic realm of forms or a Kantian realm of practical reason) into naturalistic realm that is both concrete and objective (like the Aristotelian tradition of the good life). That is, if there are times in the history of philosophy when the notion of value as abstract has been rejected for a vision of value as concrete, it has been the powerful influence of science as a model that has inspired this shift. Most famously, there is Aristotle's political science that identifies the good life in the service of the city-state as an implicit critique of Plato's vision of the good as consisting of contemplation of and adherence to an abstract realm of forms. There is an obvious parallel between this shift and Comte's 'law of the three stages', in which the second stage of rationalist philosophy paves the way for, but then is replaced by the authority of the scientific method as a source of explanation in all matters, even religious. It also parallels in spirit the advance of Victorian values (concrete but absolute) over the Christian faith from which they issued.

In sum, the development of natural science, at different times and places (in Aristotle's philosophy, in Victorian Britain), has quashed the hope for a transcendent realm of value, in effect forcing a resettlement of values from an abstract realm to the empirical world. This is not the end of the story, however. Science (or at least its philosophical proxy, logical positivism) continues to exercise its corrosive powers on value even in its new empirical status. Value still inhabits the greater objective realm, although it has fallen from an abstract, rarified Platonic or Christian realm to a more down-to-earth Aristotelian or British world of practice. But now science hounds value out of the objective world altogether, into a subjective origin, and relegates values to the ephemera of the mind. According to this new philosophy, the mind either 1) projects

itself and its valuation onto the objective world – creating the illusion of objective value, or 2) these subjective valuations are tenuously, and mysteriously, connected to it. As a consequence of this subjectivization of value, it is now considered relative and pluraristic, so that value is mere convention and not embedded in natural law.

The ascendancy of this relativistic perspective in Western thought is quite recent, especially in the social sciences, according to Himmelfarb. In fact, she claims that it was the German sociologist Max Weber who disseminated the pluralistic idea of values (two decades after it was conceived by Nietzsche) through Weber's "fact-value" distinction. She maintains that this distinction is especially celebrated in Weber's famous essays on the so-called Protestant work ethic as the supposed source of the "spirit of capitalism". Himmelfarb's argument itself extends the irony of Weber's thesis: Victorian virtues derived from Christianity fueled British industrialism (essentially Weber's thesis as applied to Victorian England) but were themselves products of the decline of religion and the search for a surrogate, and were eventually sabotaged by philosophies of decadence. And now, she claims, with the fashion of postmodernism, the moral bankruptcy that had infected elite intellectuals like Nietzsche and Oscar Wilde wreaks havoc on the entire youth of the West. She misses the point that Nietzsche, at least, was searching for new values in the face of the self-destruction of the old, and that, likewise, what makes moral skepticism popular is not its power to destroy orthodoxies, but its recognition that those orthodoxies are already bringing themselves down through their promotion of science.

Again, this is not to say that the idea of *value* or of *valuation* did not exist before Nietzsche. Rather, Nietzsche transformed value, making it pluralistic, historical and anthropological, when he theorized value. Therefore, a historical survey of the idea of

valuation is itself in order, and will be undertaken in the appendix below. But the following section also seeks to show how different discourses attribute value to different kinds of spaces. That is, it is theoretical discourses that create types of space (here, what kind of space value is to be found in), and these discourses contest one another for a kind of official status.

Critical Notes 2.1:

The idea of valuation: The philosophical literature

The philosophical literature on values seeks to locate the origin of value either out in the world or in our minds, or in some interaction of these two elements, with three main theoretical traditions. The first is subjectivism, which argues that the only valuable goods are subjective states of sentient beings, usually in reference to matters of self-interest or well-being. The second is objectivism, which holds that while values apply to humans, values exist independently; objectivists argue that if something is preferable, it is because it is good, and not the reverse. The third is a neo-Kantian rationalism, which maintains that value derives from practical reason. By this account, reasons emerge from subjective interests but are formally tested for their efficacy, so that these ends -- and not just the means to achieve them -- are thereby validated as valuable. For example, aroma-therapy may be questionable as a means to the end or goal of good health, but health is itself subject to scrutiny as an end value; for example, not everyone prioritizes health and, even among those who do, not all define it the same way.

Thus, both the 'instrumentally valuable' and the 'finally valuable' components of the means-ends distinction are equally subject to evaluation. Since their worthiness in the theory of practical reasoning is contingent, this is generally regarded as a distinction separate from that of intrinsic and extrinsic values found in the theory of value. For intrinsic values have inherent value and are not subject to tests, whereas means and ends are both extrinsic. For example, although Kant maintained that happiness might have been a final end, it was merely of extrinsic value, since intrinsic value for Kant lay exclusively with the fulfillment of moral duty. Likewise, G.E. Moore conceived intrinsic

value as metaphysical, as opposed to natural, so that the 'object' of intrinsic value was ultimately abstract, not concrete; this is what Moore meant when he wrote "Whenever [one] thinks of 'intrinsic value', or 'intrinsic worth', or says that a thing 'ought to exist', [one] has before his mind the unique object -- the unique property of things -- which I mean by 'good'."[xxxv]

Moore's philosophy actually conceives moral value as objective, in that Moore holds that intrinsic value exists independently from subjective human desires, even though his philosophy is mentalistic. This is a Platonic conception of good, in which the apprehension of an intrinsically good entity is ultimately a kind of perceptual *Gestalt* or whole that maintains a certain integrity or distinction from the empirically diverse data from which it is mentally constructed; organic unities, which are mental projections, have a combined value that is greater than that of the sum of their parts, and this extra value exists separately from subjective interest. Even consciousness is merely a part of the whole, and has no determining value. "It seems to be true that to be conscious of a beautiful object is a thing of intrinsic value; whereas the same object, if no one be conscious of it, has certainly comparatively little value, and is commonly held to have none at all. But the consciousness of a beautiful object is certainly a whole of some sort in which we can distinguish as parts the object on the one hand and the being conscious on the other."[xxxvi] For Moore, the whole has intrinsic value, which runs parallel to but is distinct from the ends-means distinction.

> The investigation of intrinsic values is complicated by the fact that the value of a whole may be different from the sum of the values of its parts, in which case the part has to the whole a relation, which exhibits an equally important difference from and resemblance to that of means to end.[xxxvii]

Regarding the matter of organic wholes in another respect, the philosophical literature often asserts that values exist in an ordered system and are structured hierarchically, so that supreme values dominate and organize the entire system of valuation. Indeed, particular philosophies are themselves examples of this. For instance, ancient Greek philosophies typically elevated the state of contemplation of what is objectively good to the apex of the value structure, whereas modern philosophies tend more to valorize action and subjective interest. However, this historical variability of particular values (representing the 'content' of value systems, as opposed to the logical structure discussed above) begs the question of how values are born and rise in importance.

The question of the origin of values is an ontological one, and pivots on whether evaluations ascribe value properties to what is evaluated. Understood as properties, values can be either natural and subject to empirical scrutiny, or non-natural. As Darwall, Gibbard and Railton explain in terms of ethical judgment, "We can distinguish two broad trends in contemporary moral theory depending upon how 'the problem of placing ethics' is identified and faced, and the implications drawn."

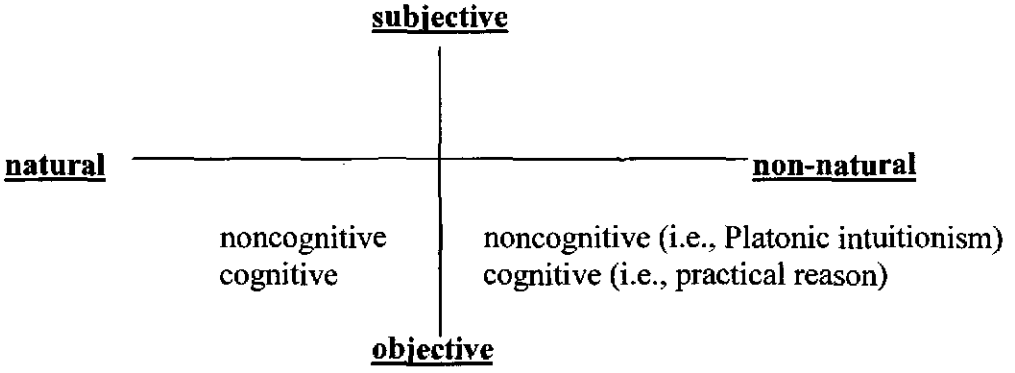
> The first [and non-scientific but objectivist trend, like Moore's Platonism] starts out from the idea that the "problem" is a product not of ethics, but of the wrong-headed notion of seeking to understand the objectivity of moral judgments on the model of the objectivity of empirical science. This [non-natural, nonscientific but objectivist] approach depends upon finding some substantial contrast or discontinuity between facts (at least, facts of the paradigm sort treated of in natural science) and norms or values. Perhaps most philosophers find such a contrast *prima facie* plausible; more controversial, and thus the focus of the most urgent dialectical task of this first trend, is the claim that a *bona fide* form of objectivity can be elaborated and defended for the ethical side of this contrast. As we will see, philosophers advocating discontinuity [of values from science] have attempted to carry out this task in various ways; perhaps the principle distinction among them turns on whether moral judgment is held to be

> cognitive (despite the discontinuity with a certain paradigm of factual judgment) or noncognitive (and so objective in some sense that does not involve aptness for -- literal -- truth evaluation).[xxxviii] (128-129)

In other words, within the model of value judgment as 'discontinuous' and non-natural (non-scientific), there exists an argument that such value judgments are, nonetheless, objective; the Platonist perspective is a classic example. Furthermore, there are two variants of this non-naturalist, objectivist argument: the 'cognitivist', which is rationally evaluative, and the 'noncognitivist', which eschews ratiocination (e.g., in favor of moral intuition). In terms of the 'continuous' or naturalistic (scientific) model of values,

> [t]he second broad trend in response to "the problem of placing ethics" accepts the challenge of showing that moral judgments are factual in the paradigm sense afforded by empirical or theoretical judgments in the natural sciences. Views in this second broad trend can also, in principle, be further divided between cognitivist and noncognitivist. However, despite the readiness with which it may be admitted that assertoric scientific discourse typically involves some noncognitive elements, few, if any, philosophers seem to occupy the postion that "paradigm factual" judgments are primarily noncognitive.[xxxix]

From this quotation, a double axis grid can be drawn illustrating this understanding of value judgment.



The point of the quotations above is that the distinction between natural (i.e., scientifically observable) and the non-natural should not be conflated with the distinction between the objective (i.e., independently existing) and the subjective. In fact, this

controversy over the ontology of values goes back to the publication of G.E. Moore's *Principia Ethica* (1903), in which he argued that goodness is a *sui generis* non-natural property that cannot be apprehended scientifically. "Such [ethical] theories may be divided into two groups (1) Metaphysical, (2) Naturalistic: and the second group may be subdivided into two others, (a) theories which declare some natural object, other than pleasure, to the sole good, (b) Hedonism."[xl] (xv) Non-hedonistic naturalistic theories were typified for Moore by the social Darwinist speculation that was rampant at that time; but all forms of naturalistic ethics for Moore were fallacies.

Moore's effort was to defend a kind of metaphysical ethics, an intuitionistic or 'noncognitivist' Platonism. As such, this ethics was non-descriptive/non-natural/non-scientific and thus not empirically verifiable -- and yet supposedly persisted as an objective, independent and eternally true.[xli] Rationalists who rejected Moore's intuitionistic embrace of *theoretical* reason likewise apprehended an objective yet non-natural ethical order when they turned toward a *practical* and 'cognitivist' reason as the ground for morality.[xlii]

An analysis by J.L. Mackie of the distinction between natural and non-natural traditions of ethical valuation finds them both erroneously conceiving values as objective and existing independently from human consciousness. He seeks to explain the mechanism for this error. He identifies the non-natural tendency in the Kantian and post-Kantian tradition of British moral philosophy, especially the metaphysical strain typified by Moore. The naturalistic tradition, in contrast, runs through Aristotle and Aquinas, in which "the fundamental notion is that of the good for man, or the general end or goal of human life, or perhaps of a set of basic goods or primary human purposes."[xliii]

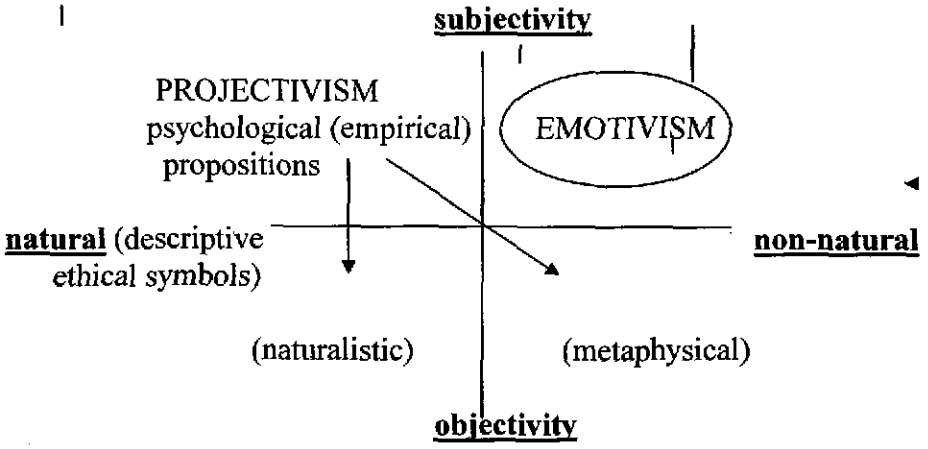
However, according to Mackie, these traditions are open to two radically different interpretations. The first is descriptive, simply stating the implicit and universal goals of all action; the second normative or evaluative or prescriptive, stating what people ought to pursue whether or not they are doing so. These two interpretations, Mackie argues, are typically run together to form a "pattern of objectivization: a claim to objective prescriptivity is constructed by combining the normative element in the second interpretation with the objectivity allowed by the first, by the statement that such and such are fundamentally pursued or ultimately satisfying human goals."[xliv] Mackie's ultimate thesis is that ethical values are subjective projections of the human mind onto the world. What is formally known as the 'error theory' posits that this tendency is ingrained but the belief is false, for two main reasons: the *relativity* of the diversity of actual goals people pursue and enjoy, and the *queerness* of the status of objectively true values in subjective consciousness.

Although the apparent existence of objective values is, for Mackie, an illusion produced by the projection of subjective values onto empirical reality, there are even more counter-intuitive philosophical positions than his. For example, 'emotivism' conceives the articulation of value judgments as expressive of feelings rather than as descriptive of reality, and serves a persuasive function rather than asserts a belief that is verifiable as true or false. As the positivist A.J. Ayer wrote,

> Our contention is simply that, in our language, sentences which contain normative ethical symbols are not equivalent to sentences which express psychological propositions, or indeed empirical propositions of any kind. It is advisable here to make it plain that it is only normative ethical symbols, and not descriptive ethical symbols, that are held by us to be indefinable in factual terms.[xlv]

Here, Ayer would seem to distinguish between normative ethical symbols, which are subjective and non-natural, and descriptive ethical symbols (be they psychological or not), which are empirical and natural and also either subjective or objective; importantly, for Ayer, psychology is empirical (scientific, natural, descriptive).

Ayer seems to be arguing from the perspective of logical positivism that confirms the separation of facts from values when he writes "[W]e hold that one really never does dispute about questions of value".[xlvi] While logical positivism is usually used to dismiss non-scientific modes of questioning, the intention here of drawing a boundary between ethical and scientific evaluation is reversed, so that values, severed from analysis, are not disregarded by but are protected from critique. Ironically, he seems to engage in an almost anthropological cultural relativism in terms of the integrity of values, their autonomy from the outer world, and their immunity from judgment on the terms of scientific forms of evaluation. He fails to address how it comes to be that rational argumentation comprises the greater part of our moral discourse, nor does he explain why logic has such a persuasive effect in such debates.



Ultimately, the projectivist understanding derives from David Hume's empiricist contention that we "gild and stain" the world with "colours borrowed from internal

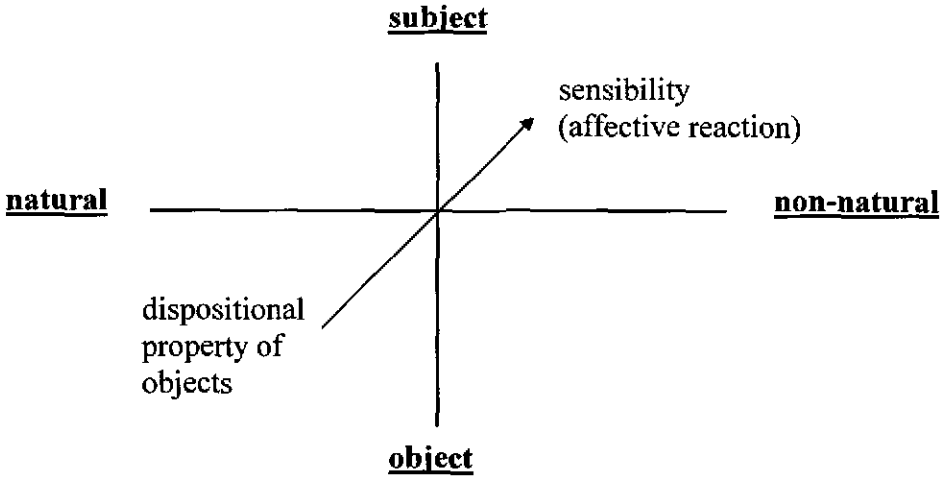
sentiment", not just in aesthetics (as in the popular notion that "beauty is in the eye of the beholder"), but in ethics and causation as well. Hume, and the projectivist tradition that follows him, is empirical in his conception of subjectivity. The emotivist school, in contrast, characterizes subjectivity as non-natural, and beyond the scrutiny of science.

Some philosophers have posited that values are second order qualities. First advanced by John Locke in 1690 in An Essay on Human Understanding,[xlvii] the distinction between primary and secondary qualities has become the popular 'common sense' understanding of the nature of perception. Primary qualities have an existence independent of being perceived, whereas secondary qualities imply sensory response and hence the subjective experience of a perceiver. Primary qualities exhibit properties that typify their separation from mind and that are generally quantifiable, and hence abstractable, like shape, weight, position, molecular structure. In contrast, secondary qualities are understood as caused by sensory stimuli but exist in mind and are qualitative, like color, sound, taste, smell, and feel.

There are, however, conflicting interpretations of the distinction between primary and secondary qualities. For example, as consummate materialists, scientists tend to reduce secondary qualities to primary ones (e.g., color is deemed identical with refracted light waves). Or, on the contrary, the irreducibility of one to the other is affirmed, as in the Cartesian dualism of mind and body. Or else, primary qualities are seen as secondary, all phenomena idealistically regarded as subjective events. Most radically, so-called secondary qualities can be seen as neither objective nor subjective but rather as mediums (like a lens) through which objects are presented and pass from objectivity to subjectivity.

But the most popular perspective on secondary qualities is also the common sense view. This view maintains that secondary qualities are dispositions that objects have to cause certain sensory responses in the right conditions. Secondary qualities are indeed properties of objects, but are defined by reference to their subjective sensory effects. This theory situates secondary qualities at the mid-point between subjectivity and objectivity (as well as the natural and non-natural), a product of their interaction. In line with this last interpretation, McDowell asserts that values are analogous to secondary qualities, and that affective reactions (like moral feeling) are analogous to sensibility.[xlviii]

SECONDARY QUALITIES



This conception of value attempts to reconnect not only the subjective and objective aspects of experience, but the natural and non-natural. In fact, there seems to be an increasing tendency in the literature to align or even conflate these two distinctions, since the examples of philosophical models in which values are projected into a metaphysical, objective realm seems to be less common. This is a tremendous irony,

considering that it was the ***metaphysical*** conception of valuation proposed by G.E. Moore that laid the foundation of this framework made up of these two dichotomies.

Indeed, in terms of theories of value, there has always been an ambiguity between these two distinctions, between the subjective and objective, and between the empirical and non-scientific. However, even within the realm of the natural/empirical, there is a certain indistinctness between the subjective and objective. For example, within the social sciences (which study the human realm of the natural), there is the case of divergent utilitarian schools, some locating value in the world, others in human subjectivity. The distinctions refined in philosophical inquiry serve to elucidate the construction of value in the social sciences.

Critical Notes 2.2:

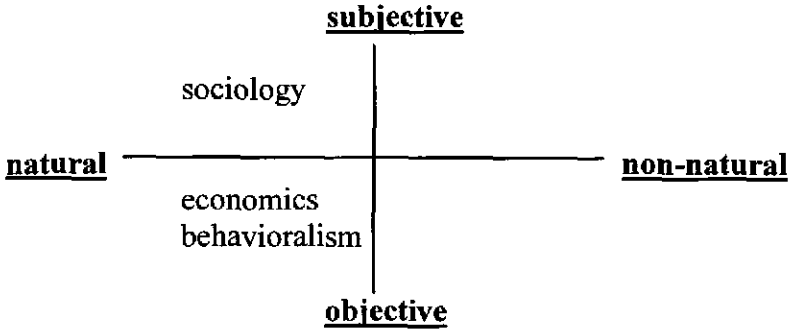
Values: The sociological literature

Insofar as their project is scientific, the social sciences always conceive value properties as epistemologically natural. However, disciplines within the social sciences diverge on the issue of whether values are either arbitrary preferences or exist as systems of relative importance; this corresponds to philosophical considerations of the status of values in terms of their objectivity and independence from consciousness (and hence their arbitrariness) versus their subjectivity. For example, economics involves the calculation of the worth of an object in use or exchange, a perspective in which value is an attribute of an object, not a person.[xlix] Likewise, behavioral psychology assumes that objective stimuli possess degrees of value that help determine an organisms response, a perspective which implies that behavior and values are linked arbitrarily so that the efficacy of values is predicated on the encounter by the organism of stimuli.[l]

However, other social sciences, particularly sociology, harbor a divergent concept of value that conceives it as a belief, and not the attribute of an object. Regardless of the subjective quality that values are attributed in this conception, theoretical and empirical research into the cognitive nature of values have advanced markedly. Indeed, American sociology came of age in the mid-twentieth-century structural functionalism of Talcott Parsons, who conceived society as a structured organism composed of functioning parts.

For Parsons, society held together because values cognitively organized the social order into recognizable roles that harmonized the individual's needs with those of the society and thereby prescribed particular norms for behavior. This was Parsons' refutation of the dominant economic view of human motivation that understood society

as an aggregate of individuals governed by enlightened self-interest vis-a-vis a potentially amoral and anarchic Hobbesian environment. Moreover, for Parsons, within each individual, values existed and evolved in a unique system of their own, an internal hierarchy. In turn, the society as a whole possessed a distinctly typical system of values, or 'value orientation'.[li]



Although it seems that philosophical speculation into the nature of values is hardly beholden to social theory in this same field, the sociological perspective typically recognizes the philosophical import and basis of values. For example, Kluckhohn and Strodtbeck[lii] asserted that values were constructed around beliefs that served to answer existential questions, answers that structured all subsequent thought and behavior. Similarly, Robin Williams[liii] accepted the sociological vision of values as beliefs, but qualified it by noting that values are a type of belief that serve as criteria for judgment, and have affective and cognitive components. Melvin Kohn employed these ideas in research on the transmission of values by parents, and from this he developed a fixed set of values that supposedly were exhaustive; he demonstrated that value systems were consistent along the lines of class, not ethnicity, so that greater cultural differences existed between the middle and lower classes than between nationalities.[liv]

Unfortunately, none of this empirical research conceived values as interacting within a system, as the earlier theoretical literature had.

An advance in empirical sociology toward understanding values as not just existing within systems, but as relative in status to one another was made by Milton Rokeach.[lv] Rokeach stressed the *ipsativity*, or prioritization of values within systems of valuation, and distinguished between instrumental values concerned with modes of conduct, on the one hand, and terminal values oriented toward end-states of existence, on the other. Rokeach also distinguished values from other cognitions, such as attitudes and interests, and observed that values are few in number and existed in a rank order.

Decades of empirical research have shown the logical connection of value priorities to attitudes and behavior, vindicating the sociological approach in relation to more theoretical philosophical discourses. But there have been qualifications of the link of values to life, such as Ann Swidler's observation that beliefs systems and patterns of behavior are never reliable indicators of action in isolation from one another; along these lines she criticizes Parson's reduction of culture to values.[lvi] However, she suggests that values do play a greater role in determining behavior in conditions of routinization, when life has settled into regular patterns of behavior. Other sociologists note that even when values are established, competing norms that would otherwise each express just one particular value can severely conflict. These sociological concerns relate well to philosophical questions of the relation between means and ends, like when sociologists study the fallibility of instrumental values (like the virtue of thrift and industry) in actually achieving terminal values (like financial success), as well as questions over the status of means and ends (i.e., success itself as a means to happiness).

But even established value systems that experience little internal conflict over the priority of values or in their proper expression through norms can still come into conflict with other value systems. This not only involves the issue of the relativity of values, so familiar to philosophy, but also the actual social and political condition of imperialism in which dominant powers enforce their moral codes. Also, new value systems can emerge and supplant established ones, particularly by way of generational change. For instance, James Davidson Hunter's research among contemporary young conservative shows that, in contrast with their parents, they share the virtually same value system as their culturally progressive peers -- except in matters of sexuality, where they maintain their conservatism. Likewise, Ronald Inglehart analyzed changes in values in industrialized societies to apprehend the possible emergence of a 'postmaterialistic' ethic. He assumed, as Maslow did, that there are a hierarchy of needs in which the satisfaction of lower, more biological needs makes possible a shift to the valuation of less immediately essential, more psychologically and socially relevant desires.[lvii]

However, value changes are ambiguous and can be treacherous. This is evident in Daniel Yankelovich's observation that surveys of college freshmen reveal how the majority had shifted their priorities away from the development of a meaningful philosophy of life in the 1960s to financial well being in the 1980s.[lviii] Also, Inglehart found that there was a substantial lag in popular value changes because those who spent their childhoods in times of want clung to their old values even in times of prosperity. He also noted that there was a 'level of analysis paradox', in which the society seemed to display a remarkable stability overall at the aggregate macro level, yet at the individual micro level there was often widespread ferment as individuals altered their values – a

kind of 'musical chairs', as members of groups, in a sense, exchanged their outlooks with one another.

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[i] Johan Goudsblom, *Nihilism and Culture* (Totowa, NJ: Rowman and Littlefield, 1980), 190.
[ii] Ibid., 201.
[iii] Ibid., 193.
[iv] Anton Chekhov, in Goudsblom, 191.
[v] Michael Shapiro, *Reading the Postmodern Polity: Political Theory as Textual Practice* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1992), 4.
[vi] Robin M. Williams, Jr., *American Society: A Sociological Interpretation* (NY: Knopf, 1970).
[vii] Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*.(Indianapolis, IN: Hackett Pub., 2000).
[viii] Fligstein, Neil. 'Field Theory', *Journal of Social Theory* 102 (2001): 53-75.
[ix] Todd Gitlin, *Years of Hope, Days of Rage* (NY: Bantam Books, 1993).
[x] Michèle Lamont, *Money, Morals, and Manners: The Culture of the French and American Upper-middle Class*. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992).
[xi] Ibid.,184.
[xii] Pierre Bourdieu, "Concluding Remarks: For a Sociogenetic Understanding of Intellectual Works". In, Calhourn, Craig, Edward LiPuma and Moishe Postone. *Bourdieu: Critical Perspectives* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993), 173-174.
[xiii] Bourdieu Pierre, *Practical Reason: On the Theory of Action* (Stanford, CA: Stanford UP, 1998), 37.
[xiv] Lamont, 185
[xv] Ibid., 85.
[xvi] Adam Gopnik, 'The Lost Tycoon', *New Yorker*, 23-30 April 2001, 143-144.
[xvii] Ibid., 151.
[xviii] John Kane, *The Politics of Moral Capital* (NY: Cambridge UP, 2001).
[xix] Ibid., 17.
[xx] Ibid., 7.
[xxi] Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Genealogy of Morals* (NY: Doubleday, 1956).
[xxii] Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari. *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1983), 190.
[xxiii] C. Wright Mills, *Sociology and Pragmatism: The Higher Learning in America* (NY: Oxford UP, 1964).
[xxiv] Shapiro, 5.
[xxv] Michel Foucault, "Of Other Spaces", trans. By Jay Miscowiec, *Diacritics* 16 (Spring 1986) 22-24.
[xxvi] M. M. Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana UP, 1984).
[xxvii] Abner Cohen, *Masquerade Politics: Explorations in the Structure of Urban Cultural Movements* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993).
[xxviii] Terry Eagleton, *Literary Theory: An Introduction* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1983), 96.
[xxix] Michael J. Shapiro and David Campbell, *Moral Spaces: Rethinking Ethics and World Politics* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2002), 63.
[xxx] Gertrude Himmelfarb, *The De-Moralization of Society: From Victorian Virtues to Modern Values* (NY: Alfred A. Knopf, 1996).
[xxxi] Ibid., 189.
[xxxii] Ibid., 188.
[xxxiii] Ibid., 55.
[xxxiv] Ibid., 10.
[xxxv] G. E. Moore, *Principia Ethica* (NY: Cambridge UP, 1993).
[xxxvi] Ibid., 28.
[xxxvii] Ibid., xiv.
[xxxviii] S. Darwal, A. Gibbard and P. Railton, 'Toward a *Fin de siècle* Ethics: Some Trends', *Philosophical Review* 101 (1992): 128-129.
[xxxix] Ibid., 129-130.
[xl] Moore, xv.

[xli] Darwall et al., 115.
[xlii] Ibid., 131-132.
[xliii] J.L. Mackie, *Ethics: Inventing Right and Wrong* (NY: Penguin, 1977), 46.
[xliv] Ibid., 47.
[xlv] A.J. Ayer, *Language, Truth and Logic* (NY: Dover, 1936), 105.
[xlvi] Ibid., 110.
[xlvii] John Locke, *An Essay on Human Understanding* (Oxford: Clarendon Press), 1975.
[xlviii] J. McDowell, 'Values and Secondary Qualities', in T. Honderich, ed., *Morality and Objectivity.* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul), 110-129.
[xlix] James L. Spates, 'The Sociology of Values', *Annual Review of Sociology*, 9 (1983): 27-49.
[l] George C. Homans, *Social Behavior: Its Elementary Forms* (NY: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1961).
[li] Talcott Parsons and Edward A. Shils, 'Values, Motives, and Systems of Action', in Talcott Parsons and Edward A. Shils, eds., *Toward a General Theory of Action* (NY: Harper and Row, 1951).
[lii] Clyde Kluckhohn and Fred L. Strodtbeck. *Variations in Value Orientations* (Bloomington, IN: Row, Peterson, 1961).
[liii] Robin M. Williams, Jr, 'Values', in David L. Sills, ed., *International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences* (NY: Macmillan, 1968).
[liv] Melvin L. Kohn, *Class and Conformity: A Study in Values* (Homewood, IL: Dorsey Press, 1969).
[lv] Milton Rokeach, ed., *Understanding Human Values: Individual and Societal* (NY: Free Press, 1979).
[lvi] Ann Swidler, 'Culture in Action: Symbols and Strategies', *American Sociology Review* 51 (1986): 186-273.
[lvii] Ronald Inglehart, 'Post-Materialism in an Environment of Insecurity', *American Political Science Review* 75 (1981): 880-900.
[lviii] Daniel Yankelovich, *New Rules: Searching for Self-Fulfillment in a World Turned Upside Down* (NY: Random House, 1981).

CHAPTER THREE

Theory versus culture: Culture as practice

In the previous chapter, we saw how ideological discourses present and impose a map of the world within the spaces of which particular discourses and values are regulated. Some of these are 'heterotopias' – spaces of otherness that diverge from the norms of the overall society. These include spaces of repressed otherness, like the mental hospital, prison or retirement home, but also carefully regulated spaces of critical reflection and dissent, like the theatre, the carnival or the university. These reflective spaces – especially realms of theoretical discourse – are tolerated by authorities for various reasons, but they pose a threat to the status quo in that they can provide a countervailing ideological 'map' of society. However, these 'maps' of society, which relegate different values and discourses to particular spaces, are 'forgotten', so the social order may seem paradoxically riddled with incompatible discourses. In this way, ideology becomes unconscious and embodied. The dynamics of how ideology, in particular an explicit and fully conscious theory becomes a 'second-nature' sensibility is the central question of this chapter.

Therefore, a preliminary goal of this study is to determine the relationship between theory and culture. The primary model of 'culture' under interrogation here is that conceived by Pierre Bourdieu, who described it as a form of practical reason. The orientation of this inquiry is the divergence on this topic between Pierre Bourdieu and Anthony Giddens, two prominent contemporary social theorists whose work is typically regarded as strikingly similar in that they both seek to overcome the dichotomy of culture and social structure. However, on the matter of the relation between theory and culture,

the two stand far apart. The intersection of their theory serves as a point on which various theoretical perspectives converge.

Pierre Bourdieu: the *habitus* as an unconscious, embodied sense of doing

For Bourdieu, there is a chasm between theory and culture, a divide that reflects the distinction between theory and practice. Again, Bourdieu claims that the *habitus* – that is, what most people mean by the term 'culture' – is a form of practical reason, comprised of simple, common sense, habitual and semi-conscious principles that manifest themselves in a kind of intuitive 'feel for the game' or 'fuzzy logic'. (For example, in his study of the Berber 'Kabyle House' in Algeria, Bourdieu shows how the split between the masculine and feminine is the cultural principle comprising the *habitus* that organizes Berber life along multiple dimensions: the space of work into outdoor men's work and indoor women's labor as well as the division of the interior of the house between the male and female sections, and also the division of time between the masculine seasons of field work and the feminine season of male idleness spent indoors.) The *habitus* not only generates strategies and elaborates cultural categories and evolves over time in order to solve problems, but it shapes the various fields in a social order similarly so that they become homologous with one another. And each of these fields has its own type of 'capital', be it financial capital (money), social capital (prestige), cultural capital (education), political capital (honor), and so forth. As the editors of Bourdieu: Critical Perspectives[i] summarize:

> Bourdieu characterizes the habitus as a system of general generative schemes that are both durable (inscribed in the social construction of the self) and transposable (from one field to another), function on an unconscious plane, and take place within a structured space of possibilities

> (defined by the intersection of material conditions and fields of operation). The habitus is at once intersubjective and the site of the constitution of the person-in-action; it is a system of dispositions that is both objective and subjective. So conceived, the habitus is the dynamic intersection of structure and action, society and the individual. The notion of the habitus enables Bourdieu to analyze the behavior of agents as objectively coordinated and regular without being the product of rules, on the one hand, or conscious rationality, on the other. It is meant to capture the practical mastery that people have of their social situation, while grounding that mastery itself socially.

The point of Bourdieu's sociology is to expose how the *habitus* of those at the bottom of the social order disguises the arbitrariness of the social order that exploits and dominates them.

> For Bourdieu, the study of human lives would not be worth the trouble if it did not help agents to grasp the meaning of their actions. His approach seeks to illuminate the social and cultural reproduction of inequality by analyzing processes of misrecognition: that is, by investigating how the habitus of dominated groups can veil the conditions of their subordination.[ii]

For Bourdieu, the cultural 'logic of practice' that is the *habitus* stands in sharp contrast to the theoretical reason typically displayed by scholars, who often wrong-headedly project their own rule-bound, calculating rationality onto the subjects they study. Indeed, at the heart of Bourdieu's social science methodology is a call for reflexivity on the part of scholars, an insistence that they reflect critically on their perspectives or 'dispositions' – particularly their tendency toward rational explanation – as products of their social position. Although Bourdieu adopted the language of rationalistic social theories (like Anglo-American social thought with its rational choice theory notion of 'strategies', and Marxist talk of 'capital') what Bourdieu means by such terms is quite different. He means by a term like 'strategy' not the fully conscious calculating behavior that dominates the social science tradition, but the execution by

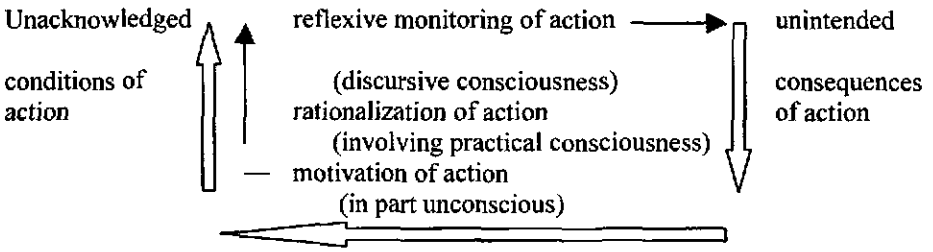
actors of semi-conscious habitual skills like driving a car or riding a bike. And although Bourdieu speaks of art and education as forms of 'cultural capital', such goods not only have an unconscious (disguised) value as a form capital to those who pursue them, but it is not profit that motivates social actors, but a desire to reproduce the seemingly natural fit of the *habitus* or cultural understanding with the social order that is similarly patterned after it. In a sense, Bourdieu would approve of the words of the (doomed) old-fashioned businessman in Charles Dickens' A Christmas Carol,[iii] who lectures Ebenezer Scrooge on the purpose of business as not the attainment of riches, but the perpetuation of a way of life. What human beings seek above all else is the comforting sense that their worldview naturally fits the order of things, and that both are natural and necessary, not contingent and arbitrary.

Recognition of the arbitrariness of the match between *habitus* and social order relates to the rather radical purpose of the social sciences. Social science as a science might have an unfortunate tendency toward promoting a misunderstanding human nature as rationalistic, but it can also provide a powerful theoretical antidote to the status quo. That is, Bourdieu's call for reflexivity is not just a methodological warning that social scientists need to become aware of their biases, but also a part of the mission of the social scientist to pose to society a challenging new understanding of itself that runs against the dominant *habitus*. Bourdieu claims that our cultural categories (for example, those promoted by Hinduism) are patterned along the lines of the structure of the social order (for example, that of the Indian caste system), and thereby unconsciously serve to legitimize that order by naturalizing and normalizing it – a process of misrecognition. Not only must the critical social scientist become more cognizant of the (usually

unconscious) dominant cultural categories – thereby helping to expose the arbitrariness of the social order that is justified through and naturalized by those categories and understandings – but social scientists must heed Durkheim's dictum that they are to promote a vision of society at odds with that promoted by the status quo.

Anthony Giddens: abstract structure as rules recursively formed

For Giddens, social 'structure' is an abstraction comprised of the rules that govern society – including the theoretical interpretations of the social sciences that describe, predict and explain the concrete 'systems' of the social world. However, these rules also recursively ***feed back into*** the concrete practices that define systems, so that not only are structural rules derived from behavior, but they influence it as well. This works the same way that 'language' is an abstract construct derived from diverse speech acts, but which also precedes speech and serves as an official standard to regulate speech acts. Abstract structure and concrete systems therefore comprise a 'duality': that is, they are effectively two sides of the same coin, and the 'reflexivity' of – that is, the interaction in – this relationship is at the center of Giddens theory. In fact, Giddens claims that the social sciences have had more of an impact on society than have the natural sciences, since the understandings of society that they foster reflexively feed into society's rules of behavior, thus constituting the social order by defining society's self-understanding. A schema of Giddens' model of reflexivity is found in combined form in Bryant and Jary's Giddens' Theory of Structuration.[iv]



Giddens explains in the Constitution of Society[v] that this stratification model of the agent is offered "in place of the traditional psychoanalytic triad of ego, super-ego and id". By practical consciousness, Giddens seems to refer to what Bourdieu means by the *habitus*, despite the Freudian association with the super-ego.

> While competent actors can nearly always report discursively about their intentions in, and reasons for, acting as they do, they cannot necessarily do so of their motives. Unconscious motivation is a significant feature of human conduct, although I shall later indicate some reservations about Freud's interpretation of the nature of the unconscious. The notion of practical consciousness is fundamental to structuration theory. It is that characteristic of the human agent or subject to which structuralism has been particularly blind. But so have other types of objectivist thought. Only in phenomenology and ethnomethodology, within sociological traditions, do we find detailed and subtle treatments of the nature of practical consciousness. Indeed, it is these schools of thought, together with ordinary language philosophy, which have been responsible for making clear the shortcomings of orthodox social scientific theories in this respect. I do not intend the distinction between discursive and practical consciousness to be a rigid and impermeable one. On the contrary, the division between the two can be altered by many aspects of the agent's socialization and learning experiences. Between discursive and practical consciousness there is no bar; there are only the differences between what can be said and what is characteristically simply done.[vi]

It needs to be noted that Bourdieu derived his theory of the *habitus* largely from phenomenology and ethnomethodology.

A clarification needs to be made here. Giddens' notion of '***discursive consciousness***' corresponds with Bourdieu's concept of **rationality**, and Giddens' '***practical consciousness***' matches Bourdieu's conception of the ***habitus***. But while Giddens' idea of concrete '***systems***' corresponds with Bourdieu's concept of the various

material '**fields**' in a social order, Giddens' concept of abstract '***structure***' (as composed of rules) corresponds – again – to those **fields** that are abstract (for example, the structure of language). A schema equating the terminology of Bourdieu and Giddens would look something like the following, with Bourdieu's concepts capitalized and parenthesized, and with Giddens' emboldened:

Discursive consciousness (RATIONALITY)	***Structure*** (abstract) (ABSTRACT STRUCTURES, or FIELDS, like language for Levi-Strauss)
Practical consciousness (HABITUS, or INTERNAL STRUCTURES)	**Systems** (concrete) (MATERIAL STRUCTURES, or FIELDS, like Marx's economic substructure)

Yet another schemata explicates the relationship between Giddens' conceptions of structure and systems:[vii]

Structure(s)	Systems(s)	Structuration
Rules and resources, or sets of transformation relations, organized as properties of social systems	Reproduced relations between actors or collectivities, organized as regular social practices	Conditions governing the continuity or transmutation of structures, and therefore the reproduction of social systems

While Bourdieu is asserting that the *habitus* is homologous with the fields, Giddens is claiming that the systems and structure are really identical. If rationality or discursive consciousness can be shown to have its own *habitus*, this complicates the portrait these

two theorists draw, and potentially brings their theories closer together. Also, discourse can impose itself violently on life to produce a new *habitus*. Ultimately, the rule formation Giddens focuses on can be seen to be a product of the unconscious, embodied practices Bourdieu studies.

Rogers Brubaker: the social sciences as *habitus*

There are two additional theoretical perspectives that this study would like to enter into this difference between Bourdieu and Giddens. First, this study, inspired by the insights of Rogers Brubaker, asserts that Bourdieu's idea of culture as practical reason or *habitus* – that is, a simple, evolving, semi-conscious principle that creatively generates both cultural categories and the 'common sense' behind strategies of problem solving – finds an analog in the realm of theory, which is typically (and mistakenly) understood in terms of fully conscious rationality or rules.[viii] After all sociology and the social sciences and even science more generally are each, Brubaker asserts, a kind of *habitus* that must be inculcated within the agents that practice them. (Bourdieu writes in response, "I can only agree with Rogers Brubaker's analysis according to which what I aim to produce and transmit above all is a scientific habitus, a system of dispositions necessary to the constitution of the craft of the sociologist in its universality.")[ix]

But Brubaker, in recognizing that theory, science and sociology have their own *habitus*, makes an important observation in the way that such *habiti* are inculcated. A *habitus* is imposed, in a sense, on a previous *habitus*, so that each cultural understanding is layered onto the consciousness of the social agent. For example, Brubaker notes, our earliest understanding of the world comes from our parents, and is later overlain with that

of our peer group and our schooling. Ultimately, if we continue to pursue our education to the college level, we are exposed to the *habitus* of sociology, and if we go on to graduate school in that academic field, the *habitus* of Bourdieu's theory, among others, is itself overlain upon our previous sociological understanding. The implication is that not every *habitus* is compatible with a prior *habitus*. For example, the *habitus* of the theory of evolution might not cohere on those who were raised in a rigidly Christian environment, nor might the *habitus* of sociology be compatible with the worldview of professors of economics who typically refuse to recognize the cultural nature of a consumer economy. The graft of the new *habitus* onto the prior *habitus* does not always take.

This begs the question of just how 'violent' this process of overlaying a new *habitus* is; this question in turn relates to the 'instrumentality' or the conscious awareness involved in the imposition a *habitus*. Bourdieu did emphasize that the embodied *habitus* tends to be disseminated largely unconsciously. For example, working class children learn to walk and act in a certain way – in short, they come to 'carry' themselves as members of a certain class – long before they learn to talk, and much sooner than their development of a self-conscious identity. Yet Brubaker argued that society is riddled with conflicting discourses, and that when one discourse becomes dominant, it becomes the tacit, un-self-conscious common sense *habitus* pervading the society. That is, unconscious dispositions and inclinations are consciously implanted through the ascendancy of certain discourses, including theoretical discourses.

However, if Brubaker asserted (and Bourdieu confirmed) that a particular theoretical orientation (for example, the conceptual schema of sociology that are

inculcated in college students) can be considered a *habitus* because it implants a certain unconscious disposition in social agents that determines how those agents are able at a later time to comprehend and internalize other theoretical perspectives (say, economics or religion), this in turn begs the question of whether or not behind an explicit theoretical schemata there could be an implicit and unconscious *habitus*, much the way T.S. Kuhn argued that often (not always) there are unconscious 'paradigms' guiding otherwise rational scientific inquiry.[x] But Kuhn's theory of paradigms argues that implicit within most if not all the many scientific theories at a given point in history (that is, within a certain *Zeitgeist*, of sorts) there is a constellation of shared unconscious assumptions that make up a single paradigm. Is there in Bourdieu's theory such a 'meta-*habitus*' that shapes and informs the manifold of scientific theories in a given historical epoch? Perhaps. Bourdieu claims that underlying traditional societies, despite all their variety and differences, is the *habitus* of the male-female dualism applied to every realm (the way the Kabyle calendar, house and division of labor was gendered), so there can be said to be a meta-*habitus* in traditional societies consisting of the application of gender. In the realm of theory – although Bourdieu did not specifically call it a *habitus* – Bourdieu claims that the subject-object dichotomy is what underlies the manifold dualisms of Western thought. In fact, Bourdieu's theory is an attempt to break free of this dichotomy by conceiving elements not in terms of oppositions and antinomies, but as mutually influential relationships, and not in terms of stark binary units, but with multiple elements (like the triad of the *habitus*, field and capital).

Here it needs to be remembered that a particular *habitus*, implanted within social agents by such things as the educational system, is not just a simulacrum of the social

order that has been engraved on the passive souls of students by the authorities. The *habitus* is indeed typically disseminated in such a fashion in modern societies, but the *habitus* also has a generative function as a form of practical reason in that agents use it creatively to solve problems. When this insight is applied to a theoretical equivalent of *habitus* – which this study hypothesizes is nothing less than the subject-object dualism that Bourdieu claims underlies the Western intellectual tradition – it can be seen that this dualism spawns the variety of dualisms that pervade the world of theoretical discourse. Indeed, these multitude of dualisms, themselves each a *habitus* according to Brubaker, in turn become the bases for more elaborate tripartitions and other conceptual schema. That is, the subject-object dichotomy is the generative *habitus* of the Western intellectual tradition, which produces the manifold dualisms found in Western theory; but each of these dualisms themselves becomes the generative *habitus* that forms more complex intellectual schema, like tripartitions and so forth. But the subject-object dichotomy is creatively transformable; the historical section of this study asserts that this subject-object dualism underlying Western thought has been radically revised – not once, but several times – in American philosophy and social theory throughout the twentieth century.

There is also a fourth perspective that this study finds relevant to this interconnection between semi-conscious practices and theoretical discourses. If Bourdieu stresses the disjunction between theory and practice, and Giddens shows how they are two sides of the same coin, and Brubaker claims that theory itself has its own *habitus* or sense of practice, Michel Foucault illustrates how discourse imposes itself quite violently upon social practices – and how this process of imposition is forgotten. In a sense, Giddens' structuration theory is informed by this Foucaultian insight, evident in Giddens'

insistence that the social sciences have done more to change the social order – they above all the other discourses serves to 'constitute' society – than the natural sciences have. This is because the social sciences feed directly into the cultural categories that govern the behavior of social actors, a process that we forget once the new modes of understanding are adopted and established. But Foucault's vision is one of conflict over which discourses are to dominate, and the process of domination is one of (forgotten) violence.

In a way, this resembles Brubaker's thesis that each *habitus* comes to overlay the previous one, forming a kind of strata. However, Brubaker fails to note the agonistic nature of this accretion, that is, the struggle between prior and succeeding discourses. Foucault's various historical explorations – what he calls 'archaeologies' or 'genealogies' – uncover the profound ruptures in Western history that are, he claims, glossed over by more conventional historical studies. Standard histories fail to interrogate as peculiar the modern notion that 'madness' is deviant and must be hidden from sight (whereas in the Middle Ages the 'mad' had an acceptable public presence), or the modern practice that punishment serves to rehabilitate the 'criminal' (whereas prior to the modern world punishment was a public spectacle that had nothing to do with the intentions of the perpetrator). In the modern world, Foucault argues, social control is achieved through the subtle imposition of the idea of the 'normal', and that deviation from this norm requires the supervision of the interior life of the deviant – most efficiently by the deviant himself. But we forget that we live under such a modern regime of discipline when we forget the violence of its imposition, as well as when we forget that the social order originates in the

victory of certain discourses over previous and competing discourses and is not the natural order of things.

Charles Taylor: Joining rules and the *habitus*

These three perspectives – of Bourdieu, Giddens and Brubaker – intersect in a brief but important essay by Charles Taylor.[xi] Because Taylor essay finds a way of reconciling the theory of Bourdieu and Giddens and also connects with other pertinent concerns, this chapter takes a close look at this essay. Briefly, Taylor argues that ***rules*** (the focus of Giddens' notion of culture) imply the existence of semi-conscious, habitual ***interpretations*** (the focus of Bourdieu's notion of culture) that continuously alter those rules.

Following Bourdieu, Taylor argues that the rationalist bias of the social sciences tends to distort the social significance of rules in society, so that scholars tend to imagine rules as comprising some sort of underlying structure. Taylor argues that the culture of modern science and epistemology have molded our contemporary sense of self in a way that defines it as an individual 'mind' as 'inner' space that represents the 'outer' world, leaving out both the body and the other from this process of representation. However, there have been voices speaking out against this error. Most famously, a central theme in Wittgenstein's thought experiments was that even the simplest rules are subject to the profoundest misunderstandings. A "number of philosophical currents in the last two centuries have tried to get out of the cul-de-sac of monological consciousness. Prominent in this century are the works of Heidegger (1927), Merleau-Ponty (1945), and of course, Wittgenstein (1953) himself. What all these have in common is that they see the agent

not primarily as the locus of representations, but as engaged in practices, as a being who acts in and on a world."[xii] For these philosophers, what distinguishes human beings from inanimate objects is not the capacity for representation, but for action within a social context that informs these representations. "But much of our intelligent action in the world, sensitive as it usually is to our situation and goals, is carried on unformulated. It flows from an understanding which is largely inarticulate."

> This understanding is more fundamental in two ways: first, it is always there, whereas sometimes we frame representations and sometimes we do not, and, second, the representations we do make are only comprehensible against the background provided by this inarticulate understanding. It provides the context within which alone they make the sense that they do. Rather than representations being the primary locus of understanding, they are similarly islands in the sea of our unformulated practical grasp on the world.[xiii]

Our unconscious and habitual mastery of the world (for example, in driving a car) is embodied, but so too is our social interaction in the way we express ourselves unconsciously through body language. And since this unconscious social interaction is 'dialogical' rather than 'monological', it is rhythmic and ritualized. "My embodied understanding doesn't exist only in me as an individual agent; it also exists in me as the co-agent of common actions."[xiv]

Likewise for Bourdieu, for whom the perception that rules consist in a kind of underlying structure is an error induced by a theoretical perspective, as he explains in The Logic of Practice. "Intellectualism is inscribed in the fact of introducing into the object the intellectual relation to the object, of substituting the observer's relation to practice for the practical relation to practice."[xv] Also: "To slip from *regularity*, i.e. from what recurs with a certain statistically measurable frequency and from the formula which describes it, to a consciously laid down and consciously respected *ruling* (*reglement*), or to

unconscious *regulating* by a mysterious cerebral or social mechanism, are the two commonest ways of sliding from the model of reality to the reality of the model."[xvi] Taylor re-states this in plain English.

> [I]n one form or another, we are defining a rule through a *representation* of it. Formulating in this case is creating a representation.
>
> So far, so necessary. But then intellectualism enters the picture, and we slide easily into seeing the rule-as-represented as somehow causally operative. We may attribute formulations of the rule as thoughts to the agents. But more likely, since this is very implausible in some cases, we conceive this as what is really causally operative, behind the backs of the unsophisticated agents, as it were.[xvii]

This slide into imagining the rule as a fixed, independent structure is important because it warps our understanding. "[T]his reification crucially distorts, and this in three related ways: it blocks out certain features that are essential to action; it does not allow for the difference between a formula and its enactment; nor does it take account of the reciprocal relation between rule and action, that the second doesn't just flow from the first, but also transforms it."[xviii] First, social scientists can imagine the rules that they perceive to comprise simple, atemporal schema, when in fact these rules (such as gift giving) are observed tentatively. "What on paper is a set of dictated exchanges under certainty is lived on the ground in suspense and uncertainty."[xix] Second, the social agent needs to interpret these rules to fit a variety of situations. "The person of real practical wisdom is marked out less by the ability to formulate rules than by knowing how to act in each particular situation."[xx] Third, social norms evolve, and are fundamentally transformed in practice.

> The relation between rule and practice is like that between *langue* and *parole* for Saussure: the latter is possible only because of the preexistence of the former, but at the same time the acts of *parole* are what keep the *langue* in being. They renew it and at the same time alter it. Their relation is thus reciprocal. *Parole* requires *langue*, but at the same

> time, in the long run what the *langue* is, is determined by the multiplicity of acts of *parole*.
>
> It is this reciprocity which the intellectualist theory leaves out. In fact, what this reciprocity shows is that the "rule" lies essentially *in* the practice. The rule is what is animating the practice at any given time, not some formulation behind it, inscribed in our thoughts or our brains or our genes or whatever. That is why the rule is, at any given time, what the practice has made it. But this shows how conceiving the rule as an underlying formula can be scientifically disastrous. We miss the entire interplay between action under uncertainty and varying degrees of phronetic insight, on one hand, and the norms and rules which animate this action, on the other. The map gives only half the story; to make it decisive is to distort the whole process.[xxi]

The quoted text would be a perfect summary of Giddens' structuration theory, with rules recursively shaping action, and action, in turn, reforming rules. Yet Giddens writes about social science theory as the classic expression the rules that constitute modern, Western society, whereas Taylor can only locate this in unconscious dispositions. "A rule which exists only in the practices it animates, which does not require and may not have any express formulation – how can this be? Only through our embodied understanding. This is what Bourdieu is trying to get at with his 'habitus'."[xxii] Taylor does acknowledge the existence of explicitly formulated rules found in rational institutions, but these "dovetail and complement" the habitus since they are both "two modes of objectification of past history" (in Bourdieu's words), both parallel products of the same experience. Moreover, these formulas require interpretation by our habitus which "is a practical sense which reactivates the sense objectified in institutions."[xxiii] This relationship helps to answer Wittgenstein's question of how rules can be interpreted in the first place.

But Taylor, in his Bourdieu-inspired illustration of how rationalistic theory can diverge from practice, ventures into an area that is relevant to Foucault-inspired

postmodernism. In daily life, we rarely use a map to get around in the familiar spaces of our environment, since we rely on an unconscious, embodied sense of where we are rooted in the particularities of landmarks. The temptation is, Taylor warns, to treat abstractions such as the map or other forms of representation as the essence of the local, and to regard our actual experiences as merely derivative. "This is the ultimate in Platonism."[xxiv]

Yet the Foucault-inspired insight is that discourses, theories and abstractions ultimately impose their own sense of place, and that we forget this. Again, as Rogers Brubaker has asserted, these theoretical discourses (including sociology, and including Bourdieu's theory) contain their own *habitus*, so that our worldview resembles geological strata with a continuous series of imposed intellectual schemata, beginning with our parents' *habitus* and extending up toward the contending worldviews we encounter in our advanced studies (for example, the *habitus* of sociology as opposed to that of economic theory, with its very different portrait of human nature). While Taylor's essay is perhaps the only literature available that explains how Bourdieu and Giddens' theories can be reconciled and interlinked, postmodernists would remind us that the maps or master discourses that portray society also inculcate unconscious and embodied understandings of the material world and thereby work to unconsciously structure that material world itself.

A few minor alterations to Bourdieu and Giddens

There are several modifications to the theory of Bourdieu and Giddens that this study undertakes. The first two will be dealt with in the appendixes that end this chapter,

but can be summarized here; the last one will be dealt with immediately since it pertains directly to the topic of this chapter – the cultural nature of theory. These modifications are slight mutations of the theories of Bourdieu and Giddens that are important, but do not lead this study to diverge radically from the basic theory of those two social thinkers. These adjustments relate to their respective conceptions of reflexivity.

First, no argument is taken up with Bourdieu's insight that scholarship tends to reflects the scholar's position in society. However, against Bourdieu's argument that social scientists tend to project their own scholarly rationality onto those they study, this study argues that rationalistic theories are better described as idealized alter egos of the theorist. That is, the portrait of man as a rational actor so pervasive in the contemporary social sciences is more a projection of the social scientist's 'ego ideal' than it is of their own thought processes. Bourdieu claimed that social scientists often project their own rationality onto the subjects of their study, but it is argued here that even the social scientist does not possess that kind of rationality. The *habitus* of rationalistic social science not only does not match the actual workings of the social order, but it does not even describe the actual mentality of the social scientist.

Second, there is likewise no argument taken up with Giddens' description of the social structure as an abstraction formed in discourse. However, it is asserted here that the norms that shape social life are largely formed unconsciously, and the fully-conscious rationality associated with discourse and theory works primarily to undermine, not promote social norms. Theory or discourse is jarring, and interrupts our unconscious habitual practices by rendering us self-conscious. Whereas Giddens would emphasize the manner in which abstract or 'discursive consciousness' feeds into, informs and

constitutes our practices, it needs to be remembered that it also dissolves our practices, often without providing an alternative practice. Whether it is the 'talking cure' touted in psychoanalysis, or the fear that artists often express of dissolving their creative processes by talking about their work, the destructive effects of discourse on practices has long been observed.

Finally, if theory possesses its own *habitus*, we need to determine what it could be. If Bourdieu found the male-female dichotomy to lie at the heart of the North African Berber society, he has also claimed that the subject-object dichotomy is the origin for the manifold dualisms that run through Western intellectual history. This subject-object dualism is, in a sense, the habitus of the Western intellectual heritage. This study, however, focuses on the existence of this subject-object dichotomy within social and cultural thought in the Western tradition. This is a reflexive move inspired by Bourdieu, whose social thought stresses self-conscious scholarship.

It is quite logical, after all, to study (reflexively) the meaning of our terms 'social' and 'cultural' before determining just how the subject-object dichotomy pervading the world of theoretical discourse can be described as a 'cultural' phenomena characteristic of Western thought – that is, whether the subject-object dualism of theory can be likened to the operation of the 'cultural' *habitus* that Bourdieu finds in the world of everyday practice. After all, since this study has dedicated itself to exploring a kind of 'cultural' principle of sorts (the subject-object dichotomy) that supposedly underlies the Western theoretical tradition, it should first seek to interrogate the conception of the 'cultural' – its history, and its many incarnations – that it is here attributing to theory.

However, the idea of culture (and of structure) is itself a development within and a product of theoretical discourse – so that the idea of 'culture' is itself a theoretical manifestation of this subject-object dualism. In other words, in order to understand theory as cultural (as derived from a kind of theoretical *habitus*), we must examine the culture idea, which is theoretical (in its origins and exposition). The circularity of this relationship between theory and culture seems paradoxical, but this is alleviated somewhat by dividing the reflexive study of the culture idea into at least three distinct forms of analysis, all of which are critical in different ways.

A genealogy of dualisms

A ***historical*** treatment of the emergence and development of the culture idea illustrates how the idea of culture has been appropriated and manipulated in terms of the evolution of the subject-object dichotomy. That is, although the idea of culture is quintessentially modern, it has been integrated into the long tradition of dualisms that characterizes the Western tradition since its inception. Indeed, Bourdieu argued that the manifold antinomies typically found in modern social thought (culture-structure, agency-structure, micro-macro, individualism-holism, etc.) are all elaborations and expressions of the subject-object dualism that underwrites the Western intellectual tradition.

This type of historical analysis is 'critical' in the sense that 'genealogy', exemplified in the works of Nietzsche and Foucault, critically de-familiarized established institutions and concepts by tracing their origins and revealing their recency. The genealogies of Nietzsche and Foucault emphasize the radical breaks or ruptures in tradition that traditional historical treatments tend to gloss over – ruptures that must be

explored by unearthing just how different modern Western society has become from its ancient origins. (In Foucault's words, we are much less Greek than we think we are.) Yet, in a sense, this chapter seeks to show how the culture idea, novel as it may be, was folded into the traditional Western dichotomy of subject and object, in that culture came to represent the subjective side of that opposition. However, the subject-object divide was itself transformed over time: first, into a harmonious dialectic in the first part of the twentieth century in American social theory and pragmatist philosophy; later, in the middle of the century, into a technocratic formula in which the objective determined the subjective in American academic theory; and then, in the last part of the century, subject and object were fused together in academic theory in an attempt to overturn the technocracy. However, the culture idea is central in all these moments of Western intellectual history.

The idea of culture as oppositional, transcendent and absolute

The culture idea has always been understood as something based on value, and was always opposed to some perceived imposition. For instance, in France during the Enlightenment, the idea of 'civilization' as the progress of social institutions toward rational, universal forms emerged and gained popular currency against the weight of tradition and superstition. In this case, the culture idea is actually synonymous with the concept of social structure. In reaction to this rationalism (and against French imperialism), during the Romantic era in the German-speaking lands 'Kultur' was identified with the spirit of a people manifest in the arts and humanities, as opposed to the artifice of manners, conventions and institutions. In England during industrialization, the

idea of culture that had been borrowed from German Romanticism was identified with the humanities, but as a token of elitist personal refinement, and not as an expression of the spirit of a people. Indeed, this sense of refinement was cast in opposition to industrialism and mass culture, and it scorned alike the crassness of the bourgeoisie and the barbarism of the proletariat.

In opposition to this British elitism, Ralph Waldo Emerson in the nineteenth-century United States conceived a native culture idea. His thought was not just a rejection of tradition in general, but of English tradition and (literary) culture in particular, and especially of the English culture idea. For Emerson, 'self-culture' (understood in the English tradition as aristocratic personal self-refinement) meant individual creative interpretation, which could, in a very democratic fashion, be engaged in by all.

Emerson's intellectual legacy seems to have at least two distinct trajectories significant for this study. Emerson's culture idea was not just radical in its pluralism, but in its reorientation of value – which had always been conceived as both absolute and transcendent by the various European traditions – towards worldly concerns. Cornell West has documented how this re-orientation by Emerson of value away from otherworldly terms toward human interests was the origin of the American philosophical tradition of pragmatism from Peirce to Rorty, marked by a shift away from the contemplation of transcendent truths to the practice of social critique. This philosophical stream directly represents the Emersonian rejection of value as ***transcendent***. Less obviously, there is also an American social science tradition that represents the Emersonian rejection of value as ***absolute and singular***. It was Nietzsche, largely

inspired by the writings of Emerson, who was the first to explicitly describe values as plural, a profound advancement toward cultural relativism. Max Weber later adopted this innovation in his social theory, which was in turn taken up and adopted throughout American social thought, and which has become ubiquitous with the process of the 'Americanization' of the social sciences that begun in the early part of the twentieth century described by Peter Manicas in The History and Philosophy of the Social Sciences.[xxv]

All of these culture ideas were born in opposition to some other ideology or force. The French Enlightenment notion of culture was opposed to tradition and superstition, the German Romantic idea was opposed to rationalism and French cultural imperialism, the English elitist notion was opposed to industrialism and mass culture, and the Emersonian American conception was launch in opposition to English and European elitism. The European culture ideas were transcendent and absolute or singular, however, and here is how we find how these are manifestations of the subject-object dichotomy. Much as Charles Taylor had explained intellectualism leads researchers to imagine that rules signify some deep, rigid underlying structure independent of the world of activity (when in fact rules change with practice), so Jacque Derrida maintains that the Western tradition has always maintained that there is some stable, underlying structure or 'center' around which the chaos of becoming is epiphenomenal. He writes in the essay "Structure, Sign and Play in the Discourses of the Human Sciences" in Writing and Difference:

> It would be easy enough to show that the concept of structure and even the word "structure" itself are as old as the *epistēmē* – that is to say, as old as Western science and Western philosophy – and that their roots thrust deep into the soil of ordinary language, into whose deepest recesses

> the *epistēmē* plunges in order to gather them up and to make them part of itself in a metaphorical displacement. Nevertheless, up to the event which I wish to mark out and define, structure – or rather the structurality of structure – although it has always been at work, has always been neutralized or reduced, and this by a process of giving it a center or of referring it to a point of presence, a fixed origin. The function of this center was not only to orient, balance, and organize the structure – one cannot in fact conceive of an unorganized structure – but above all to make sure that the organizing principle of the structure would limit what we might call the *play* of the structure. By orienting and organizing the coherence of the system, the center of a structure permits the play of its elements inside the total form. And even today the notion of a structure lacking any center represents the unthinkable itself.[xxvi]

The European conceptions of culture as transcendent and absolute fall into this Western tradition of imagining a deep structure distinct from the phenomenal world of free play.

Derrida's assertion that the conceptions of structure and center run through Western philosophy relate to the subject-object in a complicated way. If in ordinary speech subjectivity usually connotes bias and error and objectivity is associated with stable structure, Derrida observes that the Western tradition maintains a bias in favor of immediate face-to-face speech (most notably in the Platonic figure of Socrates) as opposed to writing, which is prone to misinterpretation and corruption. This Western philosophical tendency to valorize the immediate 'presence' of structure through speech is an example of what Derrida refers to as 'phonocentrism', and the valuation of structure manifest in communication itself an example of 'logocentrism'. For Derrida, the structure is associated with the subject, and the objective world is associated with the flux and play of the phenomenal realm. But structure – in opposition to play – is identified in a number of succeeding entities throughout the Western tradition, which tend to be strongly associated with human subjectivity.

> Successively, and in a regulated fashion, the center receives different forms or names. The history of metaphysics, like the history of the West,

> is the history of these metaphors and metonymies. Its matrix – if you will pardon me for demonstrating so little and for being so elliptical in order to come more quickly to my principal theme – is the determination of Being as *presence* in all senses of this word. It could be shown that all the names related to fundamentals, to principles, or to the center have always designated an invariable presence – *eidos, archē, telos, energeia, ousia* (essence, existence, substance, subject) *alētheia*, transcendentality, consciousness, God, man, and so forth.[xxvii]

The European conceptions of culture all descend from this tradition, but we find in Emerson a radical break from it – at least in some respects. As we will see with Emerson, his texts used Transcendentalist rhetoric – and were indeed initially Transcendentalist in orientation – but his though took him in radical new directions toward relativism and pluralism, and that emphasized creative interpretation. Because his radical new message was spoken in the language of the tradition, not only do his texts thereby seem chimerical on close reading, but he is easily misread. This is a common fate for those who would challenge the tradition. But this study argues that Emerson was one of the first to challenge the tradition, the effects of which are taking hold – within the tradition, in a way. There is a rupture with the tradition that cannot entirely shake the tradition.

> Where and how does this decentering, this thinking the structurality of structure, occur? It would be somewhat naïve to refer to an event, a doctrine, or an author in order to designate this occurrence. It is no doubt part of the totality of an era, our own, but still it has always already begun to proclaim itself and begun to *work*. Nevertheless, if we wished to choose several "names", as indications only, and to recall those authors in whose discourse this occurrence has kept most closely to its most radical formulation, we doubtless would have to cite the Nietzschean critique of metaphysics, the critique of the concepts of Being and truth, for which were substituted the concepts of play, interpretation, and sign (sign without present truth); the Freudian critique of self-presence, that is, the critique of consciousness, of the subject, of self-identity and of self-proximity or self-possession; and, more radically, the Heideggerean destruction of metaphysics, of onto-theology, of the determination of Being as presence. But all these destructive discourses and all their

> analogues are trapped in a kind of circle. This circle is unique. It describes the form of the relation between the history of metaphysics and the destruction of the history of metaphysics. There is no sense in doing without the concepts of metaphysics in order to shake metaphysics. We have no language – no syntax and no lexicon – which is foreign to this history; we can pronounce not a single destructive proposition which has not already had to slip into the form, the logic, and the implicit postulations of precisely what it seeks to contest.[xxviii]
>
> Nietzsche, Freud, and Heidegger, for example, worked within the inherited concepts of metaphysics. Since these concepts are not elements of atoms, and since they are taken from a syntax and a system, every particular borrowing brings along with it the whole of metaphysics. This is what allows these destroyers to destroy each other reciprocally – for example, Heidegger regarding Nietzsche, with as much lucidity and rigor as bad faith and misconstruction, as the last metaphysician, the last "Platonist". One could do the same for Heidegger himself, for Freud, or for a number of others. And today no exercise is more widespread.[xxix]

For a better understanding of how the Western tradition has persisted in producing conceptions of structure and in producing dualisms that reflect the subject-object dichotomy, it is in order to conduct a brief survey of that tradition in terms of the conceptions of culture and social structure. These two conceptions are, it seems, quite recent, modern ideas, but their roots extend deep into Western intellectual history. Both the ideas of social structure and culture developed separately as classic manifestations of the Western conception of foundations (or 'structure', in Derrida's terminology) as opposed to the world of flux or play, an opposition mounted in the subject-object dichotomy. However, both were later joined into the dualism of 'culture versus social structure' that is now the most prevalent manifestation of the subject-object dichotomy. In other words, the idea of culture and the idea of social structure were each originally conceived as foundational, in opposition to the free play found in society, but now they are contrasted to each other within the subject-object dichotomy of 'culture versus social structure' – a dichotomy that intimates the opposition of structure with free play.

The tendency toward hierarchies of dualisms

The antinomies that pervade Western thought are not produced mechanically, as if they had a pre-assigned place within a theoretical system. Rather, these antinomies, patterned after the subject-object dichotomy, seem to compete with one another, either excluding or subsuming one another within a particular social theory. For example, Jeffrey Alexander has made a magisterial attempt to map out systematically the ways in which various antinomies logically connect with one another within a fixed framework.

Alexander's ultimate admiration seems to be reserved for the synthetic efforts of Talcott Parsons. Parsons fused the thought of the classical thinkers (except for Marx) into the grand theory of structural functionalism, which practically defined American sociology in the mid-twentieth century. Sometimes known as the "big animal theory" of sociology, it envisioned society as a predictably structured organism whose components function to maintain the whole primarily through the assignment of social roles. Alexander maintains that Parson's was a heroic effort to mount a general logic that guided all social thought and that incorporated more particular theoretic logics. These lesser theoretic logics should, he asserts, maintain their place within an overall theory, but instead have come to dominate competing theories that aspire to sociological comprehensiveness, and that exclude all other theoretic logics. So the affliction of contemporary sociology is the reduction of general logic to such elements as 1) political commitment to particular ideologies, 2) methodological choice (positivist versus phenomenologist), 3) empirical proposition (conflict versus consensus), and 4) model selection in terms of functionalism (systems models). Alexander himself proposes a

final, synthetic classificatory scheme for social theory built on Parson's theory and based on the two axes of order and rationality. But the very ambitiousness of this project belies the arbitrariness of any connection drawn between any particular set of antinomies. As Nader Saiedi writes in The Birth of Social Theory:

> Building on Talcott Parsons' (1902-1979) The Structure of Social Action, Alexander proposes a classification of different theories on the basis of the two axes of order and rationality. The axis of rationality is concerned with the logic of the actor's orientation in action. Consequently, a theory is either *rationalistic* or *non-rationalistic*. The question of order, however, deals with the problem of the aggregation of individuals' actions. In a rather confounded manner, Alexander's problem of order fluctuates between the two pairs of conflict/consensus and realism/nominalism questions.
>
> However, it may be argued that all these different types of classification are equally valid and arbitrary. Each logic of classification selects one particular theoretical dimension and constructs a logic of classification based on it. The problem is that the complex of social thought cannot be reduced to any of these classification schemes. It is also important to realize that it is possible to think of still other alternative theoretical questions to work as the basis of sociological classification. For instance, the debate between *historical materialism* and *historical idealism* is probably the most frequently contested arena in sociological thought. However, such a category is not included in Alexander's list of classifications. While it is the case that a conflict theorist may be a materialist, it is definitely not the case that the two theoretical categories are interchangeable.[xxx]

In contemporary social thought, the culture-structure antinomy seems to have emerged as the most prominent antinomy. Not only is the ascendancy of this antinomy both relatively recent and not logically necessary, but a historical survey of social thought reveals that the ideas of culture and structure emerged and developed in different contexts from one another, and only later were conjoined into an antinomy. The idea of 'social structure' goes back in recognizable form only so far as the theorists of natural law, like Hobbes, Locke and Spinoza, and the culture idea can be traced back to Giambatista Vico in the mid-eighteenth century as a precocious Romantic reaction against the

Enlightenment. This is to say that even as the culture idea took on a greater significance within particular national traditions – and arose and developed in those varying traditions in opposition to particular ideas and forces – it was not then conceived as one of the poles in the now classic opposition of culture to social structure.

Historical prefigurations of theories of culture and of social structure

The modern term 'culture' is, as Terry Eagleton writes in The Idea of Culture, perhaps "one of the two or three most complex words in the English language, and the term which is sometimes considered to be its opposite – nature – is commonly awarded the accolade of being the most complex of all."[xxxi] However, even the 'natural world' is today often regarded as a concept culturally derived and projected outward. However, the purpose of Eagleton's text is to deconstruct the fissure between the two concepts, to show how each grows out of the other.

> Yet although it is fashionable these days to see nature as a derivative of culture, culture, etymologically speaking, is a concept derived from nature. One of its original meaning is 'husbandry', or the tending of natural growth. The same is true of our words for law and justice, as well as of terms like 'capital' and 'stock', 'pecuniary' and 'sterling'.
>
> 'Culture' at first denoted a thoroughly material process, which was then metaphorically transposed to affairs of the spirit. The word thus charts within its semantic unfolding humanity's own historic shift from rural to urban existence....[xxxii]

Eagleton's thesis is that "it is less a matter of deconstructing the opposition between culture and nature than of recognizing that the term 'culture' is already a deconstruction" because it "means the active tending of natural growth" and thereby "suggests a dialectic between the artificial and the natural, what we do to the world and what the world does to us. It is an epistemologically 'realist' notion, since it implies that there is a nature or raw

material beyond ourselves; but it also has a 'constructivist' dimension, since this raw material must be worked up into humanly significant shape."[xxxiii]

There is a kind of sanguine assumption on Eagleton's part that the concept of culture is already complementary to the idea of nature. But it needs to be remembered that Eagleton's text is largely a polemic against mainstream thought on culture, and his framing of culture and nature as mutually derivative is more normative than descriptive of the history of the term. As a contentious champion of leftist British cultural studies, his affirmation of the dialectic between culture and nature has a certain Marxist echo, but to understand most fully his perspective, his 'Englishness' should be emphasized as much as his radicalism. He is arguing largely within an English tradition of what culture is, a tradition spanning from Coleridge to Matthew Arnold to T.S. Eliot to Raymond Williams, that wrestles with the question of role of a cultural elite as a bulwark against the vulgarization of society by industrialism. Moreover, his comments on the idea of culture are largely limited to the developments of the modern West. There were prior traditions that have shaped this modern perspective.

It is in ancient Greek society that something like the contemporary conceptions of culture and social structure first appeared. Greek social thought was unusual in the ancient world for its systematization and articulation. On the one hand, in terms of the idea of culture, an intellectual revolution took place with the distinction made by the pre-Socratic Sophists between custom or law (*nomos*) and nature (*physis*). Karl Popper wrote in The Open Society and Its Enemies, "the beginning of social science goes back at least to the generation of Protagoras, the first of the great thinkers who called themselves 'Sophists'. It is marked by the realization of the need to distinguish between two

different elements in man's environment – his natural environment and his social environment."[xxxiv] This involved, for Popper, a shift from a 'naïve monism' in which society "lives in a charmed circle of unchanging taboos, of laws and customs which are felt to be as inevitable as the rising of the sun, or the cycle of the seasons, or similar obvious regularities" to a 'critical dualism' involving a "conscientious differentiation between the man-enforced normative laws, based on decisions or conventions, and the natural regularities which are beyond his power." In a fragment of a treatise, On Truth, by the Sophist Antiphon, it is written:

> Justice in the ordinary view consists in not transgressing or, rather, in not being known to transgress any of the legal rules of the State in which one lives as a citizen. ...[T]he rules of Nature are inevitable and innate; ...the rules of the laws are created by covenant and not produced by nature, while the rules of nature are exactly the reverse.[xxxv]

On the other hand, in terms of the idea of the social order, the Greeks were the discoverers of the tragic tension between the autonomy of the individual and his or her place and participation in society. As Z. Barbu wrote, "The Greeks were the first to build up a type of civilization which enabled man to become aware of himself as an individual. In Greece, the history of the ancient world passed from a pre-individualistic to an individualistic stage."[xxxvi] Furthermore, as Ernest Barker observed,[xxxvii] the antithesis between the individual and the state is the foundation of all political thought. This newly found (self-)consciousness of custom and individualism took place in a society in crisis, in which the breakdown of traditions, increased social mobility and cross-cultural contact, and instability of belief and political system led to increased personal insecurity and social conflict. In the contemporary language of social theory, if the former distinction was one between culture and nature, the latter was between agency

(individualism) and social structure. In a sense, culture and agency emerged as concepts in ancient Greece because the social order that had buttressed earlier habits and roles had disintegrated, melting into a vortex of chaotic change.

There were conservative responses in ancient Greece to the relativism of the Sophists, but the rationalism of such reactions comprises an acknowledgement that tradition was no longer possible as a basis for social order. Furthermore, rationalist philosophies like those of Plato and Aristotle comprised magisterial attempts to systematize sociological thought. As Popper has written, "in an attempt to understand and to interpret the changing social world as he experienced it, Plato was led to develop a systematic historicist sociology in great detail."[xxxviii] This meshed well with Plato's 'conservative' agenda, which was, first, to refute the individualism of the Sophists that had thrived in the wake of the collapse of tradition and, second, to advocate a communal caste system grounded in reason and modeled after a transcendent reality.

Aristotle's political philosophy was likewise organic and anti-individualistic, but he rejected Plato's homogenous communal ideal of self-subordination to the state in favor of a pluralistic model that found a place for the family and the individual within the architecture of the state. Social structure for Aristotle was comprised of these divisions within society based on families and clans, social and economic classes and status groups. Citizens with diverse roles were to interact cooperatively out of self-interest, and from this the state inexorably developed according to natural law (like a tree from a seed). In fact, Aristotle was more of a scientist than a philosopher, and when he described man as a political animal, he meant that there is a teleology or goal implicit in human nature that seeks to build and maintain states since man is not self-sufficient.

Although the teachings of Plato and Aristotle were to serve as the rationalist basis of the Western tradition of social and political thought, the final disintegration of the city-state (a process to which they were witnesses, and which they had sought to remedy) was followed by the ascendancy of vast empires such as Alexander's and that of the Romans in which the connection between political and ethical life was severed. This is evident in the philosophy of Stoicism, which today is associated with a kind of disciplined fatalism born of the loss of political community in which citizens could participate in shaping their own lives. As the dominant philosophy within the Roman Empire, Stoicism promoted the notion that ethical life was a matter of universal morality or natural law applicable to all men, and was not based on the laws and values of particular states. This influenced Roman law, which drew from Greek notions of the role of the state and imbued them with universal character, as George Sabine[xxxix] notes. But Stoicism in its purer form identified itself with society (especially ***human*** society) and not with the state, and certainly not with particular communities (in the modern sense of "community versus society"). This universalism was to have a great influence on the development of Christianity, which in this way resembled a Roman form of Judaism. What we find in this Roman ideology is elision of the notion of custom or culture and an expansion of notion of society, so that it included slaves and foreigners. Unfortunately, the inference of natural law involved no real social critique.

The sociological effects of this Stoic attitude, and the social anonymity that nurtured it, take on striking form in early Christianity. Christians did not define themselves by their circumstance – like their wealth, power, status or ethnicity – but only by their religious commitment. In fact, many Christians renounced all material goods,

and typically identified themselves as citizens of a world beyond, temporarily stuck in life on earth.

This metaphor of religion as a form of citizenship is central to Saint Augustine's City of God,[xl] in which he identified humans as divided into two communities, those in the sacred "city" of religious aspiration versus those in the secular "city" of worldly pleasures. These are moral and not physical communities, defined by the orientation of their values and not by outward markers. What is striking, however, is how Augustine's metaphor, despite its otherworldly intent, is so akin to Greek political thought centered on the (now extinct) city-state. Moreover, the city of the earth is Hobbesian and modern in the sense that Saint Augustine understood it as atomistic and based on conflict, whereas the city of God is an organic community. As Werner Stark notes, "St. Augustine's theory of the *civitas terrene* elaborates a mechanistic and quasi-contractual sociology, as his concept of the *civitas divina* does an organological and quasi-biological one."[xli] Despite what is potentially a symptom of Christian nostalgia for a city-state community that has long ago evaporated, Saint Augustine vehemently attacked a cyclical notion of time and championed a linear and teleological conception of history. In a sense, in Saint Augustine's writings one finds a definition of community based on values, and a devaluation of the elements of social structure. Values are, like the natural law of the Stoics or the forms of Plato and the teleology of Aristotle, ethereal and absolutist.

The portrait of social structure presented by Thomas Aquinas in the later Middle Ages was also organic and likewise reflected the nature of the society. Feudal society was much more communalistic and pluralistic than Roman society, and despite its hierarchal nature, Europeans identified themselves according to their loyalties to their

estates, corporations or guilds – not to mention the state, locality and family. One's estate provided one a fixed place in the world, with its unique rights and duties. (There were three basic estates: those who pray, those who fight, and those who work.) Aquinas tended to mix the real and the ideal, society and theology; for example, he posited a hierarchy of three types of law: the divine, the natural and the positive (actual human) law, each a manifestation of the law above it. While this kind of theology had what would today be considered a keen sense of social order, law had tended to displace custom (that is, culture) as the guiding force within society; so while Aquinas displays intimations of the idea of social structure, he elides the idea of culture.

As the organic, communal social structure of the Middle Ages gave way to the competitive and anarchic centrifugal forces of the Renaissance, the moral ethos of Christianity gave way as well to a certain ruthlessness, infamously manifested in the writings of Niccolo Machiavelli. His Italy was a paradigm for the rise of nationalism, secularism, urbanism and capitalism in Europe because of its location at the crossroads of the principle routes of trade, its urban infrastructure and the lack of strong central authority. Machiavelli's thought maintained the ancient conception of virtue as moderation, but it conceived virtue in amoral terms of effectiveness in reaching goals, not in ethical terms of proper conduct. (For example, the ruler was to be shrewd like a fox and bold like a lion; this is balanced but amoral.) In place of a world structured by the will of God, he envisioned society as governed by a mixture of Fortune and human will. Yet there was for him a permanent human nature, and he asserted that the situations described by the ancients tended to recur. Machiavelli was, therefore, hardly a culture theorist, and his notion of the social consisted in comparisons of political institutions

(monarchy versus a republic). In modern sociological terms, in the matter of subjectivity he was interested in agency, not in culture.

Jean Bodin was another influential Renaissance political theorist whose tracts have contributed to the development of the notion of national sovereignty, and which reflect the more stable and centralized conditions of Renaissance France. However, despite his geographical determinism and his pluralistic vision of society, he contributed little to any sort of social or cultural thought. Surprisingly, the honors for the development of such thought goes to the Utopian writings of the era, like Thomas More's Utopia (1516),[xlii] Thomas Campanella's City of the Sun (1602),[xliii] and Francis Bacon's New Atlantis (1612).[xliv] Although these works may at first seem like playful fantasies that manifest a nostalgia for closed and stable social orders, they in fact manifest extreme social criticism. For example, rejecting the call by Machiavelli and Bodin for the reconstruction of authority, More eschewed mere political reform and advocated the wholesale transformation of the socioeconomic order, with the abolition of private property and the self-imposition by individuals of value consensus. While More believed in the existence of a human nature, he held that human behavior was shaped by actual social conditions that had to be addressed, and the implementation of the law was not enough to build a just society. Humans can only be themselves in Utopia, where the social conditions are ideal. While the likes of Machiavelli and Bodin believed that the *political* order was a product of human reason and will, the Utopians maintained that the *social* order should also be a creation of man. However, none of these thinkers nurtured an identifiable conception of what we would today call culture.

Resembling the social thought of the Utopians in their vision of communities of free and equal members was the religious thought of the Protestant Reformation. Likewise, the religious impulse of the Reformation mirrors the political impulse of the Renaissance, for where the Reformation sought to remove religious life from political structures (that is, from the hierarchy of the Catholic Church), a Renaissance political theorist like Machiavelli sought to liberate political life from religious (and moral) constraints. Yet Protestant theologians like Luther, in order to maintain the sanctity of religion, often championed the tyrannical rule of princes as a buttress against the political influence of a corrupt Church. In the long run, however, the egalitarian ethos manifested in Protestant religious sects and in the socialist Utopias of the Renaissance was to find its way into the political sphere in the form of democratic ideologies, as Hegel noted; likewise, the Protestant ethos of actively purifying the world would also have a profound impact on economic life, as Max Weber asserted. But Protestant thought harbored no concept of either culture or social structure.

Political thinkers of the Renaissance like Machiavelli and Bodin had developed theories of authority that largely ignored social forces, and Utopian social thinkers like More and Bacon had offered socioeconomic critiques that in turn disregarded political institutions. However, the theorists of natural law in the seventeenth century (like Johannes Althusius, Thomas Hobbes, Hugo de Groot, Samuel Pufendorf, Benedict Spinoza, and John Locke) conceived a social realm that developed over time according to its own logic and that laid the foundation for political institutions and positive (actual) law. Although this abstract conception of 'natural law' descended from the religious tradition that had conceived it as divine and transcendent in origin, these thinkers were

really creating the first social theory, for as Otto Gierke states, "social science discovered itself in the concept of natural law."[xlv]

Nevertheless, even though modern natural law theories posited a necessary and universal evolution of the social order in a kind of social theory, it still understood natural law to be a normative principle much like a religious canon, against which actual or positive law was to be evaluated. The implication of this was a radical critique of all (conservative) legal traditions. Moreover, the historical narratives offered by modern natural law theories to explain social development were not empirical, but rather logical expositions modeled after mathematical axioms, and this represented another rejection of the relevance of tradition and religion. The 'state of nature' was understood counterfactually by imagining it as a society without a state; the 'natural rights' that were derived from this thought-experiment were in turn used to evaluate actual states.

The 'social contract' therefore produced at some (hypothetical) point in history a civil society through the (imagined) voluntary transference by individuals of their powers of self-protection to a specialized agency working through a legal system. But it needs to be remembered that this social contract is social, and is not so much a contract between ruler and subject as it is among individuals concerning the organization of society. Society was thus understood as a product of the interaction of individuals, so that the hypothetical and idealized 'state of nature' was of individuals – whether in harmony or conflict. Natural law theorists (like Hobbes) who emphasized conflict, and who claimed that the state's monopoly on coercion was a condition for any type of social formation, were obviously beholden to individualistic assumptions. However, although natural law theorists (like Locke) who emphasized the cooperative nature of social life assumed that

families and communities preceded the state, the assumption was still that these groups were bi-products of individuals interacting out of self-interest. This individualism shifted modern natural law further from the religious understanding of it as a moral code to a principle of self-interest more concerned with rights than with duties. Again, natural law was understood to be a socioeconomic principle that generated political institutions.

If natural law theory is the first manifestation of modern social science, the first manifestation of modern cultural studies is found in Giambattista Vico's Principles of a New Science (1725).[xlvi] Vico was a conservative Catholic challenging the growing supremacy of reason, but his work prefigures many of the boldest and most controversial ideas of both the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and he has been described as the founder of the philosophy of history, of historicism, of the philosophy of language and culture, and even the conception of a qualitative difference between the human and the natural sciences. In many ways his work was a reaction against the natural law theorists, and in place of the abstract hypotheses of natural law and its assumption of human egoism he advocated concrete historiography of actual custom and the social nature of man. Not only was humanism a more enlightening subject of study for Vico as a source of self-knowledge than the study of nature, but it was easier to know, since man created himself throughout history, whereas the mechanisms of nature, in contrast, remain obscure despite our conjectures of cause and effect. Vico presents us not only with a distinctly recognizable conception of culture, and the first of its kind in the modern age, but he does so far ahead of his time.

It is in the infancy of the modern age, in the form of natural law theory and in Vico's work, that we encounter the first modern conceptions of social structure and

culture, respectively. In fact, in this form the two concepts and the traditions that they are a part of have a striking familiarity, since we are still engaged in their use, whereas the pre-modern conceptions seem more exotic. One of the points of the brief history of pre-modern notions of culture and social structure was to show that the concepts of culture and of social structure as we know them exhibit a certain 'recency', and are products of the modern world.

This is a reflexive move, and reflexivity is at the heart of this study. That is, to inquire into the Americanization of the idea of culture in the twentieth century, this study will use more contemporary concepts of culture to evaluate more traditional ideas of culture. The later analysis in this study of American social theory and philosophy in the twentieth century thus could be described as a sociology of intellectual history. And although many of the ideas of culture under study generally understand culture as antithetical from the outset with conceptions of the social order, the contemporary sociological models and theories (primarily those of Anthony Giddens and Pierre Bourdieu) that are used here to analyze the more traditional ideas of culture describe social structure and culture – and 'culture' here also includes the ideas of culture – as expressions of one another. The brief survey above of the pre-modern notions of social structure and culture, which serves so well to illustrate the recency of those concepts as we know them, also lays the groundwork for showing later in the study just how particular social theories reflect the societies in which they emerge and flourish. This is yet another reflexive move, a reflection onto our own practices and their contexts, and it is, again, indebted to and inspired by contemporary social theory.

The subject-object dualism in twentieth-century American academic theory

The thesis of this study is that the nature of the subject-object dualism fundamentally alters several times in academic theory in the United States over the course of the twentieth century, and this alters the nature of the dualisms found in this theory. First, as it was stated earlier, there was a fundamental change in Western thought in the United States beginning with the thought of Emerson. In American social theory and philosophy (that is, in classical pragmatism), the subject-object relation was no longer conceived as an oppositional dualism, but rather became a dialectic in which subject and object mutually influenced one another. (In contrast, even in Marxist thought there is the economic substructure and epiphenomenal cultural superstructure that do not explicitly mutually shape one another's development – it is largely a one-way materialist relationship.) However, in this early twentieth-century American thought, values or culture were typically elevated over technical or scientific or material matters.

However, this relationship, although still dialectical, was inverted in the middle of the twentieth century in American academic theory. In this social thought and in 'positivist pragmatism', science or technique subordinated values and culture. Talcott Parsons' functionalism typified this, since roles and values were largely assigned by the social order to maintain its smooth operation. (This differs from Marxism in that functionalists conceive society as largely harmonious.) In this subject-object dialectic, the subject is now subordinated to the object; that is, science and technology and economics tend to be conceived as properly managing culture and values.

At the end of the century in American academic thought, 'postmodern pragmatism' as well as the relationist movement in the social sciences collapsed the

distinction between subject and object in order to combat the technocratic domination of human subjectivity. (One of the facets of relationism as well as of postmodernism is that each exhibits a converge of and collapse between American and European thought.) This study itself derives from this relationist paradigm, since it observes how these theories reflect changes in the social order; relationism and postmodernism emerge alongside the social and cultural movements and identity politics (essentially libertarian) that have swept the globe since the 1960s.

Theoretical schema (like tripartitions) derive from dualisms

The numerous ***tripartitions*** found in the Western conceptual schema, as well as in the imaginative cartography and in the spaces of the Western social order discussed above, derive from dualisms. In fact, the homologous ***dualisms*** of Western philosophy, Western society and the Western cartographic (racial) imagination and the connection between them are well known. For instance, Georges Ballandier asserted in Political Anthropology that although the term "political anthropology" is not an oxymoron, the Western traditions of political and anthropological thought conceive politics and anthropology to be contrasting traits that apply exclusively to two very different kinds of social orders. For example, in Morgan's early classificatory scheme, it was kinship that regulated *societas* ("the structures of reciprocity"), whereas the political order regulates *civitas* ("the structures of domination").

> This dichotomy appears also in Marxist theory, in which class-society and the state are a result of 'the dissolution of the primitive communities' and in which the political emerges with the disappearance of 'personal blood-ties'. It is also found, sometimes in original form, in the tradition of philosophy, notably in the phenomenology of Hegel, who makes a parallel opposition between the universal and particular, the state

> and the family, the masculine sphere (which is the political and, therefore, superior sphere) and the feminine sphere.[xlvii]

The argument made here is that these homologous theoretical dualisms found in philosophy and the social sciences are creatively articulated into tripartitions and other complex conceptual schema that are homologous.

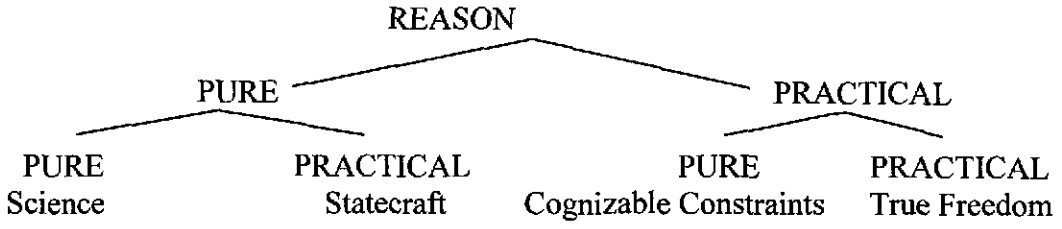
The way in which homologies are formed needs to be qualified in several ways. First, homologies appear not just in different areas, but at different levels as well. That is, within one of the aspects of a pattern, there arises a homologous pattern. For instance, in his earliest sociological research, Bourdieu found that the primary guiding principle behind the *habitus* of the Berbers of northern Africa was the division between men and women. This principle repeated itself in the division of labor between (male) fieldwork versus (female) housework, the division of space between the masculine outdoors versus the feminine indoors, between heat and light versus cold and dark, and in the divisions of time between summer (harvest) versus winter (home repair). But even within the home, the prototypical woman's sphere, there was a division between the men's part of the house and the women's area.

This conception of patterns repeating themselves at different levels is, of course, recognizable as the notion of fractals. Fractals are found throughout physical reality in the reproduction of micro level patterns at the macro level. This is found in all sorts of phenomena: the geometric pattern of a snowflake reproduced within one of the protuberances of the snowflake; or the general graphical pattern of a stock's trade during the course of any given day not just appearing almost every day, but emerging again as a description of that stock over the course of a week or month or year; or the texture of a

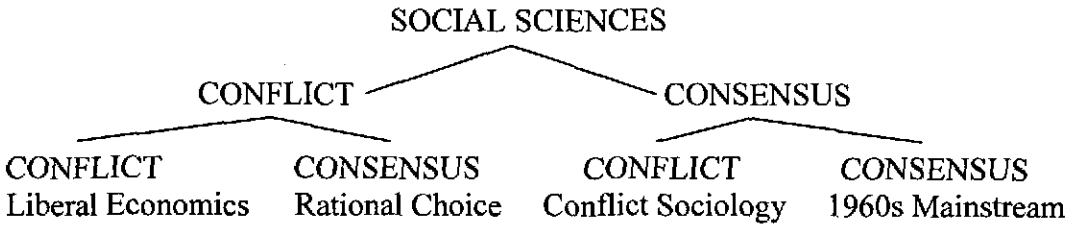
stone at the microscopic level reflecting the contours of the mountain range from which it came.

Of course, fractals are structural phenomena in physical reality, whereas homologies are patterns Bourdieu elucidates both in the cultural *habitus* and in the social world that is shaped by that *habitus*. However, the natural sciences do not observe the existence of fractals as properties of theories; that is, the natural sciences are silent on whether theories exhibit the same kind of repetition of patterns at different levels. Nor does Bourdieu recognize homologies as existent in theory; in fact, his reflexive turn makes him emphasize the gulf between the world of culture and the world of rationalistic theory. But fractal theory has been applied to the theory of the social sciences.

In The Chaos of Disciplines,[xlviii] Andrew Abbott explains how academic disciplines have evolved in a fractal pattern, so that within one element of every dualism the dualism is reproduced. For example, he illustrates this pattern in the system of Kant's philosophy in regard to the subdivision of reason; but he also applies this to the social sciences in regard to the relationship between conflict and consensus. Kant's schema of reason is reproduces the dualism of pure and practical reason within each term:



Similarly, the Abbot dissect the social sciences along the lines of conflict and consensus:

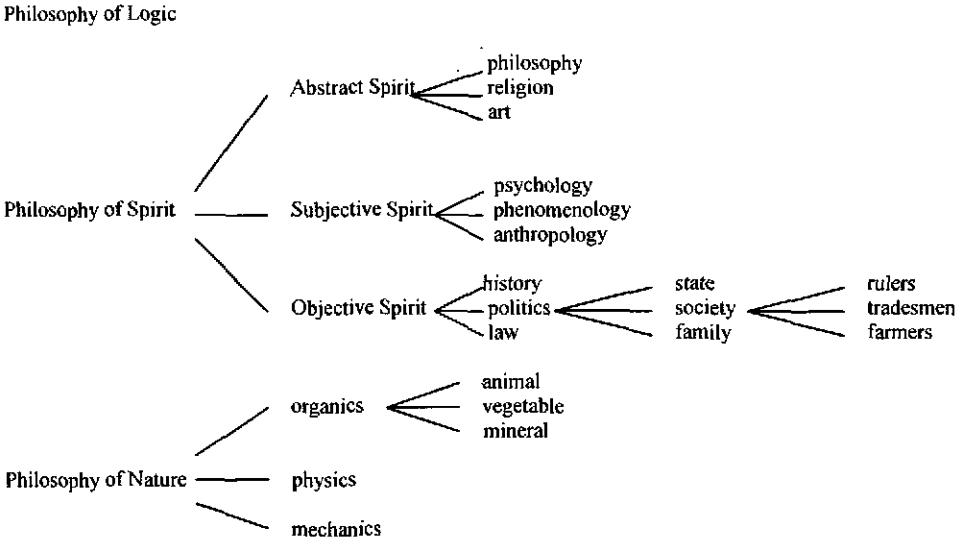


Clearly, Abbot appropriates the theory of fractals and applies it to theory itself in a comprehensive way, encompassing both the theory of the humanities and of the social sciences. However, he explains that in the evolution of the social sciences, there is a tendency for one term of a dualism to be eclipsed by the other, but in a way that appropriates the fallen interpretation, a "taking up the concerns of the defeated." For example, the rise of the consensus-oriented rational choice theory (according to the above) might have been stimulated by the decline of stronger versions of consensus theory, like that of the once dominant Parsonian structural functionalism. The point is that there is reason to assert that Bourdieu's concept of homologies applies to theory, and not just to the largely unconscious cultural categories of the *habitus*.

Second, the different theoretical homologies correspond to one another in a rough way because they are creative applications of simple theoretical principles. That is, the link between the philosophical and political tradition and the traditional tripartite Western map of the world (and its tripartite typology of the human race) is only a generalized correlation that reflects the general tendency or pattern of Western thought, not a point-by-point correspondence. Indeed, the generalized nature of homologies is precisely what Ballandier seems to be suggesting: that is, the dualism between the political (the State) and the anthropological (the tribe) is a tendency found in many disciplines and

throughout the history of the West, echoing other dualisms. The point of this study is that these various dualisms belong to the same creative elaboration of the subject-object dichotomy.

Third, if this inexactness between homologies is a common feature between various dualisms in a system of thought, then it is especially true of homologous tripartitions, since they are more creatively elaborated within varying fields, and thus diverge more from one another. This is especially true in Hegel's case, since his philosophy – composed of an expansive series of trichotomies explicitly based on the subject-object dualism – contain odd contradictions that interrupt their general symmetry. Again, this is precisely because the template of the tripartition is modified when applied to diverse fields. A schema of the organization of Hegel's philosophical system is reveals how, within a general pattern, perfect symmetry is not maintained:



Fourth, these homologous theoretical dualisms or tripartitions can alter or mutate radically over time, with little change in the underlying basic principle, that principle ultimately being the subject-object dichotomy. The relationship between the state, civil

society and the family is a case in point. According to the narratives of Habermas and Arendt, the meaning of civil society has altered radically in modernity, since a public political sphere of deliberation emerged during the Enlightenment (in the salons and coffeehouses, particularly) within the realm of civil society, only to collapse soon thereafter under the weight of social welfare imperatives and with the explosive growth of the market, so that the civic realm became a social realm and the state a household (that is, a realm of production) writ large. Yet the subject-object dichotomy that supposedly underwrites this tripartion of state, civil society and family was largely unaffected; the subject-object dualism was not modified, this study argues, until the twentieth century in American theory.

Fifth, the converse is also true, since many of these tripartions are still applied even when the underlying subject-object dualism has been transformed. For instance, this is true even in the case of the relevance of the Hegelian tripartition of the social order to Williams' sociology of American values, despite the alteration of the subject-object dichotomy in American theory in the twentieth century. In the case of American academic theory, at least, the subject-object dualism that underlies the various dualisms and tripartions has altered radically. Also, new dualisms and tripartitions resemble past ones, although the underlying principle has changed. Subsequently, the many dualisms and tripartitions found in American academic theory in the twentieth century are complementary, not oppositional, but they harken back to traditional oppositions.

Talcott Parsons' structural functionalism – for better or worse, perhaps the most influential social science theory of the twentieth century – is perhaps the classic example of the persistence of classic tripartitions even as the subject-object dualism informing the

theory is transformed into a complementary dialectic. For example, at the core of Parsons' theory are the autonomous but related social, personality and cultural systems. These are based on the synthesized (and diluted) theory of Durkheim, Pareto and Weber, respectively; these systems relate to norms, roles and values, respectively. And these systems take as their exclusive domains the academic disciplines of sociology, psychology and anthropology, respectively. (Parsons transformed the American social sciences along these lines through his work at the Harvard Department of Social Relations, imposing a division of labor within these disciplines that has spread throughout academia internationally.) These homologous trichotomies are largely based on the traditional philosophical triad of the sensible, the imaginative and the rational.

Yet the goal of Parsons' grand project is to portray society as a vast, harmonious organism, and the spirit behind this effort is fundamentally optimistic, understanding every aspect of society as complementary. If Marx was one of the few social theorists Parsons did not incorporate in his theory, it was not simply because Parsons' theory is an academic version of Cold War propaganda. Parsons was averse to conflict within a system, since his vision of the world had at its core the harmony of dualisms and tripartitions, even if these were patterned after the traditional dualistic oppositions. That is, his theory is designed in imitation of the old oppositional dualisms, but at its heart it revisions their functioning and interaction into the image of harmony that is a typical trait of American theory.

Critical Notes 3.1:

A modification of Bourdieu's notion of reflexivity:

Theory or discourse as mirror or alter ego

The habitus, as a pattern of structured and transposable dispositions, is largely unconscious. The most unconscious form of the habitus is perhaps the 'doxa', which is the state in which persons adhere to relations of order that structure both the material and intellectual world similarly so that both are accepted as self-evident. This happens in a process of misrecognition that ensures the maintenance and reproduction of the existing social structure of domination by rendering the internalized system of classification necessary and true – a condition he refers to as 'illusio'. However, the unconscious presuppositions of the habitus can come under question, especially in periods of crisis when a gap or incongruity develops between social reality and the normally tacit cultural categories of understanding, or when people come into routine contact with those who have a different doxa. The conservative response to this self-conscious exposure of the doxa is for the formation of an 'orthodoxy', that is, an attitude of correctness with regard to authoritative standards of belief which are made explicit. Later, this orthodoxy is challenged by various heterodoxies, which like the orthodoxy and unlike the doxa make their beliefs and assumptions explicit.

However, if the doxa has its own form of *illusio* or misrecognition, so too does theory. That is, while the unconscious presuppositions of the doxa involve the illusion of the natural match between the social order and the unconscious cultural categories of the habitus, a rather different kind of illusion is at work in the more explicit and self-conscious production of theory. Of course, Bourdieu claims that theorists tend to project

their own rationality onto social agents who act at a more instinctual level. But this study seeks to modify that insight.

A theory not only reflects the dispositions of the theorist, it expresses also what he or she is ***not***. That is, theory can serve as an alter ego, or perhaps more accurately, an 'ego ideal' as Freud conceived the image of what individuals strive to be. Better yet, a theory or idea resembles a kind of 'not-ego' in the German tradition of philosophical idealism, which conceived the world as a 'not-I', that is, as precisely what we can never know because what we experience is only our interaction with this physical (or rather, metaphysical) mystery. Our theories are projections of our experience – of ourselves – thrown onto an ultimately unknowable world, but in a way that manifests a reversal of our own being. Our ideas are therefore a mirror image of ourselves – a reverse image. As Adam Gopnik[xlix] argued in regard to the philosopher Karl Popper,

> ...what really underlay the contradiction between what he thought and what he was, I now think, after a quarter-century's reflection, is a perversity of human nature so deep that it is almost a law – the Law of Mental Mirror image. We write what we are not. It is not merely that we fail to live up to our best ideas but that our best ideas, and the tone that goes with them, tend to be the opposite of our natural temperament. Rousseau wrote of the feelings of the heart and the beauties of nature while stewing and seething in a little room. Dr. Johnson pleaded for Christian stoicism in desperate fear of damnation. The masters of the wry middle style, Lionel Trilling and Randall Jarrell, were mired in sadness and confusion. The angry and competitive man (James Thurber) writes tender and rueful humor because his own condition is what he seeks to escape. The apostles of calm reason are hypersensitive and neurotic; William James arrived at a pose of genial universal cheerfulness in the face of constant panic. Art critics are often visually insensitive – look at their living rooms! – and literary critics are often slow and puzzled readers, searching for the meaning, and cooks are seldom trenchermen, being more fascinated by recipes than greedy for food.
>
> It is not so much that we are drawn to things that frighten us as that we are drawn to things that we can think of as things – as subjects that exist outside the boundaries of all that is just the way we are. It is not merely that we do not live up to our ideals but that we cannot, since our

> ideals are exactly the part of us that we do not instantly identify as just part of life. An original thought is like a death mask of a man, with the solids made hollow and the nose a cavity, a portrait pulled inside out. We are our ideas (Popper, with his long, slightly overformal sentences, lucid but unornamented by wit, sounded like Popper, and no one else), for they include everything we are – but turned right around to face us, and looking back at us in surprise.

The Freudian literary critic Neil Hertz comes close to addressing the issue of theory as alter ego in his essay 'Two Extravagant Teachings'[l]. He analyzes traditional academic condemnations of plagiarism and their assumption of the afflicted conscience of the guilty. Interestingly, Hertz compared that with Earl Wasserman's reading of Pope's poem *The Rape of the Lock*, which Wasserman claimed is actually Pope's refutation of an idealized narcissism and a valorization of earthiness. Wasserman implied that New Critics were themselves guilty of an insular form of narcissism when they idealized that poem as a paragon of 'tact, balance or control',[li] and argued that what the New Critics see in the poem is their own reflection as theoretical narcissists, very much contrary to the intentions of the author. Because of their de-contextualized form of interpretation, the New Critics had become fantasists projecting themselves onto literature. Hertz, in turn, asserted that Wasserman read his own lusty self into the poem. However, like the passionate condemnations of plagiarism, it involved not just a guilty accusation, but also a feeling of affinity and sympathy with the accused. Hertz observes that it is this dual nature of this act of projection – both a harsh rebuke or rejection and a presumed (if secret) identification – that characterizes fantasy.

> Indeed, the aim of such fantasies of moral legibility, whether they are elaborated by sinners or judges, is precisely that exciting confusion of ethical and hermeneutical motifs; for fantasies are compromise-formations, they seek to have things both ways.[lii]

> The paragraph we have been considering is an imagined version of such scapegoating. It structure is that of projection. An interior difference – the sense of self-division implicit in all linguistic activity, sometimes more pronounced, sometimes less so, depending on the social context in which speech or writing is produced – that difference is exteriorized as the difference between the offended institution and its delinquent member. And, in one of those nicely economical turns that characterize powerful fantasies, the delinquent member is himself made to unwillingly represent an emblem of integrity, of the binding of the self and its signs.[liii]

Fantasy, therefore, involves both an imaginary closeness and an imaginary distance, and this is accomplished in scapegoating by 1) projecting a repressed, negative part of the self onto a scapegoat and 2) secretly empathizing with that scapegoat and its imagined guilt. This involves a kind of imagined consubstantiality, in which a 'semiotic anxiety' is dispelled through the fixation of a symbol onto a material instance. "[I]t is that establishment of a fancied consubstantiality with the offending party – the student plagiarist, the female narcissist – that allows the gesture of scapegoating to take place. Anxiety about the relation of authors to their words, anxiety about the relation of flesh-and-blood reality to conventional signs – these may be exorcised if they can be laid on the head of a figure not wholly unlike the fantasist."[liv]

Although both observe the projection of 'Otherness' in interpretation, Adam Gopnik's reflection was quite different from Neil Hertz's. Nevertheless, they hardly contradict one another, since Gopnik's theory provides a contrast as well as a parallel to Hertz's insight. Hertz argues that in an act of fantasy, the negative aspect of one's self is projected onto another person in an effort to substantiate a system of meaning and writing, whereas Gopnik asserts that a theory, abstraction or idea found in the content of writing is really a mirror image of the self, a duplicate in reverse. For Hertz, the scapegoat, as a deviant from the system of signs, is the embodiment of that system in the

eyes of an anxious community; for Gopnik, the text within a system of signs is the mirror image – in the sense of a reversal – of the creator of that text. The scapegoat is the embodiment, in reverse, of an abstract system; a theory is the abstract reversal of the concrete conditions of the self.

At least two current theories of interpretation elide these two complementary processes of reversal. In fact, these can be understood as two opposing poles in literary theory, and are epitomized in the structuralist and the Freudian schools. Structuralists or textualists reduce subjectivity – be it that of the author or the reader, or whoever – to a function of the text, so that even the author is really a character created by the text, and the meaning of the text far exceeds the intentions of any writer. (Even the social context of writing and reading is itself a text.) In contrast, the Freudians assert that interpretation involves the projection of the self onto the text, which both the reader and the author engage in. (Indeed, the author is really writing about him- or herself, but to gain a readership he or she 'bribes' the audience with a good story – onto which they can project their own selves.) These two schools are hardly mutually exclusive, but the point of this section is that both processes involve forms of misrecognition that are not always acknowledged. One the one hand, writing involves not just a projection of the self, but the reversal of that self into a reversed mirror-image or alter ego. On the other hand, the way a symbolic or cultural system manifests itself most efficiently is by imagining the inner subjectivity of the scapegoat as a stereotypical deviant from that symbolic system.

These insights may complement those of Bourdieu. Gopnik's notion of mirror quality of ideas and abstractions suggests that the potential modification Bourdieu's reflexivity. Not only is there a projection of the rational self in the act of scientific

inquiry (typical in the social sciences, Bourdieu claimed), but this projection is concomitant with a reversal of that projected self. If Bourdieu accuses intellectuals of projecting their own fully conscious rationality onto subjects who are in fact guided by their *habitus*, this imagined perfect rationality, which they attribute to others, in fact ***does not exist even within themselves***. (Perhaps a now-classic example of this would be the Nobel Prize-winning mathematician John Nash, famous for the Nash Equilibrium of rational-choice/game theory that has transformed twentieth-century economics, but who Hollywood has made even more famous for his schizophrenia.) If, as Edward Said has famously asserted, the Western humanities have traditionally ascribed an exotic inferiority, femininity and irrationality onto the non-Western 'Other', the Western social sciences have conversely imagined its subjects of study (typically Westerners) to possess a full-blown rationality that even the social 'scientist' lacks.

But does Giddens' social theory itself work as a form of misrepresentation, particularly his model of agency? The reflexive and self-critical nature of Bourdieu's reflexivity, in which scholars must look to their own condition and background as a source of bias, obliges this kind of question. Giddens does not foreground the issue of misrepresentation or misrecognition the way Bourdieu does, and that itself is somewhat of a peculiarity especially considering how social scientists typically accuse their academic rivals of engaging in the ideological misrepresentation of the social world. His model of the agent stratified between discursive consciousness, practical consciousness and the unconscious (a modification of the Freudian triad of ego, superego and id) is not quite rationalistic, as some of his critics have charged, since unconscious motivation informs practical and then discursive consciousness before discourse feed into the social

order. There is nothing to suggest that Giddens' theory could not recognize that theory or discourse constitutes a reversal or mirror image of the self, nor that abstract social structure instantiates itself in people's minds most effectively by creating a scapegoat to define deviance from the rules that are being recursively formed.

But this study challenges his notion of discursive consciousness as fully self-aware. Furthermore, discursive consciousness is ultimately the sole channel through which unconscious motives and practical consciousness are given expression in society in Giddens' theory: they have no substantial articulation of their own in his theory. For example, Bourdieu illustrates how practical reason has its own communicative power without having to feed into discursive consciousness. John Dewey recognizes this as well, as well as the communicative power of art. Moreover, following Bourdieu, this study argues that theoretical reason (Giddens' 'discursive consciousness') itself harbors a kind of *habitus* of sorts. Theory, as Kuhn famously pointed out, involves the tacit presuppositions of a community of inquiry, and this involves semi-conscious principles.

Critical Notes 3.2:

A modification of Giddens' notion of reflexivity:

The potentially erosive power of theory or discourse

Giddens and Taylor both claim that rules are (and abstract structure *is*) recursively formed by discursive action, since it is through practice and for practice that we interpret the rules that derive from practice. Giddens goes so far as to state that social theory constitutes society because of its power in determining the rules that operate in society. But although abstract structure is identical to the expression of discursive consciousness, what effect does this kind of rationality have on the unconscious *habitus* of practice? It was Charles Taylor who pointed out that reflection, for example in the case of the use of maps in places that we are already familiar with, disorients the habitual practices of daily life, interrupting the patterned dispositions of our habitual action. As Taylor writes, "I know my way around a familiar environment in being able to get from any place to any place with ease and assurance. I may be at a loss when asked to draw a map or even to give explicit directions to a stranger."[lv]

It is asserted here that discourse has an erosive power that is not identical with the passing of old rules and the establishment of new rules under its sway. That is, as Giddens and Taylor have noted, the rules of the game may keep changing as we keep making up the game as we go along – the way linguistic rules evolve as speech acts change over time – but discourse also has a certain counterintuitive effect of not only building new rules by recognizing them (the way Giddens claims the social sciences have impacted society by identifying what rules apply), but by destroying through observation already existence yet unconsciously operational rules. Discourse (like social science

theory) may build the abstract rules that are interpreted in practice and inculcate a new *habitus*, but it undermines the lived and unconscious *habitus* through inquiry.

There is empirical evidence that reflection, inquiry and discourse erode tacit, unconscious norms and values. For example, NASA experiments by Walter Otto Weyrauch on how groups in isolation would form their governing norms found that these rules were entirely unstated and unconscious, and to mention them would destroy their hold on the group.[lvi] A question like "Don't we ***always*** leave the toilet seat down?..." would signify that this norm, previously unconscious, would thenceforth be ignored. In this case, inquiry or discourse destroys the rule that was tacitly in effect. Weyrauch's research specialization is private or customary law, which he asserts evolves from the 'ground up', unlike the imposed public law of the state. In the case of the law of small groups, Weyrauch asserted, these laws were completely unconscious and dissolved upon recognition.

There is also a literature on the post-Enlightenment re-appraisal of reflexivity, in which reflexivity or analytic critical thought is conceived as erosive of belief, morality, creativity, spontaneity, naturalness, and so forth. (As Dahl notes, this is still a controversial issue in German social thought since this view has its contemporary advocates, and is closely associated with Nazi ideology).[lvii] Discourse, reflection, theory and other forms of fully conscious rationality tend to erode the underlying emotional strata from which so much of what comes naturally – that is, through the *habitus* – seems to come. But the ability of reflexivity to expose and wear the unconscious operations of the mind is often seen as beneficial as well as dangerous. This erosion was, in fact, the goal of the Enlightenment, in so far it involved the questioning and even purging of

tradition and superstition. More recently, it was the goal of Freud's psychoanalysis to dissolve the bonds of emotional fixation through discourse – the talking cure. On the other hand, artists famously assert that to talk of the creative process, to try to articulate what they are working on, would destroy it, would break up their creative flow; this is one reason why it is so hard to conduct research on creativity. Whereas discourses can form a new unconscious *habitus*, as Gillespie asserted, by overlaying the strata of prior *habiti*, the act of unearthing or excavating a *habitus* weakens it. Indeed, Bourdieu called his reflexive sociology 'socioanalysis', the counterpart to psychoanalysis, and he asserted that it was resisted just the way patients would resist the painful explorations of psychoanalysis.

That a *habitus* of norms and values is hidden might seem contrary to Giddens' thesis that theory constitutes society, but Giddens' argument is not invalidated by this modification. There can be, for instance, an official policy that is both theoretically articulated and challenged in public discourse, but in ways that fail to unearth the unconscious assumptions and values that guide and motivate that policy. For example, the realist school of foreign relations professes that the stage of world politics is an amoral realm of anarchy. The American diplomat George Kennan expressed this when he stated that the "interests of the national society for which government has to concern itself are basically those of its military security, the integrity of its political life, and the well-being of its people. These needs have no moral quality."[lviii] This was the foreign policy orthodoxy dominant during the Cold War (indeed, Kennan was the author of the doctrine of containment), and this kind of theory is exemplary of how social science discourse comes to reflexively constitute the social order. (Max Weber's essay 'Politics

as a Vocation' is a classic scholarly expression of what had been a nineteenth-century European diplomatic tradition.) Campbell and Shapiro counter that the proclaimed amorality of realist theory itself contains its own implicit moral imperative.

> However, this affirmation of sovereignty is itself insinuated with moral considerations, for it is a stance that is enabled by faith in the notion of *raison d'etat*, an acceptance of the priority accorded the security of the state. Far from being a principle that keeps morality at bay, reason of state constitutes the realist problematic as a moral argument in which the claim is that "the reasons for overriding the constraints of ordinary morality in emergency situations are themselves moral."[lix]

The authors go on to assert that although there is recently an emerging literature on ethics and international relations, this literature (for example, promoting human rights) is premised on the same assumptions of the realist tradition, and is therefore an extension of it. Campbell and Shapiro assert that their volume provides an alternative literature that "is 'against theory' insofar as it resists the desire for *a* theory of ethics that articulates abstracted principles in a systematized manner."[lx] It "is in this context that the arguments here might be thought of as being 'against ethics'" – that is, when ethics are understood as they conventionally are as theoretical formulas applied to human relationships. What the authors seek to do instead is to unearth the operative values and norms that unconsciously orient the practices under critical reflection. In doing so, their own theoretical framework is notably influenced by Bourdieu. "Eschewing hierarchical constructions of moral value," the contributors to the volume "focus instead on the always already ethical situation integral to the habitus of experience."[lxi] Whereas theoretical discourse does constitute society as Giddens asserts, this theory contains its own secret *habitus* of presuppositions that can be rendered vulnerable through the

exposure of theoretical inquiry (which is what Campbell and Shapiro et al. are attempting).

So Giddens' theory does misrecognize certain aspects of the social structure as it is produced by theoretical abstraction. That is, the semi-conscious aspects of discursive (theoretical) consciousness, and the manner in which discourse – when trained in on unearthing and identifying unconscious assumptions or lived *habitus* of an official ideology (say, foreign policy realism), and not just either expanding or replacing it (as, say, human rights discourse typically does) – can also erode those abstract structures. The larger argument of this study is that there are multiple forms of nihilism in society, and that one of the most powerful has been the power of science to disenchant the modern world. Discursive or theoretical consciousness is powerful and dangerous, and it is not to be conceived in such sanguine terms as Giddens would assert.

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[i] Craig Calhoun, Edward LiPuma and Moishe Postone, eds., *Bourdieu: Critical Perspectives* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993), 4.
[ii] Ibid., 6.
[iii] Charles Dickens, *A Christmas Carol* (n.l.: Watermill Press, 1994).
[iv] Christopher G.A. Bryant and David Jary, *Giddens Theory of Structuration: A Critical Appreciation* (London and New York: Routledge, 1991), 9.
[v] Anthony Giddens, *The Constitution of Society: Outline of the Theory of Structuration* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: UC Press, 1984), 7.
[vi] Ibid., 6-7.
[vii] Ibid., 25.
[viii] Rogers Brubaker, 'Social Theory as Habitus', in Calhoun, Craig, Edward LiPuma and Moishe Postone, eds. *Bourdieu: Critical Perspectives* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993).
[ix] Ibid., 271.
[x] T. S. Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996).
[xi] Charles Taylor, 'To Follow a Rule…', in Calhoun, Craig, Edward LiPuma and Moishe Postone, eds. *Bourdieu: Critical Perspectives* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993).
[xii] Ibid., 49.
[xiii] Ibid., 50.
[xiv] Ibid., 53.
[xv] Pierre Bourdieu, *The Logic of Practice* (Stanford, CA: Stanford UP, 1990), 34.
[xvi] Ibid., 39.
[xvii] Taylor, 55.
[xviii] Ibid., 56.
[xix] Ibid., 57.
[xx] Ibid.
[xxi] Ibid., 57-58.

[xxii] Ibid., 53.
[xxiii] Ibid., 59.
[xxiv] Ibid., 56.
[xxv] Peter Manicas, *The History and Philosophy of the Social Sciences* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1987).
[xxvi] Jacque Derrida, *Writing and Difference* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978), 278-288.
[xxvii] Ibid., 279-280
[xxviii] Ibid., 280.
[xxix] Ibid., 281-282.
[xxx] Nader Saiedi, *The Birth of Social Theory: Social Thought in the Enlightenment and Romanticism* (NY: UP of America, 1993), 4.
[xxxi] Terry Eagleton, *The Idea of Culture* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2000), 2.
[xxxii] Ibid., 3.
[xxxiii] Ibid., 4.
[xxxiv] Karl Popper, *The Open Society and Its Enemies* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton UP, 1963), 57.
[xxxv] In Jerzy Szacki, *History of Sociological Thought* (Westport, CN: Greenwood Press, 1979), 5.
[xxxvi] Ibid., 12.
[xxxvii] Ernest Barker, *Greek Political Theory: Plato and His Predecessors* (London: Methuen, 1957), in Szacki, 4.
[xxxviii] Popper, 55.
[xxxix] George Sabine, *A History of Political Theory*. 3rd ed. (London: George G. Harrap, 1951), in Szacki, 18.
[xl] Augustine. *City of God* (NY: Modern Library, 1950).
[xli] Werner Stark. *Social Theory and Christian Thought* (London: RKP, 1959), 22.
[xlii] Thomas More. *Utopia* (London: J.M. Dent and Co., 1904).
[xliii] Thomas Campanella, *City of the Sun: A Poetical Dialogue* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1981).
[xliv] Francis Bacon, *New Atlantis* (Wheeling, IL: H. Davidson, 1989).
[xlv] Otto Gierke, *Natural Law and the Theory of Society, 1500 to 1800* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1957).
[xlvi] Giambattista Vico, *New Science: Principles of the New Science Concerning the Common Nature of Nations* (NY: Penguin, 1999).
[xlvii] Ballandier Georges, *Political Anthropology* (NY: Pantheon Books, 1970), 50.
[xlviii] Andrew Abbott, *The Chaos of Disciplines* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001).
[xlix] Adam Gopnik, 'The Porcupine: A Pilgrimage to Popper'. *The New Yorker*. 1 April 2001, 34-54.
[l] Neil Hertz, 'Two Extravagant Teachings', in *The End of the Line: Essays on Psychoanalysis and the Sublime* (New York: Columbia UP, 1985).
[li] Ibid., 151.
[lii] Ibid., 148.
[liii] Ibid., 149.
[liv] Ibid., 159.
[lv] Taylor, 50.
[lvi] Walter Otto Weyrauch and Maureen Anne Bell, "Autonomous Lawmaking: The Case of the Gypsies", *Yale Law Journal*, 103 (1993): 323-399.
[lvii] Göran Dahl, 'The Anti-Reflexivist Revolution: On the Affirmationism of the New Right', in Featherstone, Mike and Scott Lash, *Spaces of Culture: City, Nation, World* (London: Sage, 1999), 175.
[lviii] Quoted in David Campbell and Michael J. Shapiro, ed. *Moral Spaces: Rethinking Ethics and World Politics* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2002), vii.
[lix] Ibid.
[lx] Ibid., x.
[lxi] Ibid.

CHAPTER FOUR

Structural Homologies: The Culture Idea and the Nation-State

Aside from either genealogy or the creative re-envisioning of the social order by the social scientist, a third form of critical analysis involves the determination of the ***social structural or institutional correlates or homologies*** with the mental structures of the cultural categories of the *habitus*. As it has already been noted, Bourdieu argues that the cultural categories that both history and the status quo have engrained in us serve to render the social order normal and natural. The internal, subjective structures (as Bourdieu refers to them) are thereby patterned after the external, objective structure *in a particular way* that justifies and legitimates those objective social relations. Indeed, social agents generally remain unaware of their own cultural categories and social conditioning until and unless a disjuncture emerges between a changing social world and the cultural understandings that agents have been socialized into. After making the critical move of interrogating one's own conceptual apparatus, the next step in critical awareness is to determine how these cultural categories reflect the structures of the social world.

It needs to be remembered here that Bourdieu does not utilize a Marxist correspondence theory of truth to explain the correspondence between internal cultural structures and external social structures. Rather, as Nicholas Garnham states, Bourdieu uses a Durkheim-inspired coherence theory of truth, in which the cultural categories are an arbitrary match to the social structure; it is a self-conscious awareness of the arbitrariness of the two that creates a social crisis.

> Certainly the response of the Durkheimian tradition to the problem [of direction of social progress in the wake of the industrial revolution]

> was to undermine reason as a guiding principle by stressing the arbitrary and thus relative nature of interpretive schema and to place the sociopolitical emphasis on the problem of social cohesion. The Marxist tradition, by contrast, held on to the possibility of rationally guided action and the Enlightenment hope of the construction of a social world congruent with a set of universal human interests. Thus, while the Marxist theory of ideology shares with the Durkheimian tradition a view of the cultural superstructure as both determined by and an expression of a social structure or base, its theory of social change and political action is based on the idea that the working class will escape from ideology and that political action will be motivated by direct rational analysis of this material conditions of existence. Thus the Marxist theory of knowledge, unlike the Durkheimian, requires both the recognition of a real world and the possibility of its cognition in terms of a nonarbitrary and at least potentially universal classificatory schema within which a common set of truth claims can be accepted and values agreed upon. Thus the misrecognition of reality that is ideology in Marxist thought stems from the misapplication of the classificatory schema, not from the structure of the classificatory schema itself.[i]

The irony of this particular study is that the cultural category in question is the culture idea itself. In The Civilizing Process, Norbert Elias traced the influences that promoted the emergence of the culture idea in modern Europe in their broad contours.[ii] Elias documented how, since the Middle Ages, there had been for centuries a steady and incremental growth in the valuation and observance of manners (for example, table etiquette) among the European warrior caste. The gradual centralization of power and the ultimate formation of nation-states required that this nobility identify itself not just with its monopoly of legitimate violence, but also with the cultivation of manners that would mark it as superior and distinct.

However, within this broad framework of the centralization of power in modern Europe and the subsequent 'civilization' or self-pacification of the nobility (a process especially promoted by the royal elite within the nobility), the culture idea took on a greater significance within particular national traditions. For example, the German

nobility had been culturally assimilated into the ways of the French elite, who revolved around the life of the court. German rulers, however, bypassed and displaced their own nobility in the emerging power structures by recruiting highly educated commoners whose careers and lives centered on the universities. This 'mandarin' literati developed its own ideology of 'Kultur' that served to justify its new powers, and attributed to the humanities a kind of quasi-religious spiritual worth that eclipsed the superficial refinement of the French court; moreover, the arts and humanities were associated with the common people, as opposed to the imperialistic tendencies and universalistic pretensions of the French notion of civilization. There was, in other words, a social and political context to the emergence of the ideas of civilization and culture.[iii] The emergence of the culture idea in modern Europe therefore registers the advanced development of 'cultural capital' by the time of the Enlightenment. This growth of cultural capital in Western Europe therefore resembles Marx's account of the accumulation of financial capital in Europe throughout the Middle Ages, an agglomeration that ultimately prepared the ground for the later burgeoning of capitalism.

The genesis of the idea of culture therefore signals the 'arrival' of the nation-state in the steady march toward political (and social and cultural, etc.) centralization since the Middle Ages, since cultural capital is the currency of status for the refined nation-state elites, and the culture idea is its fruition of the growth of cultural capital. And it is, Bourdieu insists, from the nation-state itself that modern societies receive their cultural categories – particularly from the state's educational systems. But it is difficult to think of the state as the producer and regulator of modern culture – precisely because the state determines that we not think of it in that way. The state would have us think of it

instrumentally, as a tool at the service of the people – or even as a weapon not necessarily at the service of the people. But the state disguises its primary function (which is its main source of power) as that which constitutes society through its regulation of cultural categories. Bourdieu writes:

> To endeavor to think the state is to take the risk of taking over (or being taken over by) a thought of the state, that is, of applying to the state categories of thought produced and guaranteed by the state and hence to misrecognize its most profound truth. This proposition, which may seem both abstract and preemptory, will be more readily accepted if, at the close of the argument, one agrees to return to this point of departure, but armed at this time with the knowledge that one of the major powers of the state is to produce and impose (especially through the school system) categories of thought that we spontaneously apply to all things of the social world – including the state itself.[iv]

To emphasize the role of the educational system in inculcating the *habitus*, Bourdieu cites a passage in Thomas Bernhard's Alte Meister Komödie.

> School is the state school where young people are turned into state persons and thus into nothing other than henchmen of the state. Walking to school, I was walking into the state and, since the state destroys people, into the institution for the destruction of people... The state forced me, like everyone else, into myself, and made me compliant towards it, the state, and turned me into a state person, regulated and registered and trained and finished and perverted and dejected, like everyone else. When we see people, we only see state people, the state servants, as we quite rightly say, who serve the state all their lives and thus serve unnature all their lives.[v]

But the state operates not just primarily through the dissemination of the dominant *habitus* and the distribution of cultural capital via the educational system (usually in exchange for financial capital, disguising the origins of talent in wealth). Rather, the state is itself a bank of sorts which exchanges the various forms of capital.

> The state is the *culmination of a process of concentration of different species of capital*: capital of physical force or instruments of coercion (army, police), economic capital, cultural or (better) informational capital, and symbolic capital. It is this concentration as such

> which constitutes the state as the holder of a sort of metacapital granting power over other species of capital and over their holders. Concentration of the different species of capital (which proceeds hand in hand with the construction of the corresponding fields) leads indeed to the *emergence* of a specific, properly statist capital (*capital étatique*) which enables the state to exercise power over the different fields and over the different particular species of capital, and especially over the rates of conversion between them (and thereby over the relations of force between their respective holders). It follows that the construction of the state proceeds apace with the construction of a *field of power*, defined as the space of play within which the holders of capital (of different species) struggle *in particular* for power over the state, that is, over the statist capital granting power over the different species of capital and over their reproduction (particularly through the school system).[vi]

To ensure the legitimacy of the state, the state becomes universalized. This involves a certain democratization, since elites "had an interest in giving universal form to the expression of their vested interests, in elaborating a theory of public service and of public order, and thus in working to autonomize the *reason of state* from dynastic reason, from the "house of the king," and to invent thereby the "res publica" and later the republic as an instance transcendent to the agents (the king included) who are its temporary incarnations."[vii] The tradeoff for the elite is that in order gain legitimacy by these universalized standards, the elite must accept them – especially, as stated above, the formal credentials supplied by the elite universities. "However, this *monopoly of the universal* can only be obtained at the cost of a submission (if only in appearance) to the universal and of a universal recognition of the universalist representation of domination presented as legitimate and disinterested."[viii]

As a consequent of all this, it is asserted here that the ***one institution in particular*** that correspond with the modern culture idea is the **modern Western educational system**. In fact, distinctive national educational systems in the West arose and developed coterminous with the culture idea in those very same societies that fostered the four major

variations of the culture idea (namely, France, Germany, England and the United States). As Andy Green has documented in Education and State Formation, his (Gramscian) historical analysis of educational policy in those four societies, the elites of each of those countries developed unique educational systems that were meant above all else – even above economic or political concerns – to set the cultural or ideological 'tone' of the society.

Although Green does not note this parallel, the particular cultural orientations promoted by the educational systems in these countries basically correspond to their culture idea. After all, education was (and still is) at the heart of the Enlightenment idea of civilization as progress through the public use of reason. So too was education the basis of the 'mandarin' ideology of Kultur emanating from the universities in German-speaking lands. In fact, in the British case, education policy was explicitly at the center of the English notion of culture. As an example of what amounts to the fusion of the culture idea with what would become the dominant national philosophy of education in Britain, Matthew Arnold, the originator of that conception, argued that the English middle class, newly dominant with the rise of industrialism, were even more philistine than the working class, since the latter actually had an interest in (folk) culture and might rebel if it did not receive the spiritual nourishment that must trickle down from above. Arnold's solution was for the state to create public schools where the children of the hegemonic middle class would board with the cultured offspring of the declining upper classes, infusing the middle class with dignity and high learning that the masses could respect. This historical analysis corrects what the likes of Edward LiPuma have asserted is a weakness in Bourdieu's theory:

> His view, based on his reading of modern society, is that there exists an "almost perfect homology" between the structures of culture and those of social organization (in a broad sense). So he feels free to bypass an analysis of the structure of cultural categories and classification systems and the relationship to the social structure. By a similar logic, he sees no reason to analyze how social structure informs the reproduction of these categories and classifications.[ix]

However, in exploring the correlation of Western educational systems to the Western ideas of culture, the actual mechanism of how both the social structures (educational institutions, in this case) and cultural categories (the culture ideas, in this case) came into being is revealed: ***through the very same discourses***. The social structures or institutions developed from theoretical discourse, in the recursive fashion Giddens has elaborated; and the cultural categories were also born in this discourse and were patterned after the social order, as Bourdieu claimed they are. In the case of culture ideas as cultural categories and the educational systems as social order, their origins are so close that it could be said that theories of culture are very much philosophies of education, and both reflect the cultural hegemony of the elite in emergent Western nation-states.

The culture idea and the educational system can thus be seen as the subjective and objective counterparts of one another, both fostered by nation-state elites. However, another, less dichotomous perspective would note that they are simply two fields that are homologous with one another within a social order (as are any of the fields in a society at any given time). The culture idea tends to pertain to the field of elite cultivation of cultural capital, whereas the national educational systems dissected by Green represent the sphere of 'mass production' of cultural capital through the public schools. (In terms of contemporary Western society, this is best illustrated in Bourdieu's The State Nobility, his study of how the French university system reproduces the class system – so much so,

he claims, that in France today there is more of a caste system than there was before the Revolution).[x] Yet if we remember the homology of the various fields posited in Bourdieu's social theory, we find that there are structural correlations with the culture idea in multiple fields. But first we must explore the culture idea as it initially developed.

Ideas of culture: Original French, German, English and American traditions

In a nutshell, the four modern traditions of the culture idea are the French Enlightenment's notion of civilization as the progress to more rational social forms, German Romanticism's idea of Kultur as the embodiment in the spirit of a people in their arts and in the humanities, the elitist English notion of culture as personal refinement, and the American concept of culture as pluralistic and based on values. This summary does not so much discuss the American tradition because it is the subject of other chapters, but Emerson's ideas on culture are elaborated here, since they are an antecedent and herald of later American thought on the subject. This summary also does not dwell on the social conditions that were existent in the formation of any one of these traditions, although basic context is provided.

The French Enlightenment idea of 'civilization'. In a seminar on 'Civilization: the Word and the Idea', a genealogy of the French idea of 'civilization' was provided by Lucien Febvre in 1929. Trying to find an answer to why the term civilization in French had taken on opposing meanings – one ethnographic and relativistic, the other ethnocentric and judgmental – Febvre found that the word's association with these meanings only went back to 1766. Kuper notes:

> However, the terms *civilité*, *politesse*, and *police* (meaning law-abiding) go back to the sixteenth century. Throughout the seventeenth century, the terms 'savage' and, for more advanced peoples, 'barbarian' were current in French for people who lacked the qualities of 'civility, courtesy, and, finally, administrative wisdom'. In time, *civilisé* displaced the term *policé*, but by the eighteenth century, Febvre suggested, there was a need for a new substantive term, to describe a new notion.[xi]

While the rise of science originally stimulated the notion of civilization as linear social progress toward more rational institutions, ironically, this same flourishing of science and the concomitant increase in ethnographic knowledge that it stimulated led to the relativization of the concept in the period from 1780 to 1820, with the plural form, *Civilisations*, emerging in 1819. Disillusionment with the Revolution contributed to this, but the subsequent restoration of the monarchy rehabilitated the original progressive sense of the term.

In this vein, but with a pessimistic twist, at this same seminar, the sociologist Marcel Mauss delivered a paper that distinguished civilization – which was rational, universal and progressive – from the arts, from the 'collective conscious' of a society, and from the 'mentality' of a mode of thought or cast of mind. A new world civilization was coming into being, and it did not necessarily herald greater happiness for the

individual or for society. Implicit in this conception was the influence of the German idea of culture, which distinguished between material civilization and spiritual cultivation. For example, Alexander von Humbolt had asserted that a people's civilization in terms of political order could be advanced while their 'culture de l'esprit' could be stagnant, or vice versa. Nevertheless, in many ways the German idea of Kultur and the French concept of *civilisation* did have much in common in their formation.

Norbert Elias, in his masterpiece The Civilizing Process, explained how the German idea of Kultur was in many ways the historical equivalent of the French notion of civilization. The twin ideas of culture and civilization both emerged in the context of the growth of manners – that is, of cultural capital, in Bourdieu's terms – among the elite in Europe since the Middle Ages, and represented the repudiation of the boorish ways of the medieval warrior caste. This development in turn took place within the political context of the rise of the nation-state with the monopolization of power by a monarchy.

The significant differences between the two concepts of civilization and culture, according to Elias, likewise resulted from political circumstance. The French idea of civilization as universal progress – and the French belief that France epitomized this upward trajectory – developed in the context of an unabashed French imperialism, especially in terms of cultural penetration and assimilation of European elites. In contrast, the German idea of Kultur as the spirit of a people germinated in the context of the colonization of German-speaking lands, militarily and culturally, particularly by the French. And, Elias observed, although the German idea of Kultur and the French notion of 'civilisation' were fostered by the emerging middle class in both societies, the French (and British) bourgeoisie were assimilated into the mores of the court, whereas the

German middle-class was best represented in German universities, and identified Kultur with the ideal of *Bildung*, or learning (particularly in the humanities), rather than with the affectations of high society.

The German Romantic idea of Kultur. Ultimately, the constellation of culture ideas that were produced in German-speaking lands, although they did spurn the universalism found in the ideas of civilization and progress, sustained a basic idea of culture that was itself not so much pluralist as it was *populist*. That is, the German culture idea was potentially ethnocentric and even essentialist because it conceived the *Volk* as possessing a spiritual essence that was especially well expressed in their artistic life. Kultur was to be seen as something authentic, honest or genuine that could be smothered and obscured by (French) confection and artifice. There is an obvious potential for essentialism and naturalism in this attitude, and this later emerged in nationalistic and racist German theories of Kultur, which went so far as to connect culture with nature. Also, the idea of Kultur involved a conception of an inward personal *accomplishment* that the French idea of civilization lacked, in that one could possess all the external trappings of civilized life (manners, laws, technology) and yet not have cultivated the inward virtues.

Although Elias documented the central role of the German universities in fostering the humanistic polemic that distinguished so emphatically between culture and civilization, it was left to Fritz Ringer in The Decline of the German Mandarins to illuminate the development of new academic disciplines in Germany that took as their object of study culture (Kultur) and spirit (*Geist*). The rapid economic growth that engulfed Germany since 1890 infused the German intellectual class with a nihilistic dread

of the soullessness of the emerging materialistic and rationalized civilization. Spirit or *Geist* was thus affirmed as distinct from nature, and demanded a very different kind of science for its study. For example, Dilthey's *Geisteswissenschaften* or 'mental sciences' championed a subjective and interpretive history against the ideal of scientific historiography. Likewise, Weber's *Kulturwissenschaften* understood culture to be comprised of the significance which subjects imbue onto what are otherwise meaningless events. Both perspectives required sympathetic interpretation, which they understood to be under threat from an ever-increasing rationalization and bureaucratization of society.

The substance of Ringer's argument is that this sentiment and these new disciplines serve largely as a justificatory ideology of an elite caste of literati administrators. "Politically, it is the gradual transformation of an essentially feudal state into a heavily bureaucratic monarchy which favors the development of a strong and self-conscious mandarin elite. Practically all of the early mandarins are associated with the state administration in one way or another."[xii] In order to reduce the power of the traditional aristocracy, the princes created a rational system of government staffed by highly credentialed members of the bourgeoisie, with university professors in particular rising to an unsurpassed level of power and prestige. In fact, the new elite began to mesh with the old not only in the recognized equivalence of military, administrative and hereditary ranks, but through intermarriage, and this process was lubricated by the mandarin's sense of entitlement. Out of this sense of self-importance the mandarins develop an ideology of cultivation or culture and conceive themselves as a kind of priestly caste destined to promote it. It is worth quoting Ringer at length here.

> Although the monarch still has a check on the loyalty of the new elite, partly because he pays their salaries, he soon discovers that the

> mandarins are quite prepared to use their growing bargaining power even against him. For one thing, they dare to oppose his ideal of higher education. He wants his universities to be no more than institutes for the production of useful and preferably humble administrative assistants. He has a very down-to-earth notion of practical learning. Theories that are not immediately applicable make him suspicious, although he does not mind hearing that his professors are teaching some sound and straightforward doctrine of active piety and political morality. The mandarins, on the other hand, grow tired of the purely technical role assigned to them in this scheme. Their personal and social aspirations extend beyond the standing of lower-class experts or scribes. They demand to be recognized as a sort of spiritual nobility, to be raised above the class of their origins by their learning. They think of themselves as broadly cultured men, and their ideal of personal 'cultivation' affects their whole conception of learning. Seeking spiritual ennoblement from education, they tend to reject 'merely practical' knowledge and the pursuit of morally and emotionally neutral techniques of analysis. Instead, they regard learning as a process in which contact with venerated sources results in the absorption of their spiritual content, so that an indelible quality of spiritual elevation is conferred upon the student. In short, as the mandarins become more powerful, their intellectual leaders turn against the rather narrow ideological platform from which they started, replacing it with an ideal of learning which can function as an honorific substitute for nobility of birth. Much as their ruler may regret the emergence of a new set of pretensions among originally humble servants of the crown, he must resign himself to the inevitable, for he needs these men as much as ever.[xiii]

Concomitant with this ideology of culture was what might be called an ideology of legality or logic, by which political legitimacy was conceived by the mandarins as grounded in public law, not private whim or tradition. "To combat these notions, they create[d] the idea of an abstract and rational state which 'runs itself' according to fixed and logical principles and which stands above both rulers and ruled."[xiv] However, the mandarins distinguished between rational and autonomous public law (which is their tool to erode the authority of the nobility), and the private law that protects civic rights and liberties, the integrity of which they champion. However, the mandarins are hardly populists, and they see democracy as a threat to their own power as well as to the pure

law of the abstract state (which for them is ideally a constitutional monarchy), of which they are the arbiters.

These two ideologies – of culture and of legality – were linked in another myth of the mandarins: that the state is a mere machine that has no meaning and can win no real loyalties if it does not promote the flourishing of moral, cultural and spiritual values, the strength of which is reflected in the state's right to assert itself at home and abroad. As the society continued to industrialize, ultimately the mandarins fell by the wayside as new groups, like capitalists and industrial workers, emerged and rose in power. Subsequently, the ideology of Kultur might have persisted, but it was permanently marginalized.

In yet another revision of the relationship between German political ideology and academic cultural theory, Woodruff Smith in Politics and the Sciences of Culture in Germany claimed that although the cultural sciences were originally rooted in the philosophy of early Romanticism, they were later appropriated by politically marginalized German liberals in the later nineteenth century who sought to adjust that discourse to Enlightenment conceptions of the social sciences. The implication here is that there is a distinction between the mandarin sciences of spirit and the later Enlightenment-inspired sciences of culture in Germany. Although Smith asserts that theory maintains a certain autonomy from ideology, it does so by necessity in order to bolster its credibility as objective; but there is an overlap between the two, and this is the political motive behind the theory. Ultimately, he claims, even as the political program of the German liberals disintegrated, their theory of culture ironically proliferated brilliantly, producing original and influential social theory that has been broadly adopted

in modern social thought. Much of this social theory was later appropriated by conservative German nationalists as well as by Nazi 'intellectuals'.[xv]

However, not only did this German idea of Kultur distinguish itself from the more French notion of civilization, but it diverged as well from the more universal, egalitarian and 'democratic' idea of culture found in contemporary anthropology that developed in the United States and that portrayed culture as ubiquitous, a possession of all peoples. Despite the obligation the American social sciences might have had toward the German academic world in which so many American scholars were trained, and despite the obvious debt the American(ized) notion of culture owed to the German conception of Kultur, the American idea of culture was unique in its pluralism. There had been conceptualizations of Kultur that emerged in Germany that were genuinely pluralistic and relativistic, like those of Herder and Humbolt, most famously, but these were the exceptions. That is, although the direct line of descent in tracing the emergence of a pluralistic notion of culture in the United States might at first glance seem to lie in Germany, there are other sources as well, both European and American.

The English aristocratic ideal of 'self-culture' as personal refinement. Just as influential in shaping the American idea of culture – and no less influenced by the German tradition – was the evolution of the English conception of culture. A seminal and quintessentially English conception of culture is found in Matthew Arnold's 1869 classic, Culture and Anarchy.[xvi] In this deeply conservative polemic that links liberalism with the destructiveness of the mob, Arnold's vision of culture seems to join together, on the one hand, the exclusiveness of the French notion of civilization as an advanced social

order that constrains natural impulses with, on the other hand, the rarified idealism of the German conception of Kultur as a moral and spiritual personal accomplishment. It would become a fixture of British thought that culture was conceived as opposed to the twin evils of industrialism – materialism and mass culture.

Arnold's thesis that culture is but the possession of the privileged few was destined to become the orthodoxy in the English tradition. T.S. Eliot, however, was the proverbial exception that proves the rule. In his 1948 Notes Toward the Definition of Culture, Eliot adapted a more anthropological model of culture. However, he did not completely reject a humanist (that is, a German) understanding of culture as individual intellectual and spiritual development. Rather, he conceived personal edification as existing within the context of a class structure, as well as within the frameworks of both national regional diversity and religious sectional variation. The diverse parts of society all function to support the integral whole of a national culture, with each maintaining its own worthy distinctiveness. These are the conditions of culture.

> The first of these is organic (not merely planned, but growing) structure, such as will foster the hereditary transmission of culture within a culture: and this requires the persistence of social classes. The second is the necessity that a culture should be analyzable, geographically, into local cultures: this raises the problem of 'regionalism'. The third is the balance of unity and diversity in religion – that is, universality of doctrine with particularity of cult and devotion.[xvii]

Eliot ultimately championed a relativism or pluralism that protested that national and popular cultures needed to be appreciated on their own terms. But he was a typical English conservative both in his aversion to 'universal', common or mass culture, as well as in his commitment to hierarchical structures that would serve to nourish national cultures (and would sustain even working class culture).

In 1958, Raymond Williams published a history of the English idea of culture, entitled Culture and Society, 1780-1950. Williams' analysis concluded that the English tradition of theorizing culture developed in response to both the trauma of industrialization and the subsequent emergence of mass culture, and conceived high culture as a remedy to the de-humanizing influences of the modern world. In fact, Williams observed that the word 'culture' took on its general current meaning in the English language around the period of the French Revolution, as did a whole constellation of other words, such as 'industry', 'class', 'art', 'democracy'. That is, the meaning of these words was transformed seemingly overnight from their older meanings into their current connotations. For example, 'industry' and 'art' once meant skill, 'class' meant school, 'culture' meant to tend the growth of something (usually agricultural), and 'democratic' meant mob-like. Industrialism had transformed society, and the idea of culture came to embody what should be considered of greatest value amidst all this change. And culture was, in this German-influenced conception, something that was expressed in art.

It was the English Romantic poets like Blake, Wordsworth, Shelley and Keats who first opposed art (again, now deeply connected to the idea of culture) to materialism, and who sought to segregate art from the profane world in a kind of deification of the artistic and of 'genius' (which once meant orientation). As Keats wrote, "I have not the slightest feel of humility towards the public, or to anything in existence, -- but the eternal Being, the Principle of Beauty, and the Memory of Great Men."[xviii] In fact, as Shelley proclaimed, art stood as a challenge to materialism: "Poetry, and the Principle of Self, of which money is the visible incarnation, are [respectively] the God and Mammon of the

world." However, Williams asserted that the strategic aloofness that the Romantics attributed to art ultimately backfired against art's critical potential. "The possible consequences of the idea of art as a superior reality was that it offered an immediate basis for an important criticism of industrialism. The negative consequence was that it tended ... to isolate art ... and thus to weaken the dynamic function which Shelley proposed for it."[xix]

The connection of the idea of values with the idea of culture seems to vary somewhat in each tradition. In the French tradition, in which civilization is cast as progressive and rational, the importance of values is implicit – like when certain values are attributed to the civilized world, particularly its social institutions. In the humanistic and anti-materialist and anti-universalist German tradition, Kultur represents spiritual development, especially through personal cultivation and learning, or Bildung. Here, as well as in the elitist English notion, culture is understood more in terms of values than in the French Enlightenment tradition. But Kultur, Bildung and Geist are connected more with art, poetry and the image (Bild) than with the more functional (and less aesthetic) conception of values found in the American social sciences. For instance, in Parsons' structural functionalism, culture is linked to ideas and values, which directly regulate the norms that govern society. It seems, as we shall see later, that the connection between value**s** (as plural) and culture is most strong in the American tradition because in the European traditions, value is conceived as singular or absolute. For this reason, the American social science tradition would place a greater emphasis on identifying values in any ethnography, whereas value can afford to be an implicit term in other traditions. As Adam Kuper writes:

> In both these [French and German] traditions, culture or civilizations stood for ultimate values. It has been suggested that these concepts spread in the eighteenth century because religion was losing its grip on many intellectuals. They provided an alternative, secular source of value and meaning. Each tradition, however, had affinities with a specific Christian outlook. The idea of Civilization recalls the universalist claims of the Catholic church. Comte and Saint-Simon created a religion of positivism for which they borrowed Catholic rituals. Its central dogma was progress, which stood for secular, this-worldly salvation. The German notions of Bildung and Kultur, characteristically expressed in a spiritual idiom, engaged with the needs of the individual soul, valuing inner virtue above outward show, pessimistic about secular progress, are in turn imbued with the values of the Reformation, and Thomas Mann suggested that the Reformation had immunized Germans against the ideas of the French Revolution.[xx]

As T.S. Eliot noted, the idea of culture emerged in the modern world – or at least in the modern English and German worlds – as a kind of refuge for all ***things*** of value, if not a disembodied realm of values. Values *per se* – as when sociologists speak of value systems – might not explicitly be the contents of what is considered culture. Like art, however, culture is put on a pedestal and esteemed for representing what has value in itself, above the profane and pedestrian or the superficial and frivolous.

The question of one tradition influencing another remains salient in another way. Kuper has explained the Americanization of culture as the pluralization of a humanistic (and German) ideal of culture by (German-educated) American social scientists in the twentieth century. Indeed, just as Williams argued that the typically conservative and elitist English notion of culture was distinct from the influences of German Romanticism that inspired it, so too the pluralistic American conception of culture diverged significantly from the Germanic social-science roots that are usually attributed to it. However, those roots of the American culture idea might have been just as entwined in the ***English*** tradition as they were in the German. Moreover, their transformation might

have gone back to before the twentieth century and actually ***preceded*** the Americanization of the social sciences.

Added to this question (of whether there is a distinctively American conception of culture that pre-dates the relativistic social scientific paradigm) is the matter of the explicitness of a conception of culture in American thought. Just as the idea of value remains basically implicit in and yet central to the various European conceptions of culture, so too the idea of culture itself may be largely unspoken in a given intellectual tradition that is, in fact, focused on that very idea. Even if it could be argued that there long existed a pluralistic notion of culture in American thought, it could have remained largely implicit and hidden. Moreover, it might have continued to remain implicit long since – perhaps even into our own time.

Emerson: The idea of culture Americanized. If there is an original American voice that inspired a new vision of culture, it might be found in the works of Ralph Waldo Emerson. Moreover, this idea of culture is directly linked to a new conception of value. In The American Evasion of Philosophy, Cornell West argued that the entire tradition of philosophical pragmatism (from Pierce to Rorty) finds its origin in Emerson's re-orientation of value. Emerson re-imagined the purpose of human life, and shifted its focus from the pursuit of otherworldly ideals to the fulfillment of human needs.[xxi]

West did not mention this re-orientation of human values by Emerson as a theory of culture. But it has been asserted that Emerson did develop his own notion of culture. In A Point Outside: Emerson's Theory of Culture (unpublished dissertation), Dean Forbes Dietrich claims that Emerson was a culture theorist.[xxii] For instance, in 'The

American Scholar' not only did Emerson provide a democratic vision of culture, but it also prefigured his later pragmatist strain. Dietrich claims that there is an "American strain of culture" that combines the humanist (or "literary") vision with the anthropological model of culture. This combination is not limited to American thought, but American thought is its paragon; likewise, in America, it is not simply derived from Emerson, but he is its "principle source and exemplum" in America. The reasons for this new vision of culture was political, geographic and historical, since Americans saw themselves as a new, democratic people in a new land who had (for better or worse) displaced earlier and very different inhabitants of the continent. Most important, Dietrich claims, is the Western perception of the indigenous peoples, and Dietrich concludes after scanning Emerson's journals that Emerson exhibits contradictory feelings toward native peoples (which included condescension, pity, sympathy, admiration and envy). But at a certain point, Emerson's thought on the subject grows profound.

> Emerson starts out by adopting fairly conventional ideas about "savages" and "civilization". But from Nature onward, we can also see that he seems to have an uncanny awareness of the power of culture as a category. He does not refer to it as culture right away, but he recognizes it as a force which he tries to resist, but which he cannot quite escape. ...By the time he delivers his address "The American Scholar" ... he has begun to think about ways of democratizing and rethinking the idea of "culture" which he inherits from so many European thinkers, a process that will continue for the remainder of his career.[xxiii]

In Nature, Emerson seeks to imagine an ahistorical, transcendental self, and his thoughts turn toward the native people in his own locale.[xxiv] His ambivalence is tremendous, evident as he slips from celebrating the simple life of the "savage" to condemning it as squalid. This is the genesis of Emerson's theorizing on culture, and it is also a prime example of how Emerson is not a Transcendentalist, despite the received

conception of his work. "Despite the best work of Bloom, Poirer, Packer and Ellison to the contrary, this conception has tended to predominate in much that we say and think about Emerson."[xxv] As Harold Bloom writes:

> Emerson is an experiential critic and essayist, and not a Transcendental philosopher. This obvious truth needs restating, perhaps now more than ever, when literary criticism is so over-influenced by contemporary French heirs of the German tradition of Idealist or Transcendental philosophy. Emerson is the mind of our climate, the principle source of the American difference in poetry, criticism, and pragmatic post-philosophy. That is a less obvious truth, and it always needs restating, now and always.[xxvi]

In Nature, Emerson initially does seek a Transcendentalist escape from civilization into nature, but "[h]e gets so caught up in his attempt to escape and experience nature fully, that he loses sight of that goal and focuses instead on culture. The result is a text marked by overlaps in genre and in purpose."[xxvii] The ambiguity is evident in the most famous passage from Nature, in which Emerson (supposedly) describes his forays into the natural world.

> Nature is a setting that fits equally well a comic or mourning piece. In good health, the air is a cordial of incredible virtue. Crossing a bare common, in snow puddles, at twilight, under a clouded sky, without having in my thoughts any occurrence of special good fortune, I have enjoyed a perfect exhilaration. I am glad to the brink of fear. In the woods, too, a man casts off his years as the snake his slough, and at what period so-ever of life, is always a child. In the woods, is perpetual youth. Within these plantations of God, a decorum and sanctity reign, a perennial festival is dressed, and the guests sees not how he should tire of them in a thousand years. In the woods, we return to reason and faith. There I feel that nothing can befall me in life,--no disgrace, no calamity, (leaving me my eyes,) which nature cannot repair. Standing on the bare ground,--my head bathed by the blithe air, and uplifted into infinite space,--all mean egotism vanishes. I become a transparent eye-ball: I am nothing; I see all; the currents of the Universal Being circulate through me; I am part or particle of God. The name of the nearest friend sounds then foreign and accidental. To be brothers, to be acquaintances,--master or servant, is then a trifle and a disturbance. I am a lover of the uncontained and immortal beauty. In the wilderness, I find something more dear and connate than in streets or villages. In the tranquil landscape, and especially in the distant

> line of the horizon, man beholds somewhat as beautiful as his own nature.[xxviii]

However, Dietrich notes that the irony of this most famous of passages from Nature is that it is fabricated: Emerson had, in real life, merely walked around town one evening and only later related it as a journey to the countryside. "This experience occurs not in the midst of the wilderness, but in the middle of town, not underneath towering trees, but in the midst of a bare and muddy common. Emerson has not traveled far to find this exotic scene, he only walks to the center of town."[xxix] In fact, James Cox points out that even the 'bare common' of the town was non-existent in the journal entry on which the passage in Nature was based; it, too, is a fiction. However, Cox observes, Emerson's real intent all along was cultural critique. "Thus, in his first essay, however much Emerson sought to define Nature, he meant to possess the ground from which he could see society. This twilight walker is occupying the space at the center of the village, not to reject the village, not to reform it, as much as to envision it in the fullest sense of the word."[xxx]

At this point, it must be noted that Emerson defined nature in two ways: 1) nature as opposed to artifice, and 2) nature as inclusive of all things (including artifice) except the self. And to some degree, his original purpose in Nature is to escape from artifice not in order to find nature, but to secure an authentic self. But what Emerson discovers in this process is that "nature" is a product of the imagination, that the self is an interpreter of the world.

> When we speak of nature in this manner, we have a distinct but most poetical sense in the mind. We mean the integrity of impression made by manifold natural objects. It is this which distinguishes the stick of timber of the wood-cutter, from the tree of the poet.... There is a property in the horizon which no man has but he whose eye can integrate

> all the parts, that is the poet. This is the best part of these men's farms, yet to this their warranty deeds give no title.[xxxi]

In this vein, when Emerson writes that "Nature always wears the colors of the spirit",[xxxii] he is explicitly asserting that natural beauty is a projection, an invention. Emerson usually writes of beauty as though it were an eternal Platonic ideal. Thus, the temptation is to take Emerson for a neo-Platonist, for whom, on the one hand, nature is in flux, and, on the other hand, beauty is a universal form accessible to the passive contemplative spirit. But just the reverse seems true: Emerson advocates an artistic, interpretive self that gives life to the world by imbuing it with a unique vision.

> Then shall come to pass what my poet said; 'Nature is not fixed but fluid.' Spirit alters, moulds, makes it. The immobility or bruteness of nature, is the absence of spirit; to pure spirit, it is fluid, it is volatile, it is obedient. Every spirit builds itself a house; and beyond its house a world; and beyond its world, a heaven. Know then that the world exists for you. For you is the phenomenon perfect. What we are, that only can we see. Build, therefore, your own world. As fast as you conform your life to the pure idea in your mind, that will unfold its great proportions. A correspondent revolution in things will attend the influx of the spirit. So fast will disagreeable appearances, swine, spiders, snakes, pests, madhouses, prisons, enemies vanish; they are temporary and shall be no more seen.[xxxiii]

This association of self with creativity resonates with Emerson's subsequent call for a distinctive American national literary culture in "The American Scholar", in what Oliver Wendell Holmes referred to as an "intellectual declaration of independence". However, Dietrich asserts, "although 'The American Scholar' is usually recognized as an important statement of American literary nationality, it is less that than a reflection on the culture idea itself. Emerson's lecture represents perhaps the most important moment in his developing theory of culture."[xxxiv] There had been calls for decades for an American literature or culture, but the ***idea*** of culture dominant at the time was the elitist English

one. This paradox – of an aristocratic notion of culture bound with a democratic ideology in the call for a national culture – crippled the development of American literary culture.

As a way out of this paradox, Emerson did not so much reject outright either European culture or an elitist theory of culture. Rather, he called for the re-appropriation of 'high' culture through the popular re-interpretation of texts. For example, all literature for Emerson runs the risk of corruption at the hands of a creatively sterile elite. "The sacredness which attaches to the act of creation, -- the act of thought, -- is transferred to the record.... Instantly the book becomes noxious, the guide is a tyrant."[xxxv] The democratic solution to this is creative interpretation.

> One must be an inventor to read well.... There is then creative reading as well as creative writing. When the mind is braced by labor and invention, the page of whatever book we read becomes luminous with manifold allusion. Every sentence is doubly significant, and the sense of our author is as broad as the world.[xxxvi]

Where English (and German) cultural theorists value a set of ideals supposedly embedded in exceptional texts, Emerson values instead the creative activity of thinking, writing and reading. In this way, Emerson puts popular culture on a par with high culture.

> The literature of the poor, the feelings of the child, the philosophy of the street, the meaning of household life, are the topics of the time. It is a great stride. ...I ask not for the great, the remote, the romantic; what is doing in Italy or Arabia; what is Greek art, or Provençal minstrelsy; I embrace the common, I explore and sit at the feet of the familiar, the low. Give me insight into to-day, and you may have the antique and future worlds. What would we really know the meaning of? The meal in the firkin; the milk in the pan; the ballad in the street; the news of the boat; the glance of the eye; the form and the gait of the body;--show me the ultimate reason of these matters...[xxxvii]

Another tendency in Emerson's thought that can be described as democratic is his (supposed) Transcendentalism. Although some commentators have argued, much against

the orthodox understanding of Emerson, that he is ***not*** a Transcendentalist, we shall see that even they acknowledge the elements of that idealist philosophy in his texts. However, this Transcendentalism is 'democratic' in a way very different from Emerson's repudiation of cultural elitism and his celebration of the ubiquity of creative interpretation.

The Transcendentalist strain in his thought equates all humans as participating in a somewhat homogenous universal consciousness, a 'democratic' vision of the uniformity and sameness of human beings that seems to run against the 'democratic' idea of a uniquely creative individuality. Nevertheless, this idealism, which conceives the self as eternal and fully present and in complete control of itself, is a very real presence in Emerson's thought. But it also merges into and blends with antithetical impulses that are equally real.

As we shall see, some observers have explained this contradiction as a result of Emerson's need to present in disguised form radical new ideas of subjectivity and interpretation to an audience that was firmly Christian in outlook. Moreover, Emerson himself, in all his creative dynamism, probably exhibited all kinds of contradictions in his evolving thought. In its pure form, this Transcendentalism seems distinctive. For example, the following is the first paragraph of the first essay, "History", in his collection, Essays.

> There is one mind common to all individual men. Every man is an inlet to the same and to all of the same. He that is once admitted to the right of reason is made a freeman of the whole estate. What Plato has thought, he may think; what a saint has felt, he may feel; what at any time has befallen any man, he can understand. Who hath access to this universal mind is a party to all that is or can be done, for this is the only and sovereign agent.[xxxviii]

This Transcendentalism obviously seems to run counter to Emerson's theory of culture, which proliferates both national and personal difference with its emphasis on creative interpretation. But the two themes often co-exist. For example, a conventional interpretation of Emerson would find in his famous denunciation of travel (in 'Self-Reliance') an echo of Transcendentalism and a negation of the influence of culture.

> Travelling is a fool's paradise. Our first journeys discover us to the indifference of places. At home I dream that at Naples, at Rome, I can be intoxicated with beauty, and lose my sadness. I pack my trunk, embrace my friends, embark on the sea, and at last wake up in Naples, and there beside me is the stern fact, the sad self, unrelenting, identical, that I fled from. I seek the Vatican, and the palaces. I affect to be intoxicated with the sights and suggestions, but I am not intoxicated. My giant goes with me wherever I go.[xxxix]

However, a deeper probing of Emerson's disapproval of travel traces it to his disavowal of the slavish imitation of elite European ways, a symptom of an atrophied personal creativity that would otherwise be the source of all true culture. "It is for want of self-culture [creativity] that the superstition of Travelling, whose idols are Italy, England, Egypt, retains its fascination for all educated Americans. They [the great historical figures] who [originally] made England, Italy, or Greece venerable in the imagination did so by sticking fast where they were, like an axis of the earth."[xl] This personal sterility is in turn the product of an educational system based on slavish imitation of foreign ways; the connection Emerson tries to emphasize is between a yearning for the foreign and a lack of originality.

> But the rage of traveling is a symptom of a deeper unsoundness affecting the whole intellectual action. The intellect is vagabond, and our system of education fosters restlessness. Our minds travel when our bodies are forced to stay at home. We imitate; and what is imitation but the traveling of the mind?[xli]

In Emerson's case, what seems to be Transcendentalism is often really a lionization of the all-encompassing creativity of the self. In the first example of his Transcendentalism given above – in 'History', where he claims that all individuals have access to the thoughts of all others within the universal mind – he seemed to be advocating a Transcendentalism that posits (in a notably ahistorical way that especially disclaims the relevance of culture) that all human experiences are commensurate and equally knowable to all. As the narrative progresses, however, it becomes clear that he is actually advancing the notion that historical study is a purely subjective activity. That is, the self is 'free' and 'sovereign' not in the sense of its eternal immutability, but because the individual is the ultimate interpreter of all texts.

> The world exists for the education of each man. There is no age or state of society or mode of action in history, to which there is not somewhat corresponding in his life. Every thing tends in a wonderful manner to abbreviate itself and yield its own virtue to him. He should see that he can live all history in his own person. He must sit solidly at home, and not suffer himself to be bullied by kings or empires, but know that he is greater than all the geography and all the government of the world; he must transfer the point of view from which history is commonly read, from Rome and Athens and London to himself, and not deny his conviction that he is the court, and if England or Egypt have any thing to say to him, he will try the case; if not let them for ever be silent.[xlii]

In fact, as Emerson suggests in "The Over-Soul", the soul is itself really the imaginative capacity to interpret and perceive reality as coherent, insofar as its wholeness is imagined and projected onto a disordered reality in which "[w]e live in succession, in division, in parts, in particles." Again, Emerson may use the language of mysticism to describe a correspondence between and identity with self and world, but the gist of the text is that the holistic vision is a projection of the self. "Meantime within man is the soul of the whole; the wise silence; the universal beauty, to which every part and particle

is equally related the eternal ONE.... We see the world piece by piece, as the sun, the moon, the animal, the tree; but the whole, of which these are the shining parts, is the soul."[xliii] As he writes in "The Poet", this envisioning of the world is an aesthetic practice rooted in poetic figuration and imagery from which all concepts originate, and its ultimate bi-product is language.

> The poet makes all the words, and therefore language is the archive of history, and if we must say it, a sort of tomb of the muses.... The etymologist finds the deadest word to have been once a brilliant picture. Language is fossil poetry. As the limestone of the continent consists of infinite masses of the shells of animalcules, so language is made up of images, or tropes, which now, in their secondary use, have long ceased to remind us of their poetic origin."[xliv]

In perhaps the most damning blow to the understanding of Emerson as a Transcendentalist is his depiction of this power of interpretation not just to create a vision of the world, but to objectify those who have presented other visions of it. This at least goes against the spirit of Transcendentalism's conception of a universal mind, which stresses the interchangeability of human experience based on the supposed universality of reason. In "Circles", Emerson claims that the horizons of our world are drawn by particular interpretations, and that alternative interpretations subsume not only the prior vision, but also objectify those who had advanced it.

> There is no outside, no inclosing wall, no circumference to us. The man finishes his story,--how good! how final! how it puts a new face on things! He fills the sky. Lo! On the other side rises also a man, and draws a circle around the circle we had just pronounced the outline of the sphere. Then already is our first speaker not man, but only a first speaker. His only redress is forthwith to draw a circle outside of his antagonist. And so men do by themselves.[xlv]

If Emerson adopts the language of religion in his Transcendentalism but advances very different implications in the substance and details of his thought, it is because his

audience allows him little choice: he must play to the crowd. He could well be deliberately ironic, as Barbara Packard opines. "Emerson never sounds more like one of Swift's Modest Proposers than when he is urging upon us truths he professes to value most highly. This is certainly shocking, but it is harder to say what sort of recognition that shock is supposed to produce."[xlvi] As Richard Poirier points out, this sense of irony is typical of those authors who conceptually exceed what is acceptable within any given culture yet who must communicate their radical new ideas within the present culture and its conventions. "Whatever their differences, Emerson, Nietzsche and Foucault allow us to infer two things: first, what they say in their writings is ephemeral, and, second, that to the very degree that what they want to say *can* be said, their language carries some degree of endorsement from the culture they live in, the culture they also resent."[xlvii]

Emerson therefore championed a notion of culture that rejected an English conception of high culture. Moreover, it is his emphasis on the ubiquity of creative interpretation that undermined a cultural elitism that would conceive textual interpretation as the domain of an intellectual priesthood. Along with this distancing of Emerson's idea of 'self-culture' as creativity from the more aristocratic English notions of personal self-refinement, Emerson also – at least implicitly – eroded the foundations of a Transcendentalism rooted in German Idealism. Instead, for Emerson, human consciousness of the world is a product of the integration of (inherently chaotic) experience through the coherent imaginative vision of the poet, the bi-product of which is language (itself the foundation of reason).

If 'language is fossil poetry' for Emerson, pretensions to high culture likewise represented the ossification or control of textual interpretation by elites, a 'tyranny', he

claimed, that was amplified through the educational system. This would suggest that central to any examination of theories of culture – closely tied to discourse on the potential birth, survival or flourishing of a ***particular*** national culture, as we see in Emerson's case – would be the use of a culture and a theory of culture as a means to political hegemony, particularly through the educational system. Also, since discourse on culture is closely tied to the interests of elites in regulating the social order, one could expect a certain amount of esotericism in the texts of a culture theorist like Emerson, since he must veil his more subversive implications: his radical anti-foundationalism is veiled behind of screen of transcendentalism and idealism.

In this case, we should turn our attention now to political histories of educational systems, and to sociological theories of the role of the academic field in the social order. In fact, it makes sense that theories of culture are, in a sense, philosophies of education, since the very word 'culture' is, from its etymological origin, deeply connected to the notion of cultivation. There is an evident connection between the idea of culture and an ethos of cultivation in all of its historical manifestations. But what is the social context of the emergence of Western educational systems that provide formal cultivation? It should, as Bourdieu claims that all fields are, be homologous within a particular culture.

The culture idea as homologous with nation-state education systems

In Education and State Formation, Andy Green sets out to discover the reason for the uneven growth of national educational systems in the nineteenth-century industrializing West. His special concern is with why the British educational system remains dwarfed to this day in all respects compared with its Continental rivals. Even

though it would have served the succeeding elites in England who represent different social classes to reform and upgrade their system to serve the class interests they represent, there is a peculiar stubborn continuity in the stunted development of public education in England. Of the nations he compares, Prussia developed early on an educational system that was widely regarded as advanced in terms of enrollment and attendance, whereas France also had a centralized system but had a more checkered record in terms of educational provision. Again, England diverged greatly from Continental systems of education, in which it has generally always been deemed backward by most criteria, and was late in developing a national system. And the United States was especially unique in that although it attained high levels of enrollment and literacy, it was highly decentralized. "The choice of these countries has the added advantage that although in the nineteenth century they were all emerging 'bourgeois' capitalist states, their social structures varied considerably in terms of industrializing and urbanization."[xlviii] The idea of education in this period became joined not just with the school, but with a school system that represented the newly emerging power of the state and its elites.

Educational innovations in Europe that originated in the service of the state had been a feature of all Western societies since the Protestant Reformation. In the seventeenth century, blueprints for national school systems were drafted, and in the eighteenth century "the first inchoate attempts to realize these were pioneered by absolutist monarchs like Fredrick V in Denmark, Maria Theresa in Austria and Fredrick the Great in Prussia."[xlix] For want of resources, these efforts at reform fizzled, but their agendas of state funding and compulsory attendance were to serve as models both during

the French Revolutionary era and in the decades that followed, and "embryonic national systems were first consolidated and given permanent institutional forms – initially in Prussia and France and soon after in a host of smaller continental states like Switzerland and Holland."[l] This comprised nothing less than a revolution. "The creation of a set of institutions solely devoted to education and involving a putative monopoly of formal learning and training for diverse occupations, thus signaled a revolution in the concept and forms of education and a transformation in the relations between schooling, society and the state. Education not only became a mass phenomenon; it also became a central feature of social organization."[li] As Michael Katz wrote,

> By the latter part of the nineteenth century, the organization, scope and role of schooling had been fundamentally transformed. In the place of a few schools dotted about the town and country, there existed in most cities true educational systems: carefully articulated, hierarchically structured groupings of schools, primarily free and often compulsory, administered by full-time experts, and progressively taught by specially trained staff. No longer casual adjuncts to the home and the apprenticeship, such schools were highly formal institutions designed to play a critical role in the socialization of the young, the maintenance of social order, and in the promotion of development.[lii]

Although this is an apt description of the broad developments related to the creation of educational systems throughout the industrializing West in the nineteenth century under the aegis of emergent nation-states, this process varied in tempo and scope from country to country. States and their elites eventually came to realize (although it took some longer than others to acknowledge this) that high rates of attendance, quality teaching and widespread literacy were dependant on the development of public systems of education that were state financed and regulated by an elaborate administrative bureaucracy. This was realized first in classic form by the 1830s on the Continent, in France, in the German-speaking states, in Holland and in Switzerland. In the United States, at least in

the North, this was carried out from the 1830s to the Civil War. Britain, southern Europe and the American South lagged behind in this process, especially England, which did not establish an integrated public school system until the twentieth century.

France's (1806-1882) development of its educational system presents an interesting case, since the parallel between the emergence of the culture idea and system of education is admittedly complicated. The culture idea first emerged in France in the 1770s with the invention of the word 'civilization', and by 1798 it could be found in the Dictionary of the French Academy. It was associated with the terms *civilité*, *politesse* and *police* (meaning 'law-abiding'), and connoted civility, courtesy and administrative ability – as opposed to what was 'savage' and 'barbaric'.[liii]

The French educational system was launched in 1806 with Napoleon's establishment of a central administrative apparatus with the founding of the *Université*. The Napoleonic *lycée* or secondary school had already been created in 1802, giving the state strategic control. "During the Restoration the central administrative apparatus was maintained and the state consolidated its hold over education. The law of 1816 put primary schools under the control of communal committees and the 1833 *Loi Guizot* extended state control over the licensing of teachers and inspection of schools and attempted to extend primary schooling to each commune."[liv] By the second Empire, the administrative and juridical structures of the system were in place, and by 1865 "the *lycée* and *collège* had virtually caught up with the private Catholic schools, accounting for 46 percent of the countries 143,375 secondary school pupils."[lv] Although by mid-century there was an "integrated educational bureaucracy at national and local levels which was responsible for licensing and inspecting schools, training and certifying teachers,

organizing public finance and regulating national examinations ... the spread of elementary education did not keep pace with the relative advance of secondary and vocational schooling, nor match the precocious bureaucracy of the administrative apparatus."[lvi]

This French case is unique in that the emergence of the culture idea in France is not quite coterminous with the development of a state educational system. The culture idea (that of 'civilization') enters into discourse in the 1770s, but only at the turn of the century – just as the modern educational system in France is launched by Napoleon – does the culture idea become an official part of the lexicon. For the other countries under study, this is not the case: in Germany, England and the United States, the national culture ideas are born and develop more or less simultaneously with the educational systems. The most obvious reason for this is that the culture idea is associated with learning or cultivation in other societies – particularly in German lands, where Kultur was the humanities-based ideology of the universities, whose trained elites were supplanting the French-speaking aristocracy within the state administrative structures, and who celebrated the folkways of the peasantry against the superficial affectations imported from France. In France, by way of contrast, 'civilization' was the product of the court and the nobility, and it referred more to outward manners and progressive institutions.

The point is that the idea of culture as civilization in France was initially connected more to the court and to the nobility and to the advancement of their cultural capital and to the development of the rational structures of the state than it was to the 'people', nor did it connote anything deeper in terms of cultivation than the display of mannerisms. This is important to remember in drawing a parallel or discerning a

homology between the evolution of the culture idea with the evolution of the social system. And the French Enlightenment culture idea did evolve in a radical way: although the idea of culture as civilization in France developed under the sway of the French Enlightenment, with its belief in universal progress through reason, from 1780 to 1830 the notion of civilization became relativized. This was due in part to two factors: the sciences in general, and ethnography in particular became advanced to the point that the universalism of the Enlightenment fell by the wayside as naïve and obsolete; and the trauma and collapse of the Revolution led to a disillusionment with the idea of inevitable progress. However, the Restoration of 1830 resurrected this universalism, along with its optimism. In this intervening period, the idea of civilization was temporarily pluralized, but not quite sundered.

Perhaps an unacknowledged influence on the development of the French Enlightenment idea of civilization can be found, as Bourdieu would suggest, neither in the causal effects of scientific advancement nor in political events, but in the homologous evolution of the social system. The pluralization of the idea of civilization was coterminous with an intensified 'democratization' of French life that promoted social and cultural uniformity at the expense of privilege, a social leveling of French society described by Alexis de Tocqueville in The Old Regime and the Revolution.[lvii] After all, it was the relativistic idea of 'civilizations' that had come to prevail by the time the cultural idea officially entered the French language in 1798; the Napoleonic reforms that established a state educational system were born just shortly thereafter.

Tocqueville argued that the increasing cultural uniformity brought about by economic development in France suited the designs of the French monarchy, who could,

in their quest to centralize France, increasingly circumvent the Church and nobility and the latter's privileges and liberties. Ironically, for Tocqueville, the movement toward democracy and equality in France militated against freedom and liberty (as privilege) and served the purposes of centralization and despotism: Napoleon was a product of both the Revolution and of the monarchy because he embodied both increased equality (as meritocracy) as well as increased authoritarianism. In this way, the relativization of the idea of civilization reflects the leveling of French society that is symbolically terminated with the (bourgeois) Restoration, resurrecting the universalistic notion of civilization; yet the process of social leveling continued in disguise via the Restoration. The point is that there is, along with political and scientific influences, a social component to the relativization of the French idea of civilation from 1780 to 1830. The idea of civilization, born of the court nobility and their sense of distinction, became meritocratic or 'Napoleonized' – egalitarian yet rigidly centralized; so too did the educational system in the same time period.

The **German (1780-1840)** development of an educational system and its relationship with the culture idea is complicated in a different way. German Romantic ideas of Kultur developed in reaction to the French notion of civilization from the earliest stages of the Enlightenment. The term 'cultur' had been "introduced into modern discourse by Herder in the mid-eighteenth century, and he had taken the term from Cicero, who wrote metaphorically of *cultura animi,* extending the idea of agricultural cultivation to apply to the mind."[lviii] The metaphor stresses not only the ethos of cultivation as *Bildung* (or personal progression toward spiritual perfection), but it also stresses how Kultur is bounded in time and space and hence associated with a national

identity that is potentially endangered by the spread of civilization or material development.

> In marked contrast to French and British intellectuals, who identified with the aspirations of the ruling class, German intellectuals defined themselves in opposition to the princes and aristocrats. In their eyes, the upper class lacked authentic culture. The civilization of the French-speaking elite was borrowed; it was not internalized but was a matter of forms, and of outward show. The moral principles of the aristocracy derived from an artificial code of honor. Excluded from the circles of power, German intellectuals chose to emphasize the claims of personal integrity and of scientific and artistic accomplishment. The individual achievement of spiritual growth was esteemed above inherited status and the artificial trappings of courtly style. The base of the intellectuals was the university, "the middle-class counterweight to the court," and here they fostered a literary and philosophical culture that was German, achieved, inward.[lix]

Norbert Elias, in The Civilizing Process, observed that while the idea of a rational, universal civilization appealed for obvious reasons to the dominant classes in imperial states like France and Britain, "the concept of *Kultur* mirrors the self-consciousness of a nation which had constantly to seek out and constitute its boundaries anew, in a political as well as spiritual sense.[lx]

It was for similar reasons of national security vis-à-vis France that a national educational system was built in Prussia. "Prussia pioneered the development of national education in the eighteenth century, but it was in the years between the Prussian defeat by Napoleon at Jena in 1806 and the death of Altenstein, the Minister of Education, in 1840, that the national system was consolidated."[lxi] The first important move in the direction of national education was in 1763, with Fredrick II's enactment of compulsory attendance laws, followed in 1787 by the creation of a secondary school board. The 1794 *Allgemeine Landrecht* law gave the state the right of supervision in all schools and required state regulation of all teachers. In 1808, Humbolt became head of the Bureau of

Ecclesiastical Affairs and Public Instruction and created the celebrated *Volksschule* system, which established a state administrative structure supervising a network of elementary schools, with each province given a board for secondary schools and each district a government board to oversee primary and junior secondary education. "The law of 1810 made education a secular activity and compulsory for three years. The regulations of 1812 reformed the *Gymnasium*, making it a nine-year public secondary school able to confer the *Abitur* certificate, which controlled entry into higher education."[lxii]

> During Altenstein's ministry (1817-38) elementary education was extended and increasingly regulated, reaching its acme of illiberal, centralized efficiency and, at the same time, winning wide international acclaim. By the 1830s there was thus a full national system of public elementary and secondary schools, which provided universal, compulsory schooling up to 14 years, and secondary education for the elite thereafter. Schools were public institutions, controlled by a complete state educational bureaucracy and financed largely through taxation. Public elementary schools already greatly outnumbered private schools and by 1861 they did so in the proportion of 34 to 1. The state not only licensed and inspected schools, but also licensed and trained teachers, specified the curriculum and regulated national examinations. Elementary education was clearly quite distinct from secondary schooling but the rudiments of an articulated hierarchy of schools were developing, assisted by the creation, from the 1830s onwards, of various types of post-elementary and intermediate schools. Decades ahead of any other nation, Prussia had an integrated public school system which, not coincidentally, also exercised the most rigid control over what was taught.[lxiii]

The argument of this study is that the culture idea and educational systems are homologous with one another because cultural categories tend to reflect the social structure as it is understood by the status quo. Both are uniquely 'reflexive', albeit in different ways: the culture idea reflects back on culture itself, and the educational system 'reflexively' injects cultural understandings back into society. Importantly, both developed coterminous with one another; indeed, in the German example, Herder

introduced the idea of *Kultur* in the mid-eighteenth century, and the first moves to school reform in Prussia were carried out in 1863. However, in this case, the culture idea and the school system do not share a direct, causal relationship so much as they both parallel one another and grow out of the development of a state in response to the imperialism of its culturally and militarily powerful imperialistic neighbor. However, at the level of higher education in German lands, this ***was*** a causal relationship: *Kultur* was very much the ideology of the university-based, humanities-trained 'mandarin' literati who were displacing from the administrative structures the culturally French aristocracy.

The **United States' (1830-1865)** construction of an educational system took place in the period in which Ralph Waldo Emerson theorized his culture idea, which this study assumes is the prototypical American idea of culture. Properly speaking, the United States has never had a unified ***national*** system of education, despite certain federal regulations. The northern, industrializing section of the country developed public education roughly 1830 to 1865, and the southern part of the United States adopted public education at the end of the Civil War. Despite the absence of federal support, the growth of public education in the United States was spectacular, with finance provided by public sources and the schools administered by state and county education boards. "Municipally owned and controlled, 'common schools' outflanked voluntary and charity schools during this period so that by 1850, 90 per cent of school and college enrolment was in institutions receiving public funds."[lxiv]

> Public school systems in northern states became increasingly regulated by the elected public education boards. These often appointed teachers, specified school books, regulated school terms and enacted compulsory regulation on attendance. By the 1860s rate-bills (tuition fees) had been abolished in most states.... In 1850 public expenditure accounted for 47 per cent of all educational outlays, which otherwise

> included endowments, fees and other parental contributions. By 1870 two-thirds of educational spending had a public source. Whilst less administratively centralized than educational systems in Europe, the typical educational structure in northern states had all the hallmarks of the public education system. They had achieved high levels of enrolment, a large measure of structural integration, complete predominance of public schooling, largely funded by the local state, and an incipient professionalization of teachers, at least in urban areas. Whilst there was considerably less teaching training than in Europe, high levels of literacy suggest that the reform movement did much to improve the efficiency of education.[lxv]

This connection between the interests of the elites and the character of the educational systems seems true in the United States as well, although in a curiously 'democratic' manner. Green documents how the 'democratization' of the educational system in the United States was carried out by the white Protestants majority in order to assimilate and subdue the non-'white' and non-Protestant minority. The impetus behind the much-celebrated public school system in America was not simply an idealistic drive to promote universal access, but a campaign for the majority culture to prevail over that of the minorities – a kind of elitism of the majority.

Parallel to the democratization of the American educational system for the sake of white Protestant cultural hegemony was the democratization of the culture idea in America. The culture idea continued to evolve in the twentieth century, transforming in the early part of that century into a pluralistic, anthropological notion that is now the dominant conception of culture throughout the world. As noted above, the classically American conception of culture originated with Emerson but worked its way into German philosophy and social theory (via Nietzsche and Max Weber, respectively), and then found its way back into the American social sciences (perhaps best propagated in the

United States by Talcott Parsons' functionalism), and from there it was disseminated globally.

Yet the primary impulse behind this adoption of a democratized notion of culture in American social theory was the perceived need for greater social control in a complex society, since social regulation had become the central mission of the social sciences in the United States (as Peter Manicas has chronicled). In all fairness, the social sciences in general in the modern age emerged in the modern world with the mission to develop new forms of social control to compensate for the decline of old social forms. But in the United States, this purpose was particularly true of the symbolic interactionism of the University of Chicago that largely derived from pragmatist philosophy. Somewhat in line with Elias's narrative of the culture idea as symptomatic of the on-going centralization of power in Europe since the Dark Ages, in the United States the social sciences in general and the culture idea in particular came to have a social control function, and existed at the behest of the state, even in its most democratized form.

In **England (1839-1902)**, the growth of a national education system roughly corresponds with the development of a distinctively English idea of culture. As Raymond Williams wrote of the English idea of culture in Culture and Society, 1780-1950, the English discourse on culture was initiated by Romantic poets like Blake, Wordsworth, Shelley and Keats, writing in the early nineteenth century, and was developed into a sophisticated critique of industrial civilization by Coleridge and Carlyle. However, it was Matthew Arnold's Culture and Anarchy, published in 1869, which most famously enframed the opposition of humanistic cultivation and material civilization in a particularly 'English' way. Unlike the German opposition of civilization and culture that

this was modeled on, cultivation was not associated with the traditions of a people, but rather with the education of an elite, and civilization was associated not with the progress of institutions toward universal rationality, but with industrialism and mass culture – that is, with the masses. Arnold was a progressive supporter of popular education, but he loathed the influences of both the philistine bourgeois and the dreaded lower classes.

The development of the educational system in England was a long, protracted affair with unimpressive results. "Nothing like a full public system existed before 1870, compulsory attendance was not effected in most areas until the 1880s, and elementary schools were not entirely free until 1891. It was not until the 1902 Act that state secondary schools were created and a fully-integrated educational administration consolidated."[lxvi] Whereas the educational system in the United States was decentralized to the state and county levels, it was nevertheless public and financed by taxes. Public education did not exist as such in England for the longest of times.

> Throughout the nineteenth century the mainsprings of popular education were the voluntary societies. The majority of schools were owned and controlled by the National Society and the British and Foreign Schools Society, representing, respectively, the Anglican and non-conformist churches. It is true that from 1833 onwards governments did give some financial support to the societies but this remained a small fraction of their finance until 1870.... Far from being undermined by Forster's 1870 Elementary School Act, the voluntary schools actually grew in strength within the quasi-public system which it created. By 1881 there were 14 370 voluntary schools to 3692 public board schools and attendance at voluntary schools was double that for the board schools. By 1902 the voluntary sector was still vastly dominant with 14 000 schools as compared with 6000 board schools. Secondary education, of course, remained exclusively private throughout the nineteenth century. There were no state secondary schools until the 1902 Act created the public grammar schools, exactly one hundred years after Napoleon created the state *lycée*.[lxvii]

Whereas education in the United States was decentralized yet public, in England the 'system' remained strikingly private and elitist in character for a very long time.

The primary assumption so far has been that the modern idea(s) of culture as a cultural category finds its structural counterpart in the emergence of modern systems of education. It had been assumed that these are parallel developments resulting from modernization, since the increasing demand for 'cultural capital' in the nineteenth-century leads to both the emergence of the culture idea as a (reflexive) cultural category and the construction of an educational system as a generator of cultural capital. However, we see that in the German case in particular, the relationship between the development of educational systems and of the culture idea is not merely homologous or parallel, but is causal: the conception of *Kultur* was the ideology of the German 'mandarin' elite, university-based administrators trained in the humanities who were displacing the culturally French aristocracy in the power structure.

However, recognition of the linkage between the culture idea and systems of education, whether parallel or causal, do not fully identify or explain the forces that have contributed tot the growth of both. It was Norbert Elias in The Civilizing Process who went beyond tracing the emergence of the discourses of culture and civilization to identifying the structural processes that fed those discourses, namely the long process of state building in Europe dating from the middle ages that compelled the ruling class over centuries to adhere to a steadily increasing refinement of manners. It is Andy Green's contention in Education and State Formation that much the same is true in the rise of Western education systems during early Western industrialization. He claims that elites in different countries built educational structures to enhance their control over the

population as the structures of the nation-state were being consolidated. Education systems vary from country to country because the social position of the nation-state power elite varies. What is needed is a look at all the other social forces that shaped the educational system in order to understand better what fed into the development of the modern culture idea. This will be done in later chapters on the United States.

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[i] Nicholaus Garnham, 'Bourdieu, the Cultural Arbitrary, and Television', in Craig Calhoun and Edward LiPunta and Moishe Postone, eds. *Bourdieu: Critical Perspectives* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993), 182.
[ii] Norbert Elias, *The Civilizing Process* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1978).
[iii] Fritz Ringer, *The Decline of the German Mandarins: The German Academic Community, 1890-1933* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 1969).
[iv] Pierre Bourdieu, *Practical Reason: On the Theory of Action* (Stanford: Stanford UP, 1998), 35.
[v] Quoted in Bourdieu, 36.
[vi] Ibid., 41-42.
[vii] Ibid., 58.
[viii] Ibid., 59.
[ix] Edward LiPuma, 'Culture and the Concept of Culture in a Theory of Practice', in Calhound, Craig, Edward LiPuma and Moishe Postone, eds. *Bourdieu: Critical Perspectives* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993), 16.
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CHAPTER FIVE

Early Twentieth-Century America

The primary argument of this chapter is that in the early part of the twentieth century in the United States, there was a revolution of sorts in terms of the basic assumption in various forms of academic theory, be it philosophy, social science or in the study of work and labor. In all of these fields, there is an underlying commonality of the subjective, valuing element in human nature being brought into relation with the objective, technical aspect of the social world. This constitutes a major paradigm shift, since historically the two were largely portrayed as antinomies.

Whereas previous philosophies typically divorced the objective realm from subjective intention, classical pragmatism drew them together in a dynamic that connected value or goals with the means to achieve them in a way that the two aspects were mutually influential. Moreover, the pragmatists understood values as pluralistic and relative, inquiry was understood to be a social process of problem solving shaped by cultural assumptions. In the American social sciences, a conception of culture as relative likewise emerged to become ascendant. In the world of work, the idea of creativity came into circulation, and was beginning to be accepted as relevant to the sciences as a source of ideas. In labor studies, the Human Relations Movement (preceded by the Personnel Management Movement, initiated in 1901) sought to rectify the harsh technical regimen of Taylorism by fostering communication and cooperation between management and labor in order to address worker needs and desires.

There are several reasons for making these comparisons between developments in different fields. First, this study adopts Bourdieu's hypothesis that the various fields

within a society at a given time are homologous to one another, since they have been similarly shaped by the processes of history as well as by the *habitus*. For example, in this chapter it is assumed that the realms of production and the realm of consumption shared the same basic ethos in the early twentieth century, which was that of a newly found sense of individual freedom; in the middle of the century, the ethos predominant in either field was that of conformism; toward the end of the century, both the productive and consumer realms harbor the spirit of rebellious creativity. This homology is often lost on commentators of the relationship between culture and economics.

But these homologies are manifested in many fields at any given time, including the fields of theory. Bourdieu had originally argued that fields are shaped by the unconscious workings of the *habitus*, but he later accepted that explicit theories (even those of the social sciences) were also forms of *habitus* that were imposed onto and internalized by social agents. This study also adopts Anthony Giddens' structuration theory, which asserts that rules – especially those manifest in the theories of the social sciences – both describe and influence behavior to the point where these rules can be understood to constitute society. Moreover, as Charles Taylor had explained, rules are themselves interpreted by the unconscious assumptions of the *habitus*, and this interpretation also alters these rules. Therefore, academic theory plays a special role in modern societies, akin to the authoritative rules (like those governing marriage customs) that govern more traditional societies. Explicit academic theories tend to reflect the unconscious *habitus*, especially that of the subject-object dichotomy that is the central feature of Western culture.

At the beginning of the twentieth century, however, the subject-object dualism was itself being radically reformulated. This dichotomy was throughout Western history an antinomy whose terms could not be reconciled, but in the American social sciences and in classical pragmatist philosophy, value and culture increasingly came to be seen as immanent, pluralistic and shaped by worldly concerns. It is the contention of this study that both these currents in American social sciences and in American philosophy find a common intellectual source in the thought of Ralph Waldo Emerson.

Cornell West, in The American Evasion of Philosophy,[i] traces the roots of the pragmatist philosophical school back to Emerson's revision of inquiry away from contemplation and toward social critique. Likewise, in Emerson and Nietzsche: An Elective Affinity,[ii] George Stack asserts that Emerson had been a profound influence on Nietzsche since the latter's teens to the point where Emerson had become Nietzsche's alter ego. It was through Nietzsche, Stack asserts, that Emerson helped revolutionize the European tradition. "Emerson does not merely occupy the same intellectual and psychological space as the European existentialists; rather, his surprisingly radical thought entered directly into the bloodstream of this philosophical movement by way of Nietzsche."[iii]

This study asserts that Emerson was also a seminal influence, via Nietzsche, on the social and cultural sciences in Germany and thus in the United States. Gertrude Himmelfarb has argued it was Nietzsche's conception of values as plural that were formulated decades later in the social science theory of Max Weber, and this aspect of Weber's thought was later absorbed into the German tradition.[iv] American social

scientists of the early twentieth century were socialized into this German tradition, usually during their training in Germany, as Peter Manicas has illustrated.[v]

It is this common source in Emerson that makes pragmatist philosophy and the American social sciences noteworthy theoretical streams that are not coincidentally homologous with one another. And yet this chapter also asserts that other fields, like that of labor studies, are also homologous with these other academic fields in that objective techniques and subjective affects were being brought into relation with one another, whereas in prior thought they were severed.

Again, what is found in these various fields at the beginning of the century is a new 'democratic' valuation of freedom, agency, and cooperation over a more mechanistic model of human motivation. This affirmation of subjective affect also involves, however, the recognition of cultural influences as predominant over technical considerations. Again, this is the case not just in classical pragmatism and the social sciences, but in the emergence of the Human Relations Movement in the realm of production, in the emerging consumer economy and in the newly emergent and rapidly evolving idea of creativity.

Philosophy: Classical pragmatism

In the early twentieth century, the philosophy of pragmatism rose to prominence not just within the rapidly professionalizing discipline of philosophy, but within the greater American society. This was evident in the view popular amongst both critics and champions of philosophical pragmatism that it was a kind of classic American philosophy, in that it espoused that truth is to be evaluated experientially in terms of the

ability to solve problems and make provisional goals. The emphasis in pragmatism was in understanding man as an active, cooperative, democratic, goal-oriented and problem-solving being. Pragmatism also recognized the semiotic basis of experience; the appendix below is dedicated to John Dewey's subordination of science and reflection under the prereflexive elements of art that create the presuppositions that science is grounded on.

The connection between science and life was, as the pragmatist understood it, a kind of two way street. Pragmatists like Dewey 'scientized' all thought, in that for them thought was goal-oriented and logical by nature and contained certain provisional assumptions that always needed to be verified through experience and experiment. This was a legacy of Peirce's refutation of Descartes. Cartesian epistemology had espoused a radical skepticism that denied the certitude of the existence of the external world, maintaining that the process of eliminating unreliable sense data inevitably culminated in the confirmation of one's own subjective existence as the only epistemological certainty and therefore the only legitimate foundation of knowledge ("Cogito ergo sum"). In contrast, the critical move of pragmatism was to point out that all thought is stimulated in the first place by the press of stimuli that called out for the need to act in the world. If Descartes was radical in implicitly negating the authority of tradition and religion, the pragmatists were even more radical in denouncing Descartes' foundationalism, that is, his claim that individual subjectivity is the foundation of all thought, casting doubt on the possibility of authentic knowledge of the world. Experience, for the pragmatists, was not subjective in this manner, but rather encompassed both the subjective and the objective – and involved as well the existence of other minds. In this way, all inquiry was scientific

in that it assumed the need to verify the assumptions maintained by a community of inquiry.

This pragmatist recognition of the general scientific nature of human consciousness in turn served to democratize the pragmatist understanding of formal science. That is, if all reflection was in a sense scientific, so that even the most pedestrian forms of problem solving (say, household chores) took on a scientific cast, then scientific method in general – even under pristine laboratory conditions – could be seen to be goal oriented and to involve a certain quality of improvised conjecture. This remarkably unpretentious vision of science has important ramifications for the project of the Enlightenment, which can be summarized as the advocacy of public use of reason over traditional sources of legitimacy. This is because this new pragmatist conception of science diverged radically from the Cartesian understanding, which conceived science as foundational and thus not contingent. John Dewey was the pragmatist philosopher who best elaborated what a pragmatist method of inquiry meant for science, and a brief review of this concept is presented in the critical notes in order to clarify it and its implications.

Charles Sanders Peirce

As diverse a school of thought as it may be, at the heart of all pragmatist philosophy is the placement of belief within the context of practice, with the consequent understanding that inquiry does not serve to ***represent*** reality so much as to ***promote action within it***. Pragmatism was, in its original formulation by Charles Sanders Peirce, explicitly a refutation of Descartes' representationalism and foundationalism. Descartes mind-body dualism was a revolutionary development in Western thought, introducing a

radical skepticism of whether the empirical world could be directly known. Descartes answered this problematic with the argument that knowledge was a reproduction of the real world grounded in the immediate reality of self-awareness. For Peirce, consciousness was grounded on the need and potential for scientific problem solving mediated by a theory of signs.

Peirce's criticism of a representational epistemology is connected to his critique of a mechanical metaphysics that conceives the world as governed by immutable and deterministic laws clearly apprehensible by proper methods of observation and analysis. In this understanding, nature is a perfect mechanism, and the anomalies, incompleteness and deviations that nature may seem to exhibit are actually traceable to the limitations of the observers. For Peirce, however, nature is itself fundamentally indeterminate and pervaded by chance, although there is a tendency toward increasing complexity and regularity.

> Try to verify any law of nature, and you will find that the more precise your observations, the more certain they will be to show irregular departures from the law. We are accustomed to ascribe these, and I do not say wrongly, to errors of observation; yet we cannot usually account for such errors in any antecedently probable way. Trace their causes back far enough and you will be forced to admit they are always due to arbitrary determination, or chance. (VI. 33, *W*, 170)

The mechanistic view of the world develops out of a simpler experience of it, but the sophistication that science has achieved demands now that an evolutionary vision of nature be adopted.

> Thus it is that, our minds having been formed under the influence of phenomena governed by the laws of mechanics, certain conceptions entering into those laws become implanted in our minds, so that we readily guess at what the laws are. Without such a natural prompting, having to search blindfold for a law which would suit the phenomena, our chance of finding it would be as one to infinity. The further physical

> studies depart from phenomena which have directly influenced the growth of the mind, the less we can expect to find the laws which govern them 'simple', that is, composed of a few conceptions natural to our minds. (VI. 10, W 146)

Peirce's theorizing in this vein took place in the context of the collapse of the Newtonian worldview and the establishment of the Darwinian model of evolution, and his historical contextualization of scientific theory is perfectly consonant with this.

The assumption that nature is in a state of flux alters the meaning of explanatory laws. Theories are not so much universal and ultimate laws as they are provisional explanations of uniformity. Interestingly, Peirce describes these uniformities as ***anomalies*** of sorts that diverge from the expectation of random occurrence; in a way, it is the outstanding or unexpected quality of uniformity – the irregularity of regularity, in a sense – in an otherwise chaotic universe that demands explanation.

> Uniformities are precisely the sort of facts that need to be accounted for. That a pitched coin should sometimes turn up heads and sometimes tails calls for no particular explanation; but if it shows heads every time, we wish to know how this result has been brought about. Law is *par excellence* the thing that wants a reason.
>
> Now the only possible way of accounting for the laws of nature and for uniformity in general is to suppose them results of evolution. (VI. 12-13; W 148)

Peirce's 'tychism' accepted that nature contained both elements of chance and diversity, but there was, in the universe, an anthropomorphic tendency to evolve toward an increasing sophistication and regularity. His metaphysics is, therefore, a 'Cosmogonic Philosophy'.

> It would suppose that in the beginning – infinitely remote – there was a chaos of unpersonalized feeling, which being without connection or regularity would properly be without existence. This feeling, sporting here and there in pure arbitrariness, would have started the germ of a generalized tendency. Its other sportings would be evanescent, but this would have a growing virtue. Thus, the tendency to habit would be started; and from this, with the other principles of evolution, all the

> regularities of the universe would be evolved. At any time, however, an element of pure chance survives and will remain until the world becomes an absolutely perfect, rational, and symmetrical system, in which mind is at last crystallized in the infinitely distant future. (VI. 33, W 158-9)

Moreover, in all situations, there are for Peirce form of analysis that correspond with the development of events, represented in the categories of *Firstness*, *Secondness*, and *Thirdness*, which correspond to, respectively, the experience of (first) feeling, (second) repeated occurrences in the world, and (third) laws that connect the first two events.

> First is the conception of being or existing independent of anything else. Second is the conception of being relative to, the conception of reaction with, something else. Third is the conception of mediation, whereby a first and second are brought into relation. (VI. 32, W 158)

This evolutionary scheme is the background and origin of John Dewey's conception of the five stages of the problem-solving process, and just as Dewey conceives that process of be *ad hoc* and variable, so too does Peirce reformulate his categories inconsistently. (For instance, he also writes on the same page, 'Chance is First, Law is Second, the tendency to take habits is Third.' VI. 32, W 158) Moreover, it has also been noted that Peirce's categories borrow the semiotic elements that also exist in Auguste Comte's tripartition of sociological logics – which are, respectively, based on sentiments, images and signs.

Although this cosmogonic process may seem like the subjective tendency of sentient beings (as it is for Dewey's model of inquiry), for Peirce this process is an actual property of physical reality in general that is instantiated in animals and people. For instance, in unfamiliar situations of anxiety, animals react frantically and randomly, but over time their behavior is routinized into habit as they learn to act effectively. The stimuli they learn to react to become cues and signals in a system of meaning, but it also becomes beliefs rooted in a course of action. Doubt does not consist in a Cartesian

skepticism of the existence of an objective reality, but rather in a state of anxiety over the uncertainty of beliefs. And we learn things through signs, never directly through the mode of intuition Descartes describes. In fact, the existence of the self is not immediately assumed by the 'self', but rather is conditioned on the confirmation of the 'fact' of mutual recognition by others in their beliefs. That an event occurred rests on the credibility of others, since

> my belief in that occurrence rests on the belief that each of those men is generally to be believed upon oath. Yet the fact testified to is made more certain than that any one of those men is generally to be believed. In the same way, to the developed mind of man, his own existence is supported by *every other fact*, and is, therefore, incomparably more certain than any one of these facts. But it cannot be said to be more certain than that there is another fact, since there is no doubt perceptible in either case. (V. 237, W 29-30)

There is, in a way, a democratic component to Peirce's rejection of Cartesian notions of direct intuition and the mathematical method of linear deduction and his embrace of the empirical sciences for all reasoning, including philosophical inquiry, since reflection ought 'to trust rather to the multitude and variety of its arguments than to the conclusiveness of any one.' (V. 265, W 40-1) Reason in general should not be understood 'to form a chain which is no stronger than its weakest link, but a cable whose fibers may be ever so slender, provided they are sufficiently numerous and intimately connected.' (V. 265, W 41)

This is a brand of behaviorialism, but one radically divergent from orthodox behaviorialism in the central role that it attributes to signs, in the active state of problem solving the subject is assumed to be engaged in, and in its sense of the increasing complexity and stability of both organism and environment. Just as the modern theory of inertia reversed the natural state from rest to motion, Peirce reconceived belief about the

state of the world – not Cartesian doubt about its existence – to be the original state of psychic equilibrium, one that is disturbed by stimuli in the context of inquiry. This is very much a prefiguration of Dewey's 'Reflex Arc Concept in Psychology', and of Mead's notions of the role of symbolism in the organism's control of the environment. Habit is not the passive response to the environment but is, rather, an achievement, since "the whole function of thought is to produce habits of action", and so "to develop its [thought's] meaning, we have, therefore, simply to determine what habits it produces, for what a thing means is simply what habits it involves." (V. 400, W. 123) From this, his maxim derives: "Consider what effects, which might conceivably have practical bearings, we conceive the object of our conception to have. Then, our conception of these effects is the whole of our conception of the object." (V. 402, W. 124)

Peirce later re-named his philosophy 'pragmaticism' because pragmatists like William James had altered it from a theory of **meaning** to a theory of **truth**, a vulgarization by Peirce's standards. For Peirce, scientific inquiry maintained a certain autonomy and dignity, and the truth was what an investigation concluded with. "The opinion which is fated to be ultimately agreed to by all who investigate is what we mean by truth, and the object represented in this opinion is the real." (V 407, W133) This 'pragmatic maxim' refers to the scientific process of ***clarifying ideas*** that are worthy of inquiry – ***regardless of their truth or falsity***. For Peirce, ***habit*** was the meaning of this clarified concept; in contrast, for James, ***results*** proved the falsity or truth of a proposition. For Peirce, science and education were to serve a greater spiritual end than mere material gratification of the individual's desires, and for this reason he found James' reduction of truth to results to be offensive.

William James

As was seen with Peirce, he regarded the scientific pursuit of truth to be a collective enterprise, but the truth nonetheless had a quality of an absolute. As Peirce wrote, the truth was "the opinion which is fated to be ultimately agreed to by all who investigate."

> Different minds may set out with the most antagonistic views, but the progress of investigation carries them by a force outside themselves to one and the same conclusion. This activity of thought by which we are carried, not where we wish, but to a foreordained goal, is like the operation of destiny. (CP, V. 407; W, 133)

Just as the chaotic universe is, according to Peirce's tychism, evolving toward a perfect regularity, so too do the researchers come to a seemingly inexorable consensus in their research, almost despite themselves. The point to be made here, however, is that there is a disjuncture on this matter between Peirce, on the one hand, and William James and other pragmatists, on the other hand, a disagreement that led to Peirce denying that he was himself a pragmatist in the sense that latter understood the term.

James's maneuver was to re-introduce Peirce's 'pragmatic maxim' back into epistemology. The maxim stated: "Consider what effects, which might conceivably have practical bearings, we conceive the object of our conception to have. Then, our conception of these effects is the whole of our conception of the object." (CP, V. 402, W, 124) This maxim represented Peirce's refutation of the Cartesian method of defining objects through an analysis of their inherent properties; instead, Peirce defines an object according to the whole of its effects.

For James, the implications of this maxim are radical in ways that Peirce did not envision, since for James the value of experience was not strictly limited to the standard

objects of scientific inquiry but rather embraced all phenomenon, most notably religious experience. This leads James to do the opposite of what Peirce did: explicitly embrace non-empirical experience in an affirmation of the diversity of experience and with an eye to worldly results. Whereas Peirce wrote of the inevitable conclusion of the scientific process in the formation of consensus as an end in itself, James embraces the proliferation of modes of experience for the sake of promoting life – and this promotion of survival is the sole criteria of truthfulness. "Pragmatism, devoted though she be to facts, has no such materialistic bias as ordinary empiricism labors under.... *If theological ideas prove to have a value for concrete life, they will be true, for pragmatism, in the sense of being good for so much.*"[vi] The truth for James is not marked by its ability to garner consensus, but by the satisfaction it engenders in the individual. This is its 'cash value'.

This sense of satisfaction is based on the coherence of experience a truth affords. "It means ... nothing but his, *that ideas (which themselves are but parts of our experience) become true just in so far as they help us to get into satisfactory relations with other parts of our experience.*"[vii] This is not the Cartesian 'copy' theory of truth as representation of or correspondence with an outer reality, but rather an instrumental view of 'truth' as a tool to promote comprehension in understanding. "Any idea upon which we ride, so to speak; any idea that will carry us prosperously from any one part of our experience to any other part, linking things satisfactorily, working securely, simplifying, saving labor; is true for just so much, true in so far forth, true *instrumentally.*"[viii] However, the sense of 'satisfaction' afforded by coherence is hardly synonymous with pleasure; this might be an instrumental theory of truth, but it is hardly utilitarian.

> These pragmatists destroy all objective standards, critics say, and put foolishness and wisdom on one level! A favorite formula for describing Mr. Schiller's doctrines and mine is that we are persons who think that by saying whatever you find it pleasant to say and calling it truth you fulfill every pragmatistic requirement.... The unwillingness of some of our critics to read any but the silliest of possible meanings into our statements is as discreditable to their imaginations as anything I know in recent philosophic history. Schiller says the true is that which 'works'. Thereupon he is treated as one who limits verification to the lowest material utilities. Dewey says truth is what gives 'satisfaction'. He is treated as one who believes in calling everything true which, if it were true, would be pleasant.[ix]

In other words, the satisfaction involved in considering an idea to be true does not involve the elevation of whatever ideas make people happy. Rather, ideas that satisfy the need for coherence – particularly in terms of logical rigor – are to be deemed true.

The truth is better understood, James writes, as a process of aligning an idea with events, so that in a particular situation the idea has relevance. "The truth of an idea is not a stagnant property inherent in it. Truth *happens* to an idea. It *becomes* true, is *made* true by events. Its verity *is* in fact an event, a process: the process namely of its verifying itself, its veri-*fication*."[x] But this verification is not a matter of correspondence, but coherence, since experience is not to be understood as either subjective or as objective – although we mistakenly think in these terms to organize experience. James was reacting against the rationalism of the Cartesian tradition that grounded thought on self-evident subjectivity, but he was also against the empiricism that argued that the mind was a blank slate that managed to build a complex of mature knowledge from rudimentary sense perception. Pragmatism, from Peirce on down, took into account the context of necessity, that is, the need for action, in the formation of consciousness.

In earlier works like The Principles of Psychology (1890), James did recognize states of consciousness as entities, adopting a 'methodological dualism' of mind and

body. However, he later abandoned this position, for example arguing in the 1904 article 'Does Consciousness Exist?' that 'thoughts in the concrete are made of the same stuff as things are'. But these two positions were never really that far off from one another, since he earlier embraced the mind-body dualism as a working hypothesis of physiological psychology (that explained all mental states as brain states, connected with bodily states), and this formal disciplinary assumption is not so different from the functional contrast within everyday experience of mind and body. If the distinction between subjective and objective is perpetuated throughout experience, this is done because of the instrumental nature of consciousness. If the assumption of all consciousness is intentionality, this in turn implies the manipulation of the objective world – involving, obviously, the assumption that there is such an external world. As James wrote in the Principles of Psychology, intentionality "always appears to deal with objects independent of itself".[xi] The ambiguity of this sentence lies in the word 'appears', since the perception of independent objects does not consist of direct apprehension but rather involves a complex, layered process. This is a refutation of empiricism, but there is a refutation of Cartesian rationalism involved in this as well.

Contra rationalism, to achieve self-consciousness, one cannot simply intuit the self through reflection, but must first engage in the world. A mind that is "conscious of its own cognitive function plays ... 'the psychologist' upon itself. It not only knows the things that appear before it; it knows that it knows them',[xii] but the precondition of this self-consciousness is that the "consciousness of objects must come first."[xiii] However, contra empiricism, the development of a sense of objects is a social process involving identification or 'sameness', since the "judgment that *my* thought has the same object as

his thought is what makes the psychologist call my thought cognitive of an outer reality."[xiv]

However, even though the perception of objects is confirmed through a process of social recognition, this is, in James's work, eclipsed by the process of perceiving objects, which selects for certain characteristics of the object and habituates these as markers into the system of signs that govern intelligibility. However, James described this process as one that took place within the individual, without reference to social or cultural processes. Other pragmatists, like Dewey and Mead, emphasized the social and cultural aspects of habituation, especially as they related to class and vocation.

This kind of philosophical social consciousness typical of the classical pragmatists implied a concern for social reform, which would logically focus on the transformation of the educational system, since it was the great socializing influence in modern life. Yet when James did discuss education reform, his focus was decidedly on the individual student and how instruction must be geared toward the student's interests. For the purpose of this study, although it needs to be acknowledged that James' contribution to social and cultural theory consisted of intimations of the culture idea, he nevertheless, with his limited focus on the individual, brought a new emphasis on the relation of value and technique. Teachers, he argued, should not simply present materials to students, but relate them to the student as a unique individual with particular interests, so that the student may actively pursue his or her lessons with a purposeful effort. He wrote in Talks to Teachers on Psychology: and to Students on Some of Life's Ideals that

> The teacher, therefore, need never concern himself about *inventing* occasions where effort must be called into play. Let him still awaken whatever sources of interest in the subject he can by stirring up connections between it and the pupil's nature, whether in the line of

> theoretic curiosity, of personal interest, or of pugnacious impulse. The laws of mind will then bring enough pulses of effort into play to keep the pupil exercised in the direction of the subject. There is, in fact, no greater school of effort than the steady struggle to attend to immediately repulsive or difficult objects of thought which have grown to interest us through their association as means, with some remote ideal end.[xv]

Effort and technique are subsumed not only under value, but under a pluralistic sense of values unique to each individual. In the writings of John Dewey, education was to be the matrix of democracy, not just of self-fulfillment.

John Dewey

For the purposes of this study, what is most relevant in Dewey's corpus is his use of contemporary experimental science as a basis for the reinterpretation of experience. For Dewey, knowledge is premised on the perception of relations, especially between action and consequences, and our understanding of relations is itself premised on our fund of experience, which in turn involves deliberate interaction with environmental conditions, the hallmark not just of scientific thinking, but thought in general. In The Quest for Certainty, Dewey contrasts this conception of experience with older conceptions. From the ancients we have inherited a distinction between *mechanical* and *liberal* arts, the former concerned with *things* as *means* and acquired through drill by the working classes, the latter with *people* and with *ends* and cultivated through contemplation by the leisure classes to prepare them for rule. There were higher and lower arts, each concerned with practice, but true science was alone a matter of intellect. This was a distinction between mind and body, spirit and senses, permanence and change, universal and particular. This Aristotelian notion of science assumed that there were

natural kinds or species defined by their essence or ends, universal categories inherent in nature apprehensible through the act of intellectual transcendence.[xvi]

In modern science, by way of contrast, knowledge is gotten through sensory observation, which is never to be considered final or ultimate, but practical and relative, calling for supplementation and correction by further observation and theory. Sensory observation, rather than setting a limit to the possibility of genuine knowledge, is indispensable to it, whereas the older science turned away from it. Modern science is focused on precisely the search for correlations of changes in natural phenomena. "Constants and relative invariants figure, but they are relations between changes, not the constituents of a higher realm of Being."[xvii] Modern science does not seek transcendence, but rather experiment or the control conditions in observation.

> ...we cannot introduce variation into remote heavenly bodies. But we can deliberately alter the conditions under which we observe them, which is the same thing in principle of logical procedure. By special instruments, the use of lens and prism, by telescopes, spectroscopes, interferometers, etc., we modify observed data. Observations are taken from widely different points in space and at successive times. By such means interconnected variations are observed.[xviii]

Modern science is active involvement in nature, not the separation from nature, and it devises new instruments and measures and systems of recording and alters the conditions of testing in order to probe the infinity of responses from nature to human interaction. Ancient science did, of course, involve observation and perception of nature, but this involved only the cataloguing of nature into immutable typologies. Modern science was not qualitative in this way, but rather was abstract, mathematical, technical – but it did not read qualities out of existence. Rather, it related qualities to their conditions. Dewey wrote of modern science that

> The work of Galileo was not a development, but a revolution. It marked a change from the qualitative to the quantitative or metric; from the heterogeneous to the homogeneous; from intrinsic forms to relations; from esthetic harmonies to mathematical formulae; from contemplative enjoyment to active manipulation and control; from rest to change; from eternal objects to temporal sequence....[xix]
>
> The revolution opened the way to description and explanation of natural phenomena on the basis of homogeneous space, time, mass and motion.... Heavenly bodies and movements were brought under the same laws as are found in terrestrial phenomena. The idea of the difference in kind between phenomena in different parts of space was abolished. All that counted for science became mechanical properties formulated in mathematical terms: the significance of mathematical formulation marking the possibility of complete equivalence or homogeneity of translation of different phenomena into one another's terms.[xx]

The philosophical empiricism that emerged in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, particularly in England, constituted a revolt against the classical tradition, which emphasized the role of the intellect in knowledge. Empiricism produced an opposing emphasis, attributing all knowledge to sense experience. Although Dewey considered the correcting influence of empiricism to be intellectually salubrious, it was nevertheless not a constructive theoretical alternative, particularly with regards to education, because empiricism promoted an exaggerated conception of the role of sensation in knowledge, and tended to conceive learning as passive reception of ideas. In truth, the learner reconstructs the environment in the learning process, along the lines of experimentation in modern science, since "experimental knowledge is a mode of doing"[xxi] and "Ideas are statements not of what is or has been but of acts to be performed."[xxii] Modern scientific experimentalism gives us a new conception of experience that provides an interactive vision of the relationship between ideas, sensation and active purpose that philosophy and education need to adopt. Which is to say, experimentalism provides a new relationship between the prior dualism of subject and

object in philosophy.

Dewey divided his thought into discourses on philosophy, science and aesthetics. He claimed that the methods of inquiry found in philosophy were precisely those that were used in other modes of inquiry. This effectively reversed the role of philosophy that had emerged in modernity, which was as an objective judge or arbiter of proper scientific procedure. Dewey's philosophy of science simply conceived scientific method itself to consist in the general principles of problem solving, and a summary of this is provided in the critical notes provided at the end of the chapter. In the critical notes is also an exposition of Dewey's philosophy of aesthetics. Dewey claimed that science broadly conceived constituted the sum total of reflexive experience, but that art comprised a pre-reflexive mode of experience that determined, through the arrangement of forms and elements, how social actors would perceive their environment in their reflexive, scientific mode of experience. Here he drew from the Romantic tradition, and quoted Schilling as saying that the artist is the creator of a society because he shapes the preconceptions and presuppositions that underwrite the conscious suppositions of daily life and experience. This represents in a most direct form Dewey's theory of culture.

Pragmatism as cultural theory

This raises the question of the role of culture in Dewey's philosophy, since he seems to mean by it here all human forms of activity (in contrast with the world of nature, with which they are engaged). Much has been made of Dewey's wish to have his book Experience and Nature re-titled Nature and Culture after its publication, but ultimately Dewey rejected the term culture because of its connotations; the term *experience* has a more open, unstructured quality that Dewey sought to preserve. The point is, however,

that Dewey was a cultural theorist, in that culture and experience are virtually synonymous in his thought. As he wrote in that work:

> If, however, language, for example, is recognized as the instrument of social cooperation and mutual participation, continuity is established between natural events (animal sounds, cries, etc.) and the origin and development of meanings. Mind is seen to be a function of social interactions, and to be a genuine character of natural events when these attain the stage of widest and most complex interaction with one another. Ability to respond to meanings and to employ them, instead of reacting merely to physical contacts, makes the difference between man and other animals; it is the agency for elevating man into the realm of what is usually called the ideal and spiritual. In other words, the social participation affected by communication, through language and other tools, is the naturalistic link which does away with the often alleged necessity of dividing the objects of experience into two worlds, one physical and one ideal.[xxiii]

If one also notes that *experience* is related in meaning to *experimentation* -- especially and explicitly in Dewey's thought, since pragmatism as a philosophy founded itself on experimentation (in the sense of verifying hypothesis) -- then the circle is completed: pragmatism is a kind of cultural studies. This can be taken further, in terms of political ramifications, since for Dewey (as well as Habermas), the method of scientific inquiry is also the process of democratic deliberation.

Dewey's idea of experience may better be understood though the mechanism of symbolism as articulated by George Herbert Mead in Mind, Self and Society.[xxiv] While traditional psychology was Cartesian in the way it started with individual minds and then tried to fit them into the material and social world, Mead showed how mind was not a subjective entity but rather was social behavior patterned by symbol systems. It was symbolism that promoted the organism's active control of the environment that elevated it above merely reacting to the environment. Again, as with Dewey, one finds in Mead a conception of instrumental reason bound not only with experience, but also with an

implicit notion of culture as symbolic communication (that is internalized by the individual).

Classical pragmatist philosophy seems to exhibit an inchoate and implicit notion of culture, and to explore as well how that idea of culture in classical pragmatism relates to an open-minded and democratized conception of scientific or instrumental rationality. In Dewey's thought, Thomas Alexander asserts, science subordinates itself to culture; whether or not one agrees with this, science and culture nevertheless seem to share a symbiotic relationship in Dewey's thought. Not only does pragmatism represents a cultural turn in philosophy, but this move is homologous or representative of what was happening in other fields in both academia and the larger society. Indeed, as Jerzy Szacki notes, sociology was labeled an "American science" from the onset of the twentieth century because "[i]n its most original features it was a result (next to the so-called new history and new psychology) of the intellectual revolution in American life that was marked by pragmatism."[xxv] The most concrete legacy of this intellectual revolution is the school of symbolic interactionism, Szacki notes, but its effect at the time and its more general legacy was to portray the individual as an active agent rather than as "an object subjected to the laws of nature."[xxvi] The irony of this was that this deterministic paradigm pushed aside by pragmatism was Spencerian and influenced by Darwin's evolutionary theory; pragmatism itself was inspired by evolutionary thought, although its conclusion was that rational thought was at the service of biology.

Social sciences: the rise of cultural anthropology

Another trend in the social sciences was the development of anthropology. This development signaled a shift away from an emphasis on social organization to the study of culture; the ethos behind this shift was a strong democratic ethos that conceived culture as ubiquitous and evolutionary schemes of progress as elitist and racist. Of course, today anthropology is associated with culture, and the term 'culture' has certain connotations, but this was largely a development of the early twentieth century. As Adam Kuper notes in Culture: The Anthropologist's Account,[xxvii] culture traditionally had two definitions. The first was essentially French in origin, and developed out of the Enlightenment; it is related to the concept of the progress of reason and relates to the growth of science and technology and administrative structures, such as the law. The second notion of culture is German in origin and emerged out of the Romantic reaction to the Enlightenment, and relates to both folk culture as well as high culture and its idea of *Bildung* (cultivation). In early twentieth-century American anthropology, Enlightenment-inspired evolutionary thought was eclipsed by the historicist school of Franz Boaz, which challenged the notion of a uniform, generic process of development. Cultures could be understood as unique wholes in a functionalist sense, according to him, but they could not be explained away by some common social law. If cultures seem to have something in common, according to Boas, it is probably because they have historically been in contact with one another, and their unique elements have diffused into one another over time.

This historicist school of Boas became dominant in the United States and, despite its functionalist tendencies (typically associated with Parsons' sociological theory), it was ultimately cultural in orientation. This was, in fact, ***cultural*** anthropology, as opposed to

social anthropology. In contrast to the development of anthropology in the United States, social anthropology had gained ascendancy in British anthropology at this period and maintained a functionalist focus on social structure; it derived from evolutionary theory as a kind of organicism without the predetermined development. Of course, there was in the Boasian school of cultural anthropology a strain of functionalism that sought a more coherent understanding of culture by explaining the many separate elements of culture by the context within which they each functioned. However, this orientation avoided the term "organism" because it did not conceive culture as working as a harmonious whole, like the organs of a body, and instead it used terms like pattern, style and configuration to describe society.

Within cultural anthropology at this time, there was a kind of hidden revolution, or *coup de grace* among Boas' disciples. According to Kuper, in 1924 Edward Sapir, the linguist and a student of Boas, published an essay 'Culture, Genuine and Spurious', in which he announced that the technical, ethnological idea of culture found in classical anthropology that conceived culture as "any socially inherited element in the life of man, material and spiritual" would have to be jettisoned.[xxviii] Here, Sapir noted, he was referring to culture as "civilization", but his renunciation was so explicit and thorough that even the historicism of Boas (which itself had repudiated evolutionism and its notion of progress in favor of cultural diffusion) was in turn suspect of harboring elitist notions of progress.

Sapir noted that the idea of culture was also understood in terms of both individual refinement and spiritual group heritage (high culture and folk culture, respectively). Sapir was himself a champion of 'genuine culture', by which he seemed to

mean a kind of fusion of these latter two concepts, a reversion to a classical humanist version of national *Geist*. Of course, Sapir did have a psychological notion of culture, and so he ultimately renounced the works of the likes of Ruth Benedict (even though her work was largely inspired by his theory) on the grounds that only individuals, and not cultures, can have personalities. However, Sapir's psychologism stemmed from his background in linguistics (related to the insight that language is an abstraction derived from individual speech acts). This linguistic orientation was the matrix of the most radical of Sapir's assertions, that "the 'real world' is to a large extent unconsciously built up on the language habits of the group", that "No two languages are ever sufficiently similar to be considered as representing the same social reality. The worlds in which different societies live are distinct worlds, not merely the same world with different labels attached."[xxix]

In sum, there is a similarity between the early twentieth century evolution of American philosophy and of American social science. In both fields, there is an emergent sense of scientific rigor in terms of disciplinary methodology (emulating as far as possible the natural sciences), but this scientism is subordinate to a kind of democratic or egalitarian ethos within the commitments of the newly dominant scholarship. Ultimately, the social order is described as primarily cultural in these fields, and instrumental rationality is rendered a subordinate factor in the life of individuals and groups. Moreover, culture is rooted in symbol systems and manifests itself as self-expression.

The Human Relations Movement

There emerged in the early twentieth century in the United States a new philosophy of work found both among certain influential academics and in the society more generally. Work was no longer conceived as a grim religious obligation in this philosophy, nor as mere labor to be exchanged for cash, but as a cooperative endeavor carried out between workers and managers granting freedom and recognition to the workers. This ethos was found most profoundly in the Human Relations Movement. In American Work Values: Their Origin and Development,[xxx] Paul Bernstein marks the nineteenth century as the great turning point in terms of the work values in American culture. The first part of his book (Part I, "Work as a Sign of Salvation") is as much a history of Protestantism in Europe as it is of America. It echoes Max Weber's thesis in The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism,[xxxi] which argued that the "worldly asceticism" found in capitalism – in which wealth is not enjoyed, but rather plowed right back into production – derived from Protestant doctrines that repudiated and reversed the monasticism of Catholicism. In Protestantism, sin was no longer associated with worldliness, but with idleness, and one's religious calling or vocation was not to be found in withdrawal from the world but in engagement with it in an effort to purify it through one's labor or profession.

Of course, Weber's thesis is that this kind of austere work ethic thrived and predominated in the early years of manufacturing capitalism, but at the cost of the religious faith that had animated its earlier manifestation. Bernstein concurs, stating that after the War of 1812, "work values in America underwent revolutionary change. They

continued to reflect Poor Richard's enthusiasm for work, perseverance, and thrift, but unashamedly elevated success and opportunity in the American belief system."[xxxii]

But the second part of Bernstein's book (Part II, "Work as Alienation and *Opportunity*") also chronicles another cleavage in society, the emerging class divisions produced by industrialization that led to divergent work values. Within the growing middle class and the elite, there arose an ethic of opportunity and self-advancement based on classic, old-school Protestant work values. However, within the working class, there was widespread demoralization with the obsolescence of skilled labor and the traditional crafts, and the resulting dismantling of a certain autonomy of labor. It was only until the early twentieth century that American workers embraced the notion of worker solidarity, but here there was no trace of the virtues of success nor the notion of self-made men that the higher classes espoused. In fact, the deep pessimism of American labor precluded the ideal of the revolutionary transformation of society, so that American labor sought only increased compensation in its struggles.[xxxiii] Ironically, Bernstein observes, both the optimistic materialism of the upper classes and the pessimistic de-politicization of the lower classes led to the widespread embrace of consumerism in twentieth-century America. The bourgeois optimistic faith in hard work eventually became the dominant ideology, Bernstein argues, in no small measure because of their dissemination through children's literature, as well as the efforts of teachers and clergy.[xxxiv]

There was thus, according to Bernstein, a major ***discontinuity*** between the ethos of "Work as a Sign of Salvation" (c. 1450s-1730s) and "Work as Alienation and Opportunity" (c. 1730s-1930s). There were also, he asserts, four ***continuities*** that existed throughout these periods and exist up until the present day in American culture: hard

work, opportunity, job insecurity, and the issue of the deserving and undeserving poor. In the 1930s, however, there emerged a new perspective, "Work as Self-Fulfillment", which came to challenge the dominant Taylorism that viewed workers as machines to be controlled efficiently. More specifically, scientific management was challenged by welfare capitalism, the Human Relations Movement, and the Human Resources Movement. "If they were to work diligently in the competitive world of the late twentieth century, workers required meaningful jobs, some autonomy, and feedback. The old Lutheran emphasis on working hard as a sign of salvation had been transmuted to a desire for employment that would stretch individual creativity."[xxxv]

The Human Relations Movement first arose in the beginning of the twentieth century as a way of pacifying labor through improved living standards. Where Henry Ford had paid workers handsomely in order to improve their efficiency and productivity and change their cavalier work habits, in contrast, "welfare capitalism offered employees a variety of benefits which were neither required by law nor needed to improve productivity."[xxxvi] Despite this attempt to win the loyalty and cooperation of workers, control was meant to remain in the hands of management. Moreover, the welfare capitalist programs instituted by companies – like profit sharing, improved pay, medical aid, sick benefits, housing, libraries, restaurants, and club houses – were largely dismantled during the Great Depression.

Similarly, the Personnel Management Movement (originating in the National Cash Register Company (NCR) after the strike and lockout of 1901 had led to the defeat of the union), personnel departments were created to cover operations like handling grievances and discharges, regulating safety and sanitary work conditions, keeping

management abreast of labor legislation and training supervisors. "The Personnel Management Movement was strengthened by a series of important interventions during the Progressive Era",[xxxvii] such as the use of psychology to address worker efficiency and satisfaction, and academics recognized the role of unions, the economic basis of labor problems, and government intervention in labor disputes. Civic organizations, strong unions and the Wilson administration made employers re-evaluate their practices, so that employment managers began to displace foremen in personnel decisions. Worker cooperation with management was the theme throughout this era, and during "the 1920s many businessmen such as Rockefeller underscored the need for labor-management cooperation, but the greatest booster of cooperative industrialism during the New Era of the twenties was Herbert Hoover."[xxxviii] Researchers played perhaps an even more influential role, as Bernstein notes.

> More influential in the long run were the ideas of Mary Parker Follett. Like many others during this era, she saw the study of human relations as a way of helping people "interact and coact better." She demeaned the thirst for power in itself as "coercive control", and looked for a cooperative industrial setting that emphasized "coactive control". Follett urged that "we need a technique of human relations based on the preservation of the integrity of the individual." She looked to the functional cooperation of all employees as a group. Most important was the development of a cooperative spirit to accomplish "what the law of the situation requires. Final authority by managers, Follett urged, was an "illusion" that was disappearing. She believed that "arbitrary command" ignored the desire of others to have an element of freedom in their working lives. It was fallacious to believe that only managers wanted to do the job right, "that the worker has to be goaded" to perform properly. But if managers felt compelled to retain control it could only decrease the sense of worker "responsibility".[xxxix]

In the 1920s and 1930s, the heads of companies such as Proctor and Gamble, New Jersey Bell and Crown Zellerbach championed this program, as did the U.S. Chamber of Commerce in 1944. But Follett was not the only, nor even the most influential researcher

of the period. "[T]he importance of social relationships on the job was recognized by Elton Mayo during his studies at a Philadelphia textile mill in 1923-24. It also showed up in the research of other Philadelphia firms by Anne Bezanson in 1925."[xl]

> But it was the ideas of Mayo in particular that gave the Human Relations Movement its greatest impetus. Taken together with books by T.N. Whitehead and Roethlisberger and Dickson on the Hawthorne experiments, they propelled human relations to a position where the behavioral assumptions of Taylorism no longer went unquestioned. Beginning with his work in a Philadelphia textile mill, Mayo noted how consultation with workers on the scheduling of rest periods helped transform them from a "horde of 'solitaries' into a social group." He observed that "efficiency experts" had never placed much credence in what workers thought or said, and saw operatives as economic entities whose opinions reflected the ideas of a disorganized "rabble". In this modified work situation, however, Mayo observed that production rose by 80 percent during the next five months. Turnover decreased by 5-6 percent, and absenteeism dropped on Mondays and Fridays. Despite this modest level of success, Mayo still worried about the separation of work and family life. Work was no longer supported by a social community and easily led to anomie, a "planlessness of living" that was characterized by insecurity and normlessness. Perhaps Mayo saw a partial solution in the Hawthorne research, for it was here that employees found work group attachment a source of social strength and a first glimpse at "self-determination".[xli]

Bernstein notes that the "Hawthorne studies which followed from 1924 to 1932 provided the fundamental body of research that propelled the human relations movement for the next thirty years."[xlii] The experiments at this factory were initiated with the well-known experiments in which lighting was increased, held constant, and decreased, with worker consultation. Worker productivity rose with each alteration, and it was theorized that more than material conditions, it was empowerment of and attention to workers that improved productivity.

Building a sense of community through cooperative problem solving was at the heart of Dewey's conception of inquiry, and so the resemblance of his thought to the

changing attitude toward work is striking. But it is no surprise that this Human Relations Movement resembles the commitments of John Dewey's philosophy, since Dewey had been working with the progressive wing of Chicago's business community when he was at the University of Chicago, a collaboration that was to draw criticism from more left-wing activists. However, it is difficult from this history of American work values to find how culture and art fit into this scheme, although the ideal of creativity as self-fulfillment (if not explicit self-expression) was an obvious element in this movement. Tayloristic scientific management, which conceives workers as machines whose only motivation is earning pay, is debunked by a Human Relations Movement that conceives workers to be cooperative problem solvers; moreover, the primary satisfaction of the worker is not pay, but the work itself, understood as a form of creativity. In this way, creative self-fulfillment subordinates instrumental rationality. On a speculative note perhaps a quotation from Thomas Alexander on Dewey's life may draw an oblique connection between art and industry.

> In the early years of this century Dewey produced a prodigious quantity of writing, but virtually none of it treated the topic of art and the aesthetic, though his personal interest in poetry abided. In 1917, however, the irascible millionaire-industrialist Albert C. Barnes, owner of the best collection of French impressionists in the Western hemisphere, developed a passion for Dewey's philosophy. After reading *Democracy and Education*, he hung Monets in his factory and commuted to New York to attend Dewey's classes. Thus began one of the strangest and least predictable friendships of Dewey's life. Barnes, playing teacher in his turn, took Dewey to Europe and its museums and artworld. The fruition of the relationship came with Dewey occupying a place on the board of the Barnes Foundation and, by 1925 with *Experience and Nature*, once again directly discussing art --as "the culminating experience of nature."[xliii]

The emergence and spread of the idea of creativity

At this period of time a new conception of creativity was coming into acceptance. The natural sciences were re-conceived as a creative endeavor, as were the arts with the rise of Impressionism, which subordinated verisimilitude to self-expression. The application of creativity to the arts and then the sciences therefore represents the subsuming of objectivity to subjective processes.

Robert Paul Weiner, in Creativity and Beyond: Cultures, Value, and Change,[xliv] writes of the genealogy of the idea of creativity, and claims that the word 'creativity' came into being in 1875 in Adolfus William Ward's History of Dramatic English Literature, in which the author gushed over Shakespeare's "poetic creativity" – not only transforming a verb (create) and an adjective (creative) into a noun (creativity), but implying that there could be types of creativity other than the poetic. It was, coincidentally, roughly at this time that both international copyright and patent laws were established, a development that immensely benefited the chemist Alfred Nobel of Sweden after his patent of dynamite. Nobel had perceived that originality of thought cut across all disciplines, that it must be recognized and rewarded. Similarly, in the 1890s, the great German scientist Hermann von Helmholtz claimed that all creators – artists, writers and scientists alike – go through a series of stages in their work: 1) saturation in or preparation of information, 2) incubation, and 3) illumination or inspiration. (Graham Wallace translated Helmholtz's words in 1926 and, influenced by the mathematician Henri Poincares radical account written in 1906 of mathematical invention, added a final stage of 'verification'.) When, ten years after his discovery of benzine in 1855, August

Kekule admitted that his inspiration came from a dream of snakes, he was mocked; by the 1890s, his intuitive capacity was lauded and emulated by his colleagues.

This represent a 'democratization' of science in that it portrayed rational inquiry as akin to the artistic process, and the stages of this process of inquiry do resemble those described by Dewey. Likewise, artistic creativity itself at this time was altered in a way that paralleled pragmatist concern for method over content (which was regarded as provisional). In painting, Impressionism (both inspired by and reacting against photography) prioritized technique, style, form, color and process over subject matter and content, so that originality and novelty were valued over the portrayal of structures and objects, inspiring endless styles and fashions. This happened because master photographers had shown how the camera was hardly a barren, objective tool that it was at first seen to be, but rather was artistically pliable. Technology, traditionally regarded as mere 'craft', inconspicuously stood between science and art, but as technology expanded dramatically, art and science would merge together, so that "thanks to William Morris and other designers, some mass-produced use objects could be viewed as works of art, and the designing of technologically advanced objects could be viewed as creative."[xlv] Similarly, form and function were merged in architecture.

By Weiner's account of science, technology and art in the early twentieth century West, all three of these fields were pervaded by a spirit of creativity that transformed the way they were typically perceived and defined. In a sense, once photography was determined to be an art, painting in turn was even more severed from the conception of representation as verisimilitude. (This seems reminiscent of Sapir's detaching culture from civilization, so that even Boas' historicism was to lose favor with the 'elitist' social

anthropology it opposed.) In a sense, self-expression had subordinated problem solving in terms of the creative process, which can now be ascribed across all fields.

The social world:

Livingston's thesis: Classical pragmatism born of postmodern consumerism?

One of the common complaints that historians of classical pragmatism make about connecting social and intellectual history is the sense they have of trying to 'mix oil and water'; the two fields do not seem to have a proper interface or connection. However, by utilizing Bourdieu's theory, this can be addressed. The *habitus* or culture shapes the various fields in society so that they are homologous, or resemble one another. Moreover, this study brings in Giddens' structuration theory, which stresses the recursive relationship, even identity, of social theory and the social order. Although these theories solve the riddle of how to mix social and intellectual history, they present the challenge of verification: how valid are Bourdieu and Giddens' theories in this historical context?

James Livingston's thesis in Pragmatism and the Political Economy of Cultural Revolution[xlvi] is that classical pragmatism is a form of postmodernism based on the rise of a consumer economy in the United States in the wake of the Civil War and rapid industrialization. This consumer society, according to Livingston, altered the dominant conception of subjectivity, which had been embedded in the individualism of the small, self-sufficient freeholder, and which, in its waning days, was manifested politically in the populist movement that represented the interests of farmers and independent skilled laborers. The consumer identity, in contrast, is one that emphasizes mutual recognition in

the practice of conspicuous consumption, and fosters an intersubjective, non-individualistic sense of identity that is found in pragmatism.

First of all, classical pragmatism had not a consumerist orientation, but a *productivist* or *scientific* bent. Second, while there are 'postmodernist' themes in philosophy that stretch back to the Romantic era, those who attempt to historicize the postmodern in society usually limit it to the late twentieth century and its mass media, globalization and consumerism. Third, there are many different types of consumerism, from the fashionably rebellious posturing of the late twentieth century to the rampant conformism of the middle of the century. In the early twentieth century, the era of classical pragmatism, American consumerism was widely seen as a celebration of individualism or freedom.

Perhaps the most philosophically individualistic of the pragmatists was William James, who provides a seemingly obvious connection between consumerism and pragmatism in his rhetoric of the 'cash value of truth'. In one famous essay he did address the topic of consumerism, but hardly as an advocate. In 'A Moral Equivalent of War' (1910), he addressed the way that the modern economy of surplus ('the pleasure economy') undermined a sense of self that was structured largely by tradition and the harsh environmental exigencies that underwrote that discipline. Those who were personally threatened by the temptations of modern opulence were driven into militarism in order to buttress a wobbling sense of self. But James' remedy to modern militarism was the proposal to establish a Spartan equivalent of the Peace Corp, into which all young men would be drafted to wage an economic 'war against nature' as a sane and constructive alternative to war. Notably, this solution resembled Dewey's own vision of

collective and democratic problem solving as a source of community and identity. There may be a strain of collectivism in James' thought, but like Dewey's thought, it is not reflective of a conformist consumerism, nor is it without a strong democratic strain that seeks to avoid a worse regimentation.

The *influence of the new consumer economy*

Nevertheless, Livingston is on to something when he associates the pragmatist philosophy with the rise of consumerism. For instance, in Land of Desire: Merchants, Power and the Rise of a New American Culture,[xlvii] William Leach describes the transformation of American culture following the Civil War as the abandonment of republican ideals and Christian virtues for the secular and materialistic pursuits of the individual consumer. The religious vision of America as a paradise continued to persist, albeit in worldly terms, leading to a cult of the new and of youth. Originally, according to Leach, it had been Whitman and Emerson who were the prophets extolling new-ness, calling for an embrace of new experiences, new interpretations and an open expressiveness, but by the end of the century, this discourse had been appropriated by commercial capitalism, especially by the fashion industry. Equality was conceived in this movement not by the widespread ownership of the means of agricultural production by the yeoman farmer, but as the equal rights of all to desire and pursue consumer goods. There was a political backlash against this re-definition of democracy at the end of the century in the Populist movement, comprised of farmers and workers against business. Yet the democratization of individual desire – as opposed to the redistribution of wealth

and power – ignited the society with a powerful and newfound sense of personal ambition.

Susan Harris Smith and Melanie Dawson write in The American 1890s[xlviii] that this cult of the new took off in the decade of the title, but was accompanied by a mix of trepidation and excitement. Even the 'craze' of the 'safety' bicycle set off polemics on safety, health, decorum, dress, etc. Behind all this handwringing over otherwise trivial matters was the promise and threat that lurked behind talk of the 'New Woman' and the 'New Negro'. An even greater worry in this period, they assert, was with ethnicity and acculturation, because of the influx of immigrants, as well as with issue of class in a newly industrialized social order. In this context, self-improvement or 'self-culture' to ascend into the middle class through imitation of 'types' became of paramount importance. This idealized notion of the internalization of culture translated, in practice, into the mere consumption of cultural commodities as markers of status and social legitimacy.

What we find in these two texts is the wholesale appropriation of philosophical and literary discourse by an emergent bourgeois social order that sought to assimilate immigrants under the aegis of traditional American values (equality, independence, individualism) now associated with consumerism. In a way, this is a reversal of the causal link drawn by Livingston between philosophical thought and consumerism, since the economic realm did not so much spawn a revolution in philosophy as it appropriated and distorted that discourse. And this discourse was not so much that of the supposedly other-directed consumer preoccupied with fashion and appearance as it was of an

individualism that expressed itself as such in the court of middle-class opinion that demanded such a display.

Although the pragmatist philosophy seems better associated with the changing values of the workplace than with the dynamics of a consumer society, there are homologies between the two. In terms of individualism, self-expression is not just a feature of the consumer economy, but it emerges as a legitimate goal within the labor studies literature of the early part of the century. In the consumer economy as well as in the spaces of production, there was a tendency to validate individual input, expressiveness and quest for fulfillment and to harness this to the productive capacities of the social order. The work place was being democratized in a sense, albeit for the sake of greater profits. Perhaps the ultimate expression of this was the invention of the idea of creativity.

Critical Notes 5.1:
Dewey's scientific methodology

In the Logic of Inquiry,[xlix] John Dewey reduced the process of inquiry to five generalized stages: 1) a sense of anxiety, 2) the framing of a problem to be solved, 3) an evaluation of conditions, 4) a theoretical and empirical relating of these conditions with those provided by past experiences, and, finally, 5) the testing of the hypothesis. That Dewey framed these stages differently elsewhere and claimed that they are simply generalizations and not iron-clad *a priori* rules served to point out the flexible, elastic nature of this conception of science. Specifically, Dewey wrote about the general features of reflective experience in chapter 11 of Democracy and Education.[l] However, even in this chapter Dewey offered several varying definitions or descriptions of reflection. In its briefest form, these are expressed as: 1) Perplexity from an incomplete situation 2) Conjectural anticipation (tentative interpretation), 3) Survey (observation defining situation), 4) Refining the hypothesis with broader array of facts, and 5) plan of action that will test the hypothesis.[li] He offered a narrative summary of this process in the chapter summary, when he stated: "Thinking includes all of these steps, -the sense of a problem, the observation of conditions, the formation and rational elaboration of a suggested conclusion, and the active experimental testing."[lii] In both these examples, Dewey offered a model of reflection that diverges from that of the philosophical tradition, which typically casts reflection as disembodied contemplation.

Thought, for Dewey, is hardly a form of pure abstract contemplation. That is, reflection in his terms is not contemplation of some realm distinct from that of lived, daily activity. On the contrary, thinking is always a form of problem-solving, and the process of reflection involves not only addressing problems of this world, but it also

engages in always noting the consequences of thinking in the world, and continually modifying both thought and action. In his words:

> Thinking is the accurate and deliberate instituting of connections between what is done and its consequences. It notes not only that they are connected, but the details of the connection. It makes connecting links explicit in the form of relationships. The stimulus to thinking is found when we wish to determine the significance of some act, performed or to be performed. Then we anticipate consequences.[liii]

Dewey has expressed this process of reflection differently elsewhere. For instance, in chapter six, *The Pattern of Inquiry* (in Logic: The Theory of Inquiry) Dewey defines inquiry as "the controlled or directed transformation of an indeterminate situation into one that is so determinate in its constitution and relations as to convert the elements of the original situation into a unified whole."[liv] He describes this pattern of inquiry in terms that are basically the same with that of his stages of reflection, but there are differences. For example, inquiry is described as involving:

1. *The Antecedent Conditions of Inquiry: The Indeterminate Situation.*[lv] A disturbed and unsettled situation inspires anxiety and confusion, and a desire to return to integrity or wholeness through successful inquiry.
2. *Institution of a Problem.* The above situation is not problematic, that is, has not yet been problematized through inquiry. The second stage transforms an uncertain situation into a problem to be solved, and puts an end to panic and blind searching.[lvi]
3. *The Determination of a Problem-Solution.* The stating of a problem implies the existence of a potential solution. This, in turn, implies that not all the constituents of the problematic situation are uncertain, and implies the recognition that many of them are, in fact, settled. These are "the facts of the case", and constitute the terms of the problem, and they suggest a possible solution (which takes the form of an idea); the

clearer the facts, the clearer these ideas. These ideas and suggestions are embodied as symbols, and have no independent existence outside of concrete problem solving. (Even Kant, who recognized the interdependence of perception and conception, imagined ideas to originate from a realm distinct from that of the physical world of facts.)[lvii]

4. *Reasoning.* The meanings of the various ideas are brought into relation with one another through symbols in this step. That is, the original ideas are refined through a process of discourse.[lviii]
5. *The Operational Character of Facts-Meanings.* Both the facts and ideas involved in problem solving are operational in that they are selected and interpreted according to the needs of the situation.[lix]
6. *Common Sense and Scientific Inquiry.* The language of common sense is that of custom, whereas scientific inquiry is abstract and coherent and less partisan; they have different subject-matter.[lx]

In "Analysis of Reflective Thinking", Dewey again outlines the characteristics of the process of reflection. While his headings in the first section of the chapter ("Reflection Includes Observation", "Reflection Includes Suggestions", "Data and Ideas Are Correlative and Indispensable Factors in Reflection") echo his claims about inquiry noted just above, the second section of this chapter lists the "Five Phases, or Aspects, of Reflective Thought". These are: 1) suggestion (leaping forward to a solution), 2) intellectualization (of emotion into problem solving), 3) "the Guiding Idea, Hypothesis" (or rather, multiple suggestions), 4) reasoning (or elaborating ideas), and 5) "Testing the Hypothesis by Action".

That this schema differs somewhat from the one given in Democracy and Education (i.e., 1. Perplexity from an incomplete situation 2. Conjectural anticipation (tentative interpretation), 3. Survey (observation defining situation), 4. Elaborating the hypothesis with broader array of facts, and 5. plan of action that will test the hypothesis) is not quite so important in two ways. First, by now we have the general idea of what Dewey meant by reflection: practical problem solving in which ideas and fact were bound together from the start as products of a creative process. Again, this stands in contrast to the meaning of reflection within the philosophical tradition, which generally construed it as a kind of otherworldly contemplation or navel-gazing. Second, this chapter reveals something that is not so explicitly found in Dewey's other works, that is, that "The Sequence of the Five Phases Is Not Fixed". (This is a heading of the chapter, in fact.) In a sense, Dewey was ultimately consistent with his own pragmatist philosophy in terms of subjecting it to flexible, verifiable criteria.

In a way, what the classical pragmatists (and Dewey especially) seemed to be doing in terms of science is both an extension of and refutation of the Enlightenment project of displacing tradition with science. That is, classical pragmatism affirmed science, but it attempted to removes science's rationalist foundations. The process of reflection as Dewey understood it consisted not in contemplation of objective realities and external truths, but in provisional problem solving.

It seems to me that pragmatism, if only implicitly, likewise embraced but altered the thought of the post-Enlightenment re-appraisal. If Romanticism celebrated an organic and concrete model of the individual, society and nature in the face of the Enlightenment's atomistic and mechanistic abstractions, pragmatism likewise adopted

such a holistic approach, albeit without the foundational dualisms. For example, Dewey advocated a model of inquiry as cooperative not only because he felt that it was especially relevant ***instrumentally*** to an industrializing society, but was important as well in terms of social ***solidarity***, with inquiry (as "science") as one way to transform an alienating modern society into a community. (Indeed, the social theorist Juergen Habermas now claims to be a pragmatist; his philosophy is premised on the potential for social consensus through democratic debate between political equals who may not share socio-economic parity.) This anti-foundationalism is evident in other fields of Dewey's philosophy, not just in his philosophy of science, and this needs to be explored briefly in order to better identify anti-foundationalism as a recurring pattern in Dewey's philosophy.

Critical Notes 5.2:

Dewey's philosophy of art

Dewey's philosophy of art provides an example of his philosophical strategy of reconstructing the Western philosophical tradition by re-writing it with its ontological foundations sundered. In this case, Dewey is engaged not with the scientific tradition of the Enlightenment, but with the artistic theory of the Romantic era. Dewey's thought is usually associated with the philosophy of science, since he addressed matters of art only late in his career and only in a few books. Nevertheless, he regarded art to have at least as much import as science. Indeed, it is argued by Thomas Alexander that Dewey, in books like Art as Experience,[lxi] subordinates scientific inquiry to artistic expression. For Dewey, aesthetic appreciation is a pre-reflexive (pre-scientific) mode of perception, which consists in apprehending qualities as opposed to making arguments. The qualities manipulated in art alter our vision of the world and hence also change the pre-suppositions of our logical inquiry. Although Alexander does not note this, in the final pages of Art as Experience, Dewey quotes Schelling at length with approval, especially Schelling's dictum that it is the poet who creates society since he supplies its vision and pre-suppositions. The drift of Dewey's aesthetic theory is that self-expression does not consist of manifesting an already formed authentic self, as the Romantics would claim, but rather consists in articulating and giving form to feelings that are themselves vague and formless. In this sense, Dewey's theory reads like a Romantic treatise on art, only severed from any ontological foundations.

Thomas Alexander's thesis is that the primary, guiding concern of Dewey's philosophy is his theory of aesthetic experience. Alexander thus challenges the

prevailing wisdom that holds that Dewey's aesthetic theory was an atavistic departure from his pragmatist philosophy and represented a reversion back to the Hegelian idealism of his earliest writings. Alexander maintains that the fundamental concept in Dewey's system is that of "experience" and that the paradigmatic treatment of experience is to be found in Dewey's analysis of art.

Dewey's understanding of experience is usually associated in the literature with the instrumentalism of his pragmatism. That is, "reflection" or "inquiry" or "science" for Dewey (terms used interchangeably by him) refer to a process of practical problem solving that follow about five steps, best elaborated in his *Democracy and Education*: 1. Perplexity from an incomplete situation 2. Conjectural anticipation (tentative interpretation), 3. Survey (observation defining situation), 4. Refining the hypothesis with broader array of facts, and 5. A plan of action that will test the hypothesis. (150) (Consonant with his experimentalism, Dewey provided varying formulations of this process of inquiry, suggesting that the specifics of the process would depend on the particular experience.) He offers a model of reflection as a process rooted in verification (that is, in feedback), diverging profoundly from the philosophical tradition, which typically casts reflection as disembodied contemplation. Since Locke, experience had been understood as a subjective event within "mind". Alexander writes:

> From the start, Dewey's theory was opposed to such a theory. "Experience" for him meant a process situated in a natural environment, mediated by a socially shared symbolic system, actively exploring and responding to the ambiguities of the world by seeking to render the most problematic of them determinate. The persistent failure of his critics to adapt themselves to these new meanings had Dewey so frustrated by his eighties, that he toyed with dropping the term "experience" altogether, along with several others. *Experience and Nature*, his major work, was to be retitled *Nature and Culture*.[lxii]

However, Alexander understands Dewey's notion of reflection or inquiry (as instrumental) as subsumed under Dewey's conception of experience more generally. That is, Alexander suggests that rational inquiry is a mere subset within the potential range of experience. In this way, argues Alexander, "Instrumentalism was a tool, an organon, built to serve a far more general theory of experience_. The telos of experience is the aesthetic."[lxiii]

Experience is to be more broadly understood as always involving what Dewey refers to as "art": the ability to conceive experience as a narrative. Experience involves art in the sense that we imagine experience to possess narrative meanings, which, like language, are culturally derived (although the capacity is natural). The most profound kind of experience is what Dewey called "*an* experience", which are experienced as distinct and intense events that manifest a powerful sense of culmination, like witnessing a sunset or participating in a battle (similar to what Abraham Maslow referred to as 'peak experiences'). As Dewey writes:

> Art is a quality that permeates an experience; it is not, save by a figure of speech, the experience itself. Esthetic experience is always more than esthetic. In it a body of matters and meanings, not in themselves esthetic, *become* esthetic as they enter into an ordered rhythmic movement toward consummation.[lxiv]

It can be seen here that by "art" Dewey means art in the broadest sense, as in the classical notion of art as skill. The ramifications of this are that all of life demands ordering and intervention. Yet the artistic drive that seeks to order all experience (and, in a sense, render it artificial) is the most profound of *natural* drives. Whereas specific biological drives and reflexes are to be understood as (blind and passive) *impulses*, the guiding drive to order experience and organize activity is what he terms "impulsion".

Impulsion lies behind not just aesthetic enjoyment, but all experience, shaping experience with an eye to consummation.

In line with the harmony between Dewey's concept of culture and his naturalism is his concept of time as a teleologically determined structure. As Alexander writes, "*an* experience reveals the temporality as well as the continuity of experience",[lxv] and the hallmark of the aesthetic is the ordering of space-time (even static visual mediums) into rhythms. Clarifying the importance of Dewey's notion of time to his theory, J.E. Tiles has suggested that the evolutionary or historical development perspective (linked to both Darwin and Hegel, respectively), is the consistent feature of all of Dewey's varied thought.

> The principal features of Dewey's outlook arise from a method of proceeding, a habit of thought, which Dewey both recommended and practiced, that of looking at a unified phenomenon, whether it be sentience or self-hood, consciousness or community, as the product of internal differentiation over time in some simpler unity. This habit of thought works directly contrary to that in contemporary thought, which leads it to reduce wholes to parts and to treat parts as prior in the order of understanding to the wholes which they form, to neglect context and to seek to examine things in isolation from one another, and to deny the relevance of temporal development and to view things ahistorically.[lxvi]

At a later point, Tiles explains that Dewey's organicism involves a notion of time that supplants 'sequence' with 'series'. "It is possible, we have seen, to have an organic unity over time; a piece of music, the plot of a story, must have a temporal structure, must be unified by a temporal quality, which gives its episodes more coherence than simply one thing following another ('are succession in time') – there has to be a deposit at each stage and point entering cumulatively and constitutively into the outcome'...."[lxvii] "Constitutive" is the crucial word, since, as Tiles previously explained, Dewey's notion of "instrumentalism" actually involves a rejection of the typical idea of instrumentalism

(propagated by Aristotle) in favor of the idea of the means as composing the ends.

> [Earlier the] two ways of understanding the relation of means to ends were outlined, *instrumental* -- typified by the relation of 2 x 20p to a cup of coffee -- and *constitutive* -- typified by the relation of coffee beans to a cup of coffee. It is the domination over our thought of the former sense of means -- 'things that are only external and accidental antecedents of the happening of something else' ... -- which Dewey deplores, and he quotes from Aristotle's *Politics* to illustrate what he does not like: 'When there is one thing that is means and another thing that is end, there is *nothing common* between them, except in so far as the one, the means, produces, and the other, the end, receives the product'. What is wrong with this concept is not that it is false or inapplicable, but that it so dominates our thinking that it obscures the other, the constitutive, relation, which is, Dewey believes, more properly that of means to ends, a relation in which means constitute a "genuine instrumentality".[lxviii]

Alexander says that for Dewey, several "dimensions of *an* experience can be noted: expression, form and quality."[lxix] In terms of quality, this is directly related to Dewey's conception of temporality. "The underpinning for Dewey's philosophy of experience is a tenacious insistence on its radical temporality as well as its situationality.... Situations exemplify continuity, they have the possibility of growth toward consummatory, qualitative meaningful experience."[lxx] Whereas for Dewey inquiry or logic is marked by statements, experience more generally is composed of qualities, that is, immediate perceptions (like that of color). As Dewey states, "all direct experience is qualitative, and qualities are what make life-experience itself directly precious. Yet *reflection* goes behind immediate qualities, for it is interested in relations and neglects qualitative setting," especially in philosophical reflection, which regards quality as obscuring truth.[lxxi] Yet quality is fundamental to experience. Alexander writes, "Duality is present from the start as the defining and regulating aspect of situations, constituting the horizon and focus of experience and the teleology of action."[lxxii] Alexander claims that inquiry is but the focal point of experiential life, of the

"situation":

> For now, it must be noted that "the situation" provides the non-cognitive, qualitative context for meaning. Dewey explicitly argues this... : 'The situation as such is not and cannot be stated or made explicit. It is taken for granted, understood,' or implicit in all propositional symbolization. It forms the universe of discourse ..." All cognitive or discursive thinking operates as but the center, the tensive focus, of the field of experience.... This means that prior to the universe of explicitly, consciously used meanings, there is a vast, dynamic structure of prereflexive involvement with the world which forms the tacit order against which consciousness emerges and which it uses as its material.[lxxiii]

The vast field of prereflexive experience is a realm marked by emotion. (Remember, the initial stage of inquiry entailed anxiety.) Yet emotion is more than the experience of qualities through sensation. Emotion implies a deeper engagement with life than mere sensation. Alexander states that a very act is "tensive and coordinating, having thereby emotional tone or depth as well as structure in action. Experience embodies this intrinsically dramatic and rhythmic quality, and art arises from the conscious exploitation of these features."[lxxiv]

Alexander notes that the emotion-laden character of experience implies the potential for expression, but expression, in turn, implies the existence of a medium of communication through which we learn about others and then, through them, we become self-reflective beings. The presence of an articulated lifeworld leads to the development of experience as a self-reflective or conscious enterprise, spanning the range from non-cognitive feeling to immediately apprehended sense to cognitive signification. ... [E]xperience naturally has the capacity to have immediately embodied meaning that is not explicitly cognitive but which expresses everything which makes shared life human and worthwhile."[lxxv] Dewey seems to suggest that meaning is born of language, but adopts its ancestor, emotion.

Expression for Dewey involves not the discharge of emotion -- like the cries of an infant -- but its articulation. In a sense, it is the aesthetic corollary of his broader concept of impulsion as the drive to organize all experience, to be contrasted with particular impulses that demand satisfaction. This is an important revision of the idea of expression, and is often confused with the classic Romantic notion. As Alexander states, the theory that emotions are preformed, definite, identifiable entities infects our theories of art", and are manifest in both idealist and materialist notions of expression as the externalization of the internal.[lxxvi] In contrast, expression is understood by Dewey as creative construction and refinement utilizing the raw material of emotion, not as the birthing of something already whole.

Just as Dewey repudiates the traditional essentialist understanding of expression, so he rejects the standard essentialist definition of form, which Alexander characterizes as some sort of timeless, static essence underlying the work like an ontological skeleton, waiting to be intuited in an act of aesthetic appreciation."[lxxvii] However, in Dewey's radical revision of the meaning of form (in terms that neither Dewey nor Alexander use), form relates to the *context* of an art objects life, whereas *substance is the text itself.* As Dewey writes, "All language, whatever its medium, involves *what* is said and *how* it is said, or substance and form."[lxxviii] For instance, a stage actor's theatrical presentation is the *form* of a work of art, while the script is the substance. But the audience member's interpretation -- which changes over time, as does the presentation of the play -- is also the form of the art, the active shaping of the matter presented. Alexander writes:

> The form, then, is a transitive as well as transformational activity which passes from the interaction of the creator and his material to the interaction of the work and the audience. The form is no more in the object than in the mind -- it is the organization of response to a material.

> This presents Dewey with the paradox that the form, as the creative renewal of experience residing in the process of the various encounters, has no fixed and final essence."[lxxix]

If impulsion or the artistic drive shapes and organizes all experience, and experience is a social phenomenon that exists only through communication within a symbol system, art has the power to reshape the social and political structure. Indeed, the central practical concern of Dewey's philosophy was education. Alexander notes that "To understand the political history of a nation one might well begin by examining the stories told to its children."[lxxx]

The unconscious aspect of culture is especially relevant to Dewey's political philosophy considering that his definition of democracy was, like many of his definitions of familiar terms, idiosyncratic. As Alexander notes, "Democracy for Dewey is not a *name for a special political institution so much as one for such a creative-critical culture.* Political freedom is more the result of a free culture than the other way, Dewey insists."[lxxxi] Alexander quotes Dewey from Freedom and Culture (1962):

> The problem is to know what kind of culture is so free in itself that it conceives and begets political freedom as its accompaniment and consequence.... The problem of freedom and of democratic institutions is tied up with what kind of culture exists.... The struggle for democracy has to be maintained on as many fronts as culture has aspect: political, economic, international, educational, scientific and artistic, religious.[lxxxii]

At another point, Alexander quotes Dewey to the effect that democracy is the idea of community life itself, as an ideal that exists within the community -- indeed, that makes it a community. But that ideal is never actualized in any specific institution. In fact, the state, in this democratic culture, is perpetually under scrutiny. Alexander finishes his book with an assertion that criticism is a precondition for creativity, since a distancing from the status quo must preceed all original work. While he does not back up

this assertion with textual support from Dewey, a quote he cites earlier from Dewey's The Public and Its Problems (n.d.) implies as much.

> Democracy will come into its own, for democracy is a name for a life of free and enriching communion. It had its seer in Walt Whitman. It will have its consummation when free social inquiry is indissolubly wedded to the art of free and moving communication.[lxxxiii]

One gaping hole in Alexander's critique of Dewey's aesthetics is the topic of the artist's specific role in society. At the very end of Art as Experience, Dewey addresses the relationship between art and morality, and he laments that conventional understandings of that relationship either treat art as a vehicle for morality, or else divorce the moral from the aesthetic altogether. Dewey quotes Shelley with approval when Shelley insists that it is the imagination which is the source of moral systems in all their cultural variety. By this logic, paradoxically, for the poet to advocate for any particular moral code would be to sever the aesthetic from the realm of imagination that transcends particular moralities and hence from the source of morality and moral feeling. Dewey writes of Shelley's concept of art as the mother of morality, "The power of imaginative projection is so great that he [Shelley] calls poets 'the founders of civil society.'"[lxxxiv] Dewey is in full agreement with Shelley's radical vision.

> Except where "ideal" is used in conventional deference or as a name for a sentimental reverie, the ideal factors in every moral outlook and human loyalty are imaginative. The historic alliance of religion and art has its roots in this common quality. Hence it is that art is more moral than moralities. For the latter either are, or tend to become, consecrations of the *status quo*, reflections of custom, re-enforcements of the established order. The moral prophets of humanity have always been poets even though they spoke in free verse or by parable. Uniformly, however, their vision of possibilities has soon been converted into a proclamation of facts that already exist and hardened into semi-political institutions. Their imaginative presentation of ideals that should command thought and desire have been treated as rules of policy. Art has been the means of keeping alive the sense of purposes that outrun evidence and of meanings

that transcend indurate habit.[lxxxv]

The poet as author of a civilization is an idea so profound that Alexander should never have glossed over it, especially considering its placement as the substance of the last few pages of Art and Experience. This idea is to be found in Romantic thinkers, and even in Nietzsche and Heidegger, but Dewey provides a coherent and detailed account of the mechanism of this process that makes the other thinkers' formulations seem vague and mystical by comparison. Dewey's expansion of the definition of poets in the above quote to include "moral prophets" who spoke in free verse or by parable" provides a definition of the poet that is both generous and sober, and would obviously include a philosopher like Dewey himself.

If Art as Experience offers an anti-foundationalist account of the role of art as high culture with all of its socially transformative potential, it also integrates this with an anthropological conception of culture. (This is a typical move for Dewey, who systematically reconstructs what are usually taken to be opposing dualisms so that they complement one another.) This is a book about culture, yet the word "culture" is mentioned only once, linking together nature with both art and folkways.

> The fact that a civilization endures and culture continues -- and sometimes advances -- is evidence that human hopes and purposes find a basis and support in nature. As the developing growth of an individual from embryo to maturity is the result of interaction of organism with surroundings, so culture is the product not of efforts of men put forth in a void or just upon themselves, but of prolonged and cumulative interaction with environment. The depth of the responses stirred by works of art shows *their* continuity with the operations of this enduring experience.[lxxxvi]

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[iv] Gertrude Himmelfarb, *The De-Moralization of Society: From Victorian Virtues to Modern Values* (NY: Vintage Books, 1996).
[v] Peter Manicas, *A History and Philosophy of the Social Sciences* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1987).
[vi] William James, *Pragmatism* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP), 71.
[vii] Ibid., 58.
[viii] Ibid.
[ix] Ibid., 234.
[x] Ibid., 201.
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[xii] Ibid., 272-273.
[xiii] Ibid., 273.
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[xviii] Ibid., 84.
[xix] Ibid., 90.
[xx] Ibid., 97.
[xxi] Ibid., 102.
[xxii] Ibid., 138.
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[xxiv] George H. Mead, *Mind, Self and Society: From the Standpoint of a Social Behavioralist* (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1967).
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[xxvi] Ibid.
[xxvii] Adam Kuper, *Culture: The Anthropologist's Account* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 199).
[xxviii] Sapir, in Kuper, 64.
[xxix] Ibid., 72.
[xxx] Paul Bernstein, *American Work Values: Their Origin and Development* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1997).
[xxxi] Max Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (London: Fitzroy Dearborn, 2001).
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[xxxiii] Ibid., 143.
[xxxiv] Ibid., 160.
[xxxv] Ibid., 186.
[xxxvi] Ibid., 194.
[xxxvii] Ibid., 197.
[xxxviii] Ibid., 199.
[xxxix] Ibid., 199-200.
[xl] Ibid., 202.
[xli] Ibid., 202-203.
[xlii] Ibid., 203.
[xliii] Thomas Alexander, *John Dewey's Theory of Art, Experience and Nature: The Horizon's of Feeling* (Albany: State University of New York, 1987), 55.
[xliv] Robert Paul Weiner, *Creativity and Beyond: Cultures, Value, and Change* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2000).
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[xlvi] James Livingston. *Pragmatism and the Political Economy of Cultural Revolution, 1850-1940.* (Chapel Hill: Univeristy of North Carolina Press, 1994).
[xlvii] William Leach, *Land of Desire: Merchants, Power and the Rise of a New American Culture* (NY: Pantheon Books, 1993).
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[xlix] John Dewey, *Logic, the Theory of Inquiry* (NY: H. Holt and Co., 1938).
[l] John Dewey, *Democracy and Education: An Introduction to the Theory of Education* (NY: The Free Press, 1966).
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[lii] Ibid., 151.
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[liv] Dewey, 104-105.
[lv] Ibid., 105.
[lvi] Ibid., 107.
[lvii] Ibid., 108.
[lviii] Ibid., 111.
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[lx] Ibid., 114.
[lxi] John Dewey, *Art as Experience* (NY: Perigee Books, 1980).
[lxii] Alexander, xii.
[lxiii] Ibid., xiv.
[lxiv] Dewey, 326.
[lxv] Alexander, xvii.
[lxvi] James E. Tiles, *Dewey* (London: Routledge, 1988), xi.
[lxvii] Ibid., 192.
[lxviii] Ibid., 191-192.
[lxix] Alexander, xix.
[lxx] Ibid., 61-62.
[lxxi] Dewey, 293.
[lxxii] Alexander, 62.
[lxxiii] Ibid., 115-116.
[lxxiv] Ibid., 123.
[lxxv] Ibid., 123-124.
[lxxvi] Ibid., 221.
[lxxvii] Ibid., 233.
[lxxviii] Ibid., 106.
[lxxix] Ibid., 235.
[lxxx] Ibid., 271.
[lxxxi] Ibid., 272.
[lxxxii] Ibid., 173.
[lxxxiii] Ibid., 174.
[lxxxiv] Dewey, 347.
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[lxxxvi] Ibid., 28.

CHAPTER SIX

Middle Twentieth-Century America

In the previous chapter, it was observed that in many fields in early twentieth-century American society, especially in academic fields like the social sciences and in classical pragmatist philosophy, there was a shift in the relationship between subjectivity and objectivity. In various fields, there is an underlying commonality of the subjective, valuing element in human nature being brought into relation with the objective, technical aspect of the social world. This constitutes a major paradigm shift, since historically the two were largely portrayed as antinomies. The subjective aspect of experience came into dynamic relation with objective concerns like science and technique, and there was a new emphasis on agency, creativity, freedom, cooperation, communication, democracy, as well as culture. In a sense, subjectivity and objectivity – traditional antinomies in Western thought – were brought together at this time in American thought in a mutually influential dialectic in which the subjective is given predominance.

In the middle of the twentieth century, however, a general change altered the relationship between subjectivity (involving values and culture) on the one hand and objectivity (involving social structure and science) on the other. In a sense, in the academic theory of philosophy and the social sciences as well as in the general society, values and culture became more segregated from the social order and from science. For instance, science was increasingly conceived as value neutral, and the society itself seemed to have become a paragon of technocracy; subsequently, American philosophy and social science came to reflected both these trends. In this way, culture and values were subordinated across many fields to the social order or to science, and the original

balanced relationship established earlier in the century was thereby corrupted. Positivist philosophy negated values, the social sciences conceived value and culture as derivative of social structure, the concept of creativity was appropriate and promoted by technocratic government and business elites, and the social order of the realms of consumption and production were pervaded by an ethos of conformity.

This is, however, not to say that this period was not without the advancement or furthering of prior conceptions of subjectivity. It was at mid-century that the concept of creativity was 'democratized' so that all people and not just creative geniuses could see themselves as capable of creativity. Likewise, the pluralistic anthropological conception of the idea of culture is firmly established in American academia in mid-century and propagated around the world with the global hegemony of the American social sciences. Unfortunately, both these concepts of creativity and culture, regardless of their egalitarian aura, are closely tied to the interests of the technocracy, and their imposition throughout the world impacts and disrupts traditional cultures that have no such concepts, accelerating the process of global Americanization.

Philosophy: Postitivist Pragmatism

In the 1940s, American philosophy was rapidly changing in the face of new philosophic trends imported to the United States from Central Europe in the wake of the Nazi conquests. Among the best philosophers were the logical positivists of the Vienna Circle who urged their colleagues to take a "linguistic turn" in their theorizing, to forsake the psychologism of theories of "mind" and other ephemera and conceive philosophy as concerned instead with matters of language. Meaning was to be seen as a property of

whole sentences and not of individual words; moreover, the "truth-condition" of a sentence referred to its empirical verification, which is equivalent to its meaning. The truth is not some obscure ideal, but what one can confirm empirically. The implications of this are that statements that are not empirically verifiable or falsifiable are nonsense, so that, for instance, ethical statements are merely emotive, not meaningful. Legitimate philosophy was therefore strictly limited to the philosophy of science.

Political motives lurked behind this theoretical commitment to logic. In the minds of the positivists, European culture had sank deep into a quagmire of irrationalism because science and logic had advanced to the point where they no longer confirmed the philosophical assumptions that underwrote the educational system and which had provided assurances that human experience was by nature structured logically. Neo-Romantics (like Heidegger) had come to assert that experience was actually structured irrationally; the influence of this claim seemed to have devastating practical, political results. Logical positivists claimed that there were *no* a priori truths at all: metaphysics was bunk.

Pragmatism not only faced a challenge from positivism, but more immediately, from a native brand of realism that had, by embracing an a priori conception of logic, dispensed with any pretense toward empirical knowledge and confirmed philosophy's disciplinary self-confinement in a rapidly professionalizing academic environment. In contrast, classical pragmatists had come to seem like know-it-all amateurs. At the University of Chicago, the pragmatist Charles Morris realized that he could up-date pragmatism by refocusing it on Peirce's theory of signs, or semiotics, and thereby wed it to the new positivism, a move that was met with sympathy by positivists like Carnap.

Ironically, it was the positivists who benefited from this marriage to American pragmatism, since it helped resolve so many of the conundrums found in positivism. For instance, the principle of verification maintained an uncertain status, since it was neither definitional nor strictly empirical. Moreover, positivist research seeking to legitimize current physics instead showed how the same data can be equally well explained and predicted by many different logical schemes and frameworks. Carnap took a pragmatic turn, arguing that choices between one 'language' or ontological framework and another are pragmatic, that choices are made according to what better suits current science. There is no matter of fact on which a general preference for any particular interpretative framework can be based. The theoretical framework is the pre-condition for entities within it, and although this involved an ontological relativism (of competing frameworks), it implied no metaphysical relativism (of a priori entities, like facts). As David Depew writes,

> "Five is a prime number" is true *if* one chooses a framework of numbers. But the bare statement "Numbers (or substances, or universals) exists", is neither true nor false. For "external questions" about ontologies do not have truth-conditions that differ from those that apply to the "internal questions" that they make possible.[i]

Philosophy provides theoretical frameworks that are unverifiable, and as such constitute pseudo problems; they are, nonetheless, indispensable as theoretical frameworks.

Quine went even further than Carnap in this pragmatic turn. Languages cut up the sensational field differently, even when they seemingly refer to the same object. Choice between theories therefore does not consist of what works best to explain particular, objective data. Statements about the world were always part of a larger theoretical framework, a perspective that favored Jamesian coherence over correspondence theories

of truth. The greater implications of this are that the revered distinction between analytic and synthetic statements, and hence between conceptual frameworks and empirical truths, are discredited, so that even analytic definitions (e.g., "All men are mortals.") are vulnerable to falsifiability.

Quine's conclusion from this was that the choice of theoretical frameworks is best left to experts in the discipline, not to philosophers. Quine claimed that this was a return to Dewey's "naturalized epistemology" that located meaning in behavior, although it bypassed Dewey's psychologistic and inductivistic logic. But where Dewey's naturalism explained ordinary daily life as socialized and as biological, Quine's naturalism removed the mediation of a symbolic, intersubjective realm between the physical world and the inferential apparatus of prepositional logic. This was the new naturalism that inspired the behavioralism of B.F. Skinner, and that rejected the symbolic social behavioralism of Mead.

This positivistic new naturalism shocked Dewey. Dewey had been accused of a technocratic "pragmatic acquiescence" because he had claimed that values (as ends) were provisional and were shaped by the means available to actors just as much as they determined those means. Positivists, in contrast, simply dismissed values as merely emotive. Moreover, Dewey regretted his boosterism for American involvement in the First World War, and felt that this fed into the technocratic reaction that followed the war. He feared even more how positivism would amplify the technocratic impulse in the post-World War II years, manifest in consumerism, the managerial revolution and the rule of experts, and which together refashioned liberalism away from meaning public participation in democratic life to meaning protection and enhancement of personal

choice within the private sphere. As Bruce Kuklick writes in "The Professionalization of the Humanities", the positivist school had a profound impact on reshaping the disciplinary structure of higher education, now bloated with funding from the G.I. Bill.[ii] The social sciences mimicked the natural sciences in the quantitative approach; disciplines that failed this test were categorized as "humanities", which were supported now for their ability to dissolve students' dogmatic value systems (literature was especially valued for this end). As Depew writes:

> What is important here is not the need for experts. It is instead a certain conception of expertise: an objectivistic, external, nonparticipatory, technical conception of the relationship in which experts are assumed to stand to their society. Fostering that conception of expertise is how positivism helped create a new "meritocratic" governing and managing class or stratum, whose most powerful tools are informational technology and quantitative social science."[iii]

Pragmatist philosophers were now such experts, and no longer public intellectuals. But, as Depew continues, "nothing could be more ideological than proclamations of an 'end of ideology' and its replacement by 'value-free' scientific management.'"[iv] In a sense, values still existed in hidden form in this technocratic ideology, just as ontological relativism – with its assertion that theoretical frameworks helped produce the objects of sense data – lurked behind a naturalism stripped of its symbolist psychologism.

Social sciences: the rise of functionalism

The contemporary discipline of sociology in the United States is sometimes described as a product or even version of the sociological school of functionalism, which came to dominate the American social sciences in general on the middle of the century. Although this might over-state the import of functionalism, Jerzy Szacki states that

"Sociological functionalism is an original, perhaps epoch-making orientation, despite the fact that its influence has almost never reached beyond the American universities."[v] Functionalism achieved this by synthesizing and incorporating virtually every sociological tradition except Marxism, so that it offered a catholic theoretical system that tended to explain all social events as serving the harmonious operation of the social order. It did this at an unusually stable and pacific time in American history.

The dominant school of functionalism was launched in 1937 with the publication of Talcott Parsons' The Structure of Social Action, in which he presented a history of European social thought.[vi] Usually, such intellectual histories were more expansive in terms of encompassing the thought of a broad range of thinkers, not just social theorists, and were more restrictive in terms of limiting themselves to the national traditions of their own country. However, Parsons was bent on integrating the French and German traditions of social thought, which he identified as positivist and idealist, respectively. Growing out of French Enlightenment thought, the positivist tradition that dominated economics studied individual behavior to uncover law-like regularities that were attributable to a rational human nature. The response to this model of human nature emerged in the German Counter-Enlightenment, which asserted that cultures -- each with its own unique dynamic, and which is altered by the characteristics of particular historical periods – shape individuals to their ends.

Rejecting the usual polemics of literary theory and philosophy, Parsons' insisted that theory be tested by fact, and that this would lead to convergence as researchers discovered that human nature is somewhat rational, but also organic and at times guided by ideology. Parsons found three theorists who actually confronted this complex social

reality as Parsons saw it: Marshall, Pareto and Durkheim. Marshall recognized that values matter economically; indeed, the valuation of freedom is essential to markets. Pareto argued that irrational beliefs may provide coherence of thought, and that individual rational behavior may not serve society's rational interest. Durkheim claimed that society imposes its interests on the individual's by colonizing his or her consciousness through ritual and symbol. Just as these positivists thereby recognized the power of culture, the greatest idealist, Max Weber, introduced an element of positivism when he observed the wholly unintentional consequences of ideology.

By truly synthesizing idealism and positivism, Parsons believed that he had, in his general theory of action, achieved the greatest intellectual revolution in the social sciences since the sixteenth century. Parsons distinguished between three systems that work to influence every decision by an individual: the cultural system, personality system and social system. These seem to derive from the classical philosophical distinction between the cognitive mind or spirit (*nous*), the imaginative soul (*psyche*) and the practical physical world of mind or body (*somos*), respectively.

In 1946, Parsons established an interdisciplinary Department of Social Relations at Harvard, through which he planned a reformation of the social sciences according to his schema, so that psychology would focus on the particular personality or organism, sociology with society, and anthropology with culture. Culture for Parsons meant ideas, beliefs and values expressed in symbols. This call to disciplinary specialization came as a shock to the academic world, and to anthropology in particular. All other disciplines would have to forsake the study of culture, and anthropology would have to study culture

to the exclusion of all else. Moreover, culture would be reduced to the strictest of definitions.

To this effect, in 1952 the two most esteemed anthropologists in the United States, Alfred Kroeber at Berkeley and Clyde Kluckhohn at Harvard, published a comprehensive review of such American anthropological theory in Culture: A Critical Review of Concepts and Definitions.[vii] (In fact, Kluckhohn had been a collaborator with Parsons on his project at Harvard, but even he protested the complete separation of these systems from one another, since culture provided an implicit map of the social world, in his view.) The authors noted that the various anthropological notions of culture all derived from Tylor's concept that defined it as a system that seemed to include everything except the biological. They felt that this definition of culture was so much a hodge-podge of different elements that it did not truly provide a model of culture as a system; in order to do so, culture (as ideas) would need to be distinguished from social organization (as acts and institutions). They further concluded that within this ideational conception of culture, the most important aspect of it was the existence of (variable) value systems, the currency of which was symbolic. Their own summary (that is, definition) of what was currently regarded as culture in anthropology was that "Culture consists of patterns, explicit and implicit, of and for behavior acquired and transmitted by symbols", so that "the essential core of culture consists of traditional ... ideas and especially their attached values."

Of course, this study by Kroeber and Kluckhohn was a geneology of *American* anthropological thought, and marked a sharp break with the more humanistic European traditions. That is, their research renounced ideas of culture based on civilization

(France), personal refinement (England) and folk ways (Germany). However, according to Kuper, this myth of origin is a misrepresentation of both Tyler (whose thinking is in the tradition of the French Enlightenment and British empiricism), as well as of American anthropology, in which the idea of culture had been fundamentally redefined under the influence of Boas (who came out of the Berlin school of ethnology). And it would be Parsons who would take this German idea of culture -- in which culture was conceived as a system of ideas and values, expressed in symbols and embodied in religion and art -- and have it displace all other ideas of culture. Moreover, he would have it also displace all other subjects of study within American anthropology.

In 1958, Parsons and Kroeber jointly published a manifesto "The Concepts of Culture and Social System" in the *American Sociological Review*. This was a truce between two great powers not to encroach on each other's intellectual territory.

> We therefore propose a truce to quarreling over whether culture is best understood from the perspective of society or society from that of culture... The traditional perspectives of anthropology and sociology should merge into a temporary condominium leading to a differentiated but ultimately collaborative attack on problems in intermediate areas with which both are concerned.[viii]

However, anthropology's restricted new domain, the field of culture, was now defined as Parsons would have it.

> We suggest that it is useful to define the concept *culture* for most usages more narrowly than has been generally the case in the American anthropological tradition, restricting its reference to transmitted and created content and patterns of values, ideas, and other symbolic-meaningful systems as factors in the shaping of human behavior and the artifacts produced through behavior. On the other hand, we suggest that the term *society* -- or more generally, *social system* -- be used to designate the specifically relational system of interaction among individuals and collectivities.[ix]

This Parsonian academic division of labor therefore represents a refinement of the idea of culture, in which culture as an idea was both strictly defined and then relegated to anthropology. In exchange, both this discipline and its formal definition of culture received a certain autonomy, even while other disciplines were gutted of inquiry into cultural matters and while other concepts of culture were squashed. Moreover, the best followers of Parsons, like Clifford Geertz and David Schneider, severed the concept of culture from that of the social order even more than Parsons had.

> Parsons himself introduced further distinctions, between expressive culture, cognitive culture, and values and norms. Clifford Geertz published elegant elaborations on the Parsons formula, but David Schneider eventually went further: he came to argue that culture should exclude norms. Culture was "a system of symbols and meanings." Norms were a different sort of thing altogether. Culture "contrasts with norms in that norms are oriented to patterns *for action*, whereas culture constitutes a body of definitions, premises, postulates, presumptions, propositions and perceptions about the nature of the universe and man's place in it." And so in the hands of these younger anthropologists the Parsonian distinctions became ever finer, and the notion of culture became ever more specialized, but it was also increasingly cocooned from action.[x]

Thus severed from the social world, culture formed a system of its own, apprehensible only through interpretation. As Parsons wrote, "The only intrinsic element in common to symbols and their meanings is that of order. And this can never be grasped by the isolated study of particular symbols, but only in terms of their mutual relations in systems."[xi] This model of culture as holistic can lead to a coherence, as opposed to a correspondence theory of truth; this, in turn, has implications that culture can define the social world, just as Sapir's linguistic orientation culminated in his hypothesis that the perception of reality is determined by language. Of course, the idea that the perception of social reality derives from cultural background represents a contradiction of Parsons' intent, since culture is here colonizing the social system – indeed, defining it. In this

vein, Schneider wrote that "'nature and the 'facts of life' are always a special case of the cultural definition of things; they have no independent existence apart from how they are defined by the culture."[xii]

Moreover, even the ethnographic act of *interpreting* culture (as Parsons prescribed for anthropology) diverges from the general theoretical orientation of Parsons' methodology, since functionalism is by its nature *explanatory*, not interpretive. Social facts are ultimately *explained* in functionalism as teleological, by the effects they produce for the maintenance of the system, and are not *interpreted*, at least not in the sense of apprehending meaning through translation. (This form of explanation is distinct as well from explanations that identify the *causes*, and not the results, of social phenomena.) That an interpretative epistemology (relegated to anthropology) is subordinated within a general theory of explanation (found in sociology) illuminates an imbalance of power in Parson's disciplinary division of labor. As Szacki writes, "each social discipline is assigned its own place and is situated with respect to sociology."[xiii] More specifically, Gordon Direnzo writes:

> The analytical model in the frame of reference of general action theory provides for three independent, irreducible, and indispensable elements: the social, cultural, and personality sub-systems. Each of these "primary abstractions" is an independent focus for the organization of the elements of the action system. No one sub-system is theoretically reducible to the terms of any one, or to a combination, of the other two. Yet, in the structure of a completely concrete system of action, the personality system of the individual actor and the cultural system are built into the action of the social system. Accordingly, the conception of the social system is defined and mediated in terms of the cultural system and the personality system.[xiv]

Ultimately, the cultural and personality systems were components of the social system, so that sociology reigned as queen of the social sciences in Parsonian functionalism.

The cultural system (and the personality system), therefore, is subordinate in Parsons' structural functionalism to the social system, with the institution of a dual standard, of sorts. That is, while the social system is not deemed to be a product of cultural interpretation, the culture system is subject to explanations of the social system. But it should be pointed out that the social system is, for Parsons, a product of a different kind of interpretation other than ***cultural***. For Parsons, all social facts are a product of ***theoretical*** interpretation, since sociology "is not a *tabula rasa* upon which things called 'facts' inscribe their determinate and essential paths and shapes."

> We approach our data as humans and, as humans, we approach with differential receptivity and intentionality everything toward which we propose a cognitive orientation. In this respect we need only recall Tolman's famous and provocative concept of "the cognitive map".... There is a formative input to analysis, the components of which are not born *ex nihilo* in or of the moment of encounter with "facts"; rather, they are grounded in the orientation and frame of reference of the analyst. Indeed, in major part we create, we do not merely encounter, facticity.[xv]

> There may be more or less "goodness of fit" of our map to the data, and we may be more or less sensitive to this, more or less willing to "learn", to adjust our map; but our learning does not make us inhuman and we always have maps before we encounter the "facts". Our maps tell us what *are* the "facts". We select, and we ascribe importance; and we select and ascribe importance according to criteria that are not simply immanent "in" the data. Our criteria transcend the array of data under analysis.[xvi]

This is the Kantian element of Parson's work, the subjectivist turn that fostered a 'Copernican revolution' in modern philosophical thought that rendered problematic the realist notion of the direct perception of reality. This is basically the kind of ontological relativism that compelled Quine to observe that competing theories 'cut up' the perceptual field in ways that select certain data so that certain facts are produced from them, facts that other theories do not recognize. This ontological commitment of Parsons

helps explain why he engages in 'grand theory' that never touches on the concrete, the specific, the particular.

But for Parsons, theory itself has a strong cultural flavor. Since the scientific method, by virtue of its selective approach, invariably involves some distortion of reality, all analytic thought is 'mythologization'. The 'facts' of science, no matter how imperative they remain for the process of scientific inquiry, are basically 'myths' and always contain something of the analysts and their frame of reference. Parsons and Charles Ackerman write:

> *The "facts" of science are myths.* This is not a new thought.... As Alfred North Whitehead put it ... "A single fact in isolation is the primary myth required for finite thought." ... There can be no Bultmann of science, pleading that we "de-mythologize": *analytical thought itself is mythologization.*[xvii]

Here a parallel can be drawn between the ontological relativism of Quine's empirical positivism and the Parson's Kantian recognition of the theoretical grounding of all facticity. Dewey and the other classical pragmatists had joined the dualism between subjective mind and objective world by creating a continuum called experience between these two poles, so that, as Dewey writes, "experience is *of* as well as *in* nature. It is not experience that is experienced, but things ... Things interacting in certain ways *are* experience; they are what is experienced",[xviii] even things like magic, myth, illusion.[xix] On the mental side of the continuum, "Mind is seen to be a function of social interactions, and to be a genuine character of natural events when these attain the stage of widest and most complex interaction with one another."[xx] But Quine gutted experience of its intersubjective content, so that experienced 'reality' was shaped not by values, but by

theoretical frameworks. But even the affirmation of value-neutral inquiry harbored certain values.

In the realm of the social sciences, Parson's structural functionalism relegated the idea of culture to (interpretive) anthropology, and made that discipline a component of (explanatory) sociology. The social order was not to be understood as a projection of cultural categories, but rather of sociological theories. At the same time, Parsons embraced a Kantian ontological relativism (as Quine had in philosophy) that maintained that facts were the products of theoretical inquiry into the world. Yet "mythology" was the rhetorical term he used to describe theory and analysis in general, the connotations of which were obviously cultural.

To be sure, major assumptions posited by functionalist theory did have challengers at this time. What is significant about these theories that contested much of what was basic to functionalism is that these alternative social theories -- such as conflict theory, exchange theory, and humanistic sociology -- was that they developed out of the general functionalist paradigm. With perhaps the exception of the iconoclastic C. Wright Mills' version of conflict theory, the alternative social thought of the day at least typically claimed to have at least one foot still in the functionalist camp.

Theories of conflict took issue with the functionalist portrayal of society as characterized by agreement, accommodation, cooperation, adjustment, equilibrium and harmonious function; conflict theorists shifted the focus of their own research onto strife, maladjustment and dysfunction. However, Lewis Coser, in The Function of Social Conflict[xxi] and Continuities in the Study of Social Conflict,[xxii] is very Parsonian in his analysis of how social conflict serves to contribute to social integration. Since his

program is to trace the effect of conflict *between individuals* upon social structure, and not the reverse, his approach is hardly Marxist. In contrast, Ralf Dahrendorf locates the origin of social conflict within the social system itself; relations of power are latent until driven to the surface, catalyzing group identity among dependent groups, which in turn precipitates conflict that can lead to social change. Because the social order itself is the source of disorder for Dahrendorf, conflict theory is for him a complement of functionalism, not a sub-set of it as it was for Coser. In contrast to either Coser or Dahrendorf is the corpus of C. Wright Mills, who rejected functionalism outright in favor of a historical sociology that concretely embedded individual biography within its narrative. Only Mills, an isolated, iconoclastic, contrarian figure in his time, really breaks with functionalism, or acknowledges the worth of Marxist theory, which in many ways was the original thesis to which functionalism was the antithesis.

Also in accord with the dominant functionalism is exchange theory, which was presented as a complement to functionalism. While functionalism one-sidedly looked at how individuals subordinated themselves to norms and patterns that reinforce the social order, exchange theory sought to identify the reward system that encouraged and thereby *caused* individuals to so conform. Although exchange theory in a way seemed to be a fusion of sociological and psychological functionalisms, its disregard for cultural and social determinants in favor of an abstract model of human nature drew it toward economics and behaviorism.

Humanistic forms of sociology emerged in the sixties, and tended to be eclectic and interpentrated one another. For example, the symbolic interaction of Herbert Blumer and Erving Goffman, which originally emerged out of pragmatism, developed in

response to functionalism and exchange theory and tried to identify the ways in which individuals manipulate social roles in order to further their own personal ends. The ethnomethodology of Harold Garfinkel, underwritten by the sociological phenomenology of Alfred Shutz (in contrast to the Kantian grounding of Parsons' functionalism), sought to identify both how experience and data were assimilated into socially constructed categories and norms, and how new norms and classifications were created and assimilated, a question raised by functionalism.

These alternative theoretical orientations to functionalism both grow out of functionalism and then later transformed on their own into something quite different. In the societal context in which functionalism dominated, however, this relationship is significant in the light of later critiques of mid-century American society which conceive this period as a full-blown technocracy, a society governed by expert managers and bureaucrats. In a technocracy, even forms of resistance and deviance are in reality often products of the conservative social order, and which ultimately serve to buttress this order. The alternative social theory not only seeks at times to understand exactly how this process works (for example, in Coser's conflict theory) but is, in the sense that it is a complement of functionalism, *itself* a kind of false alternative of functionalism, now widely accepted as the classic ideology of technocracy. Of course, the determinism of functionalism is not totalistic (for example, Mills' conflict theory represents a genuine repudiation), and the new descriptive and empirical micro-level orientation led the way out of the desert of grand theory.

The role of creativity and the work ethic

If in the first third of the twentieth century, within the world of work for elites, creativity became recognized as the driving force behind scientific research, in the second third of the century, this valuation of creativity trickled down to the lower reaches of the population in the United States. The word *creativity* itself had been born just prior to the twentieth century, and over the next few decades its meaning migrated from the arts to the sciences. In fact, by 1937 the first "creativity training" was introduced by General Electric Corporation.[xxiii] After the close of the Second World War, however, the idea of creativity became popularized, and was promoted as a source of everyday technical innovation and personal fulfillment accessible to everybody. The word itself became common and appeared in most English-language dictionaries after the war. Weiner writes: "In 1948, Alex Osborn's Your Creative Power popularized what a few corporate researchers and a number of cultural leaders had been pointing to. In 1950, J.P. Guilford, the president of the American Psychological Association, called upon psychologists to study creativity, and this call resulted in literally thousands of studies."[xxiv] (Guilford had designed the first tests for creativity for the Air Force during the Second World War.) The term "creative problem-solving" became a common expression at this time.[xxv] The motives behind this mid-century wholesale celebration of creativity were diverse, as Frank Barron traces them. It is as though all sectors of society and all facts of existence were orienting themselves toward the ideal of creativity.

> Governments became interested because the sheer power and, by a very short step, political power that comes from inventiveness had suddenly (with Hiroshima) become so manifest; commerce is newly interested because the increase in goods, services, and profits is most evidently dependent on new ideas; religion is interested because old meanings have been destroyed and new ones call to be created; the individual is interested because to create is to be more fully and freely oneself. Perhaps at no

> other time in all of human history has there been such general recognition that to be creative in one's own everyday activity is a positive good.[xxvi]

This vision of creativity is essentially the one that exists today, not just in the United States, but throughout the world. "Today, creativity generally refers to the phenomenon of bringing forth something new in virtually any realm of human endeavor. this interdisciplinary perspective is new."[xxvii] Not only is this vision of creativity interdisciplinary, but it is also democratic. "Also new are the egalitarian attitude that almost anyone, from any walk of life can be creative, the multicultural attitude that creativity can be found anywhere on Earth, and the overwhelmingly positive value we attach to the word."[xxviii]

Weiner notes that this "democratic and interdisciplinary" conception of creativity – in a way a return "to Aristotle's understanding of the unique initiating quality inherent in human action and thought", only without the boundaries between disciplines nor between theory and practice – "congealed sometime in the 1950s in the United States and has spread throughout the world."[xxix] Typical of this era of profuse revision was the humanist psychologist Abraham Maslow's reminiscence:

> I learned to apply the word "creative" ... not only to products but also to people in a characterological way, and to activities, processes, and attitudes. And furthermore, I had come to apply the word "creative" to many products other than the standard and conventionally accepted poems, theories, novels, experiments or paintings.[xxx]

Moreover, the distinction between problem solving and self-expression has collapsed. "While many artists and others continue to disdain the focus on 'problem solving', and consider the idea of 'creative training' ridiculous, much of the current literature on creativity moves seamlessly between business innovation and personal self-help, between problem-solving and self-expression."[xxxi]

Weiner cites different reasons for the democratization of the idea of creativity. Notably, these include the social, economic and political ascension of women in the United States, a development that enabled "women's work" to be seen as creative in its own way. But the single greatest influence is that of the pluralistic conception of culture that emerged from American anthropology that allowed Westerners to envision non-Western folkways as artistic or "cultured". Unfortunately, Weiner notes, this kind of politically correct notion of culture disregards the native's own conceptual system – often a system of thought so different that it has no concept commensurate with that of "creativity" – nor of "art" or "culture", all relatively recent Western conceptions; these Western notions have come to colonize the worldview of non-Western peoples, fundamentally altering their core understanding of the world. Moreover, this well-intentioned universalization of recent Western concepts unwittingly promotes the assimilation (cannibalism) of foreign motifs into the global culture industry, into what James Clifford in Predicaments of Culture[xxxii] calls the "imaginary museum of human creativity".

Even in the mid-century United States, problems began to be perceived by scholars regarding the ideology of creativity in the workplace espoused by the Human Relations Movement. Of course, there were still classic works by scholars that contributed to the movement's theme, like George Homans' The Human Group (1950),[xxxiii] that warned of diminishing returns for industry under the system of a financially compensated repetitive division of labor; he advocated instead cohesive work groups. Similarly, William F. Whyte stressed the values workers brought to the workplace, and that managers had to understand that "the factory was a social

system."[xxxiv] (Men and Work; Money and Motivation) But in 1952-53, Robert Dubin's research led him to conclude that not only is work not a primary value on the factory floor, and that people just simply prefer to socialize outside the workplace, but that "all the communication effort and group dynamics in the world will not alter the basic drift in our society away from a central life interest in work."[xxxv] This was a direct repudiation of the basic claims of the Human Relations Movement.

By the late 1950s, the Human Relations Movement had completely played itself out. Malcolm McNair said that while the movement's advocacy of worker dignity was commendable, it made people feel sorry for themselves and shirk responsibility.[xxxvi] (1959) Even Whyte began to claim that training programs that focused on interpersonal relations were a waste of time, and that issues like technology, culture, work flow, managerial personality and the nature of the organization were more important.[xxxvii] Douglas McGregor claimed that the movement was simply naive and less productive than authoritarian management.[xxxviii]

But later there were also criticisms of the movement that harkened the rejection of the technocracy. C. Wright Mills had lamented the movement's focus on status at the expense of a critique of power. Raymond Miles offered a scathing criticism of the movement that typified the retrospective evaluations from the 1960s, claiming that while the participative structures erected by management did improve "subordinate morale and satisfaction", improved performance was never really one of their goals; instead, management implemented human relations programs as "a lubricant which oils away resistance to formal authority." (1965) (However, according to Miles, administrators did come to pursue even more progressive workplace programs – for management only,

excluding their underlings.) Likewise, Jacques Ellul denounced human relations as hoodwinking the worker "to accept his slavery" and unwittingly to subordinate "human spontaneity to the mathematical calculations of technicians."[xxxix]

This damning indictment of the Human Relations Movement not only exposes the movement for the scam it might have been – pacifying workers by convincing them that they had been liberated through creative, cooperative labor – but tells us something about the changes in perspective of the analysts. The movement did emerge in the 1930s as an initiative by management, just as did welfare capitalism and Personnel Management Movement before it, and this origin does lend credence to the charge that the movement was a cosmetic form of worker empowerment. But the scholarship of the time advocating the movement is passionate and sincere, and revolutionary in tone. By the fifties this advocacy, while still present in the works of Homans and Whyte, has a change in tone; there is no longer a sense of outrage at the dehumanized conditions of the workplace, but rather an appeal to the prudence of management that improving workplace social conditions is the only way to continue to squeeze out productivity gains. By the sixties, the complicity of the movement with the designs of management was all too obvious to researchers. Notably, some researchers reacted not against the corrupted nature of the movement, but at the facts that social values were shifting inexorably away from work as a "central life interest" (Dubin), that the movement just did not seem to register any real results (Whyte), and that it allowed the worker to make excuses for failure (McNair).

What we find in mid-century America is the ascension of creativity to the apex of the American value system, in terms of both cooperative problem solving and self-

expression. The idea of creativity is expanded across disciplines, valued in all social and economic sectors, democratized to apply to all social groups and classes, the object of countless research projects, and celebrated as an end in itself. Yet the impetus behind this intensified interest in creativity seems to derive mainly from business interests and the government, from economic and military expansion. By the 1950s, the crusade to institute creativity as cooperative problem solving in the workplace has lost its moral fervor, and instead has a technocratic ring; it is now a managerial strategy to raise profits without relinquishing control to workers, simply by recognizing workers' value systems in the context of the workplace as a social system. By the 1960s, this movement is denounced by some scholars as a scam, defrauding workers of real empowerment for a mere sense of efficacy gained through harmonious problem solving. And there are hints that fulfillment is seen by workers to lie outside the realm of work in the conclusions drawn by Dubin.

Creativity has blossomed as a ubiquitous ideal in mid-century, in which practical and spiritual needs are fulfilled, but creativity is promoted at the behest of the technocracy. In many ways, despite this intensification of the idealization of creativity, this is an inversion of the valuation of creativity in the earlier part of the century, in which creativity was elevated above technique, both for intellectuals and workers alike. Likewise, in Parson's structural functionalism we found an inversion of the primacy of the cultural over the social that exists in the writings of Boas and his disciples. In functionalism, culture is refined and established as an object of inquiry (values and ideas) with its own disciplinary domain (anthropology) and methods of inquiry (interpretation), and yet it is subordinated under the social system and its study (sociological explanation);

however, this sociological theory is itself reflexively understood in cultural terms (as mythologization). In the philosophical realm, positivist pragmatism sweeps aside the notion found in classical pragmatism that subjectivity is inter-subjective, that meaning is cultural and derived from symbolic systems. Empirically verifiable or falsifiable accounts of the objective world are to be valued over all other statements, even philosophical or metaphysical statements that are necessary for the operation of science. However, for these positivists, theory is later found to be a presupposition to any account of the empirical world, the perception of which is shaped by theory and language; yet theory itself is guided by certain values.

The Social World:

The culture of the corporate economy

The realm of work in American history is directly influential on scholarly theory, as it has been discussed above. We have seen with Reisman's The Lonely Crowd the entrenchment of the image of the middle half of the twentieth century as a period of bland conformity and acquiescence.[xl] According to Reisman et al., the corporate environment that came to dominate the world of work at this time did not primarily value or reward "character" and its qualities of discipline, productivity and postponed gratification. Rather, Reisman asserts, "personality" emerged as the valued individual trait, since it was crucial in the corporate environment to be agreeable and presentable.

Bernstein's history American Work Values also seems to link the new ideal of cooperative problem solving that developed at the beginning of the century with industrialism and the drive to greater productivity. Bernstein claims that the Protestant

ethic dominated work values until the 1730s, at which point industrialism cleaved the population into alienated factory workers, on the one hand, and, on the other, optimistic bourgeoisie that saw work as an opportunity to advance up the social order. In the 1930s, Bernstein notes, the desire to end labor strife and to maximize productivity stimulated a movement to conceive work as cooperative, and which elevated fulfillment (in terms of cooperative problem solving, resulting in higher productivity) above financial compensation as the primary motivation of workers.

But the publication of Reisman's The Lonely Crowd, with its critique of corporate culture, precipitated the development of a new paradigm in the social sciences that related to the world of work. In books like The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life, Erving Goffman universalized what Reisman had historicized, so that social interaction as pretense could be understood in dramaturgical terms.[xli] The world of work was a stage performance of sorts, and the customer especially was presented with a polished "on-stage" routine that tended to be formal, scripted and emotionally distant. In contrast, relations between employees tended to be "back-stage": informal, joking, relaxed, even vulgar. However, one of Goffman's points is that even this "back-stage" behavior was itself a "mask" or performance for the benefit of one's cohorts. Re-historicizing Goffman's corpus allows us to distinguish between two kinds of performance: the on-stage presentation of products, related to sales and advertising and customer relations within the context of a full-blown consumer economy, and the off-stage presentation of self in the context of corporate culture (the ethos of which dominates the entire society). In this context, the techniques of performance in the workplace eclipse any quest for self-

fulfillment through work; the quest for fulfillment might tend to be displaced onto a private realm of consumption in this kind of environment.

The question that emerges is the similarity of social fields like the realm of consumption and the realm of production with one another. After all, Bourdieu asserted that each field is autonomous and has its own logic and yet all fields are nevertheless shaped similarly by the *habitus* and by history so that they are homologous. It does seem that the individualism of the consumerism in the early twentieth century paralleled the individualism of the market economy, and that the conformism of the consumerism of the 1950s matched the corporate consumerism of the 1950s. Thomas Frank argued as much in The Conquest of Cool: Business Culture, Counterculture, and the Rise of Hip Consumerism, but his conclusions about how the two fields were revolutionized in the 1960s has more to do with the next chapter.[xlii]

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[i] Robert Hollinger and David Depew, *Pragmatism: From Progressivism to Postmodernism* (London: Praeger, 1995), 114.
[ii] Bruce Kuklick, 'The Professionalization of the Humanities', in Callahan, Danieal, Arthur Caplan and Bruce Jennings, ed. *Applying the Humanities* (NY: Plenum Press, 1985).
[iii] Depew, p. 118.
[iv] Ibid.
[v] Jerzy Szacki, *History of Sociological Thought* (Westport, CN: Greenwood Press, 1979), 502.
[vi] Talcott Parsons, *The Structure of Social Action: a Study in Social Theory with Special Reference to a Group of Recent European Writers* (NY: Free Press, 1968).
[vii] Alfred Kroeber and Clyde Kluckhohn. *Culture: A Critical Review of Concepts and Definitions* (NY: Vintage Books, 1963).
[viii] A.L. Kroeber and Talcott Parsons, 'The Concept of Culture and of Social System', *American Sociological Review*, 23 (1958): 583.
[ix] Ibid.
[x] Kuper, p. 71.
[xi] In Kuper, p. 71.
[xii] Kuper, p. 72.
[xiii] Szacki, p. 508.
[xiv] Gordon Direnzo, ed. *Concepts, Theory, and Explanation in the Behavioral Sciences* (New York: Random House, 1966), 22.
[xv] Ackerman and Parsons, in Direnzo, 24.
[xvi] Ibid., 25.
[xvii] Ibid., 25-27.
[xviii] John Dewey, *Experience and Nature* (NY: Dover Publications, 1958), 4a.
[xix] Ibid., 20.
[xx] Ibid., vi.

[xxi] Lewis Coser, *The Function of Social Conflict* (Glencoe, IL: 1956).
[xxii] Lewis Coser, *Continuities in the Study of Social Conflict* (NY: Free Press, 1967).
[xxiii] Weiner, p. 5
[xxiv] Ibid., p. 97
[xxv] Ibid., p. 5
[xxvi] Frank Barron, *Creativity and Personal Freedom* (Princeton, NJ: 1968), 7.
[xxvii] Weiner, 99.
[xxviii] Ibid.
[xxix] Ibid., 103.
[xxx] Abraham Maslow, *Toward a Psychology of Being* (Princeton, NJ: Van Nostrand, 1968), 137.
[xxxi] Weiner, 106.
[xxxii] James Clifford, *Predicaments of Culture: Twentieth-Century Ethnography, Literature and Art* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 1996), 235.
[xxxiii] Bernstein, 211.
[xxxiv] Ibid.
[xxxv] Ibid.
[xxxvi] Ibid.
[xxxvii] Ibid.
[xxxviii] Ibid.
[xxxix] Ibid.
[xl] David Riesman, *The Lonely Crowd* (New Haven: Yale UP, 1950).
[xli] Erving Goffman, *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1959).
[xlii] Thomas Frank, *The Conquest of Cool: Business Culture, Counterculture, and the Rise of Hip Consumerism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997).

CHAPTER SEVEN

Late Twentieth-Century America

This chapter surveys the evolution of trends in academic theory in the United States in the last third of the twentieth century. It is argued here that underlying the changes in theoretical perspectives, there was a fundamental shift in the relationship between subject and object that underwrites the Western intellectual tradition. Previously, it had been argued that in the United States toward the beginning of the twentieth century, there had been a revolution in the way subject and object were related to one another. Beginning with Emerson, and manifest in the classical pragmatist school of philosophy as well as in the American social sciences and labor studies, subject and object were, contrary to the Western tradition, conceived as mutually constituting and affecting one another, that is, as complementary. Value and culture were no longer conceived as transcendent, but rather as immanent and pluralistic, as developing in interaction with the objective environment, and with the needs of technique.

By the middle of the twentieth century, however, within all of these fields (philosophy, social theory, labor studies), value and culture were subordinated under the needs of technique and of the functioning social structure. There was a rebellion against this kind of technocratic tendency in theory, and in American philosophy, social theory and labor studies in the last third of the century, the subject-object distinction tended to collapse altogether. Most strikingly, for example, science was conceived as a cultural endeavor by the likes of Kuhn and later as a form of literature by Rorty.

However, although this deconstruction of the subject-object relationship at this time is motivated by an anti-positivist impulse, the ultimate significance remains

ambiguous. For example, in work studies, self-fulfillment and creativity ascend at this time to pre-eminent status, but they do so in terms of their potential to generate increased productivity. Likewise, Rorty's liberalism advocates the quest for self-fulfillment and self-expression, but as a private pursuit, leaving technocrats to run the society. Therefore, technocratic control is in some ways in recent theoretical discourses not so much undermined through deconstruction as it is disguised.

Late twentieth-century philosophy: the disciplinary context

This study has focused on exploring the evolution of various academic discourses on value and culture in the twentieth-century United States, and academic philosophy has been central to this project, despite the popular perception that it is withdrawn from the social world. Despite its distance from everyday life, academic philosophy is immensely valuable to this study precisely because it is a realm of reflection on subjects like value and culture. Moreover, this study has traced the development throughout the twentieth century of what is widely regarded as a classically American school of philosophy, that of pragmatism. Yet to understand developments within American pragmatism in the late twentieth century, one must first recognize greater trends in the discipline.

David Depew and Robert Hollinger provide a rather brief and abstract account of how developments in philosophy were impacting pragmatism in the United States. By the late 1950s and early 1960s, logical empiricism had been accepted as providing the correct account of scientific explanation as value-free in the natural sciences, and this kind of positivist analysis was beginning to be extended to the social sciences. As Depew and Hollinger relate, however, "This time resistance was encountered", since "Those trying to hold back the extension of the logical empiricist philosophy of science to the

human sciences found a rich source of counterexamples to the unity of science program in historical explanations. Once [Anglo-American] ordinary language philosophers [associated with positivism] had convinced pragmatized positivists that explanation itself is an inherently pragmatic, or context-dependent, notion, it was pretty easy to show that the narratives by which we come to understand the past are more explanatory than any laws that could cover them...."[i] Just as the classical pragmatist tradition in the United States had fused with European positivism in a bid to sustain the relevance of its core principles, now that pragmatist tradition (as well as others in American philosophy), looked to Europe once again – for a refutation of positivism.

> Soon American philosophers sensitive to arguments like these were finding their way to Continental philosophers, who often seemed to support their main point. That was because it turns out that something very close to an argument like this had already been fought out in German-speaking countries during the waning decades of the nineteenth century, when broadly neo-Kantian philosophers, seeking to maintain the traditional dominance of the human studies (*Geisteswissenschaften*) in their universities, resisted the rather crude reductionist materialism that had characterized apologists for science in Bismarkian Germany by proclaiming that the human sciences wield a distinctively hermeneutical or interpretive method that makes little or no use of natural laws, or even empirical regularities. The importation of this body of thought, to which thinkers as eminent as Dilthey, Rickert, Windleband, Weber, Husserl, Heidegger, and Gadamer had made contributions, was a major event in the history of American philosophy. From that period to the present, the duality between the *Naturwissenscaften* and the *Geisteswissenschaften* has been reflected in a split between 'analytic' and 'Continental' schools in philosophy departments.[ii]

Although this advocacy of interpretive methods was originally limited to the social sciences as a defense against positivist encroachments, Hollinger and Depew relate that this stalemate soon collapsed and an interpretative understanding of natural science began to form, turning the tables on positivists. The perception grew that science was itself a hermeneutical activity in the wake of Kuhn's The Structure of Scientific

Revolutions, Quine's argument that scientific theories are underdetermined by data (and therefore appeal to extra-empirical considerations), and Paul Feyerabend's attacks on empiricist foundationalism. "From that time until the present, the law-covered explanations of the positivist tradition have continuously lost ground to an aggressively universalizing hermeneutics, in which even the most well-established scientific theories are viewed as social constructions and products of rhetorical negotiation. Philosophers of science trying to stem this revenge of the humanities on the natural sciences have been forced to jettison large parts of the received neo-positivist philosophy of science in order to defend their core commitment to the epistemic solidity of science, and to preserve bits and shards of the once persuasive notion that science can preside over society in the same way that philosophy once did."[iii]

Depew and Hollinger's brief narrative is a useful one in the context of their attempt to trace the evolution of pragmatist thought, but the conflict between the methods of natural science and those of interpretation extend even farther back into history than even early German industrialism. Indeed, as Fred Dallmayr and Thomas McCarthy observe, the development of the idea of interpretive 'understanding' germane to the humanities and social sciences, distinct from the conception of empirical 'explanation' linked to the natural sciences, in fact have a common origin that extends back to early modernity, even though they increasingly came into odds with one another in terms of methodological relevance. This conflict is world-historical in importance, and Dallmayr and McCarthy go so far as to state that "This situation – the claim of empirical science to absolute supremacy – constitutes the immediate background for the intellectual 'crisis' of our age and for the intense ferment in the republic of letters accompanying this crisis."[iv]

Yet both of these modes, interpretive understanding and scientific explanation, both grew out of a prior intellectual crisis that resulted from the collapse of the medieval Christian worldview. The Church had provided Western man with a vision of himself as an integral part of nature, itself a kind of divine book that could be interpreted or read as carrying messages from God. When this vision lost its credibility, the quests for knowledge and self-knowledge began to part ways, in a sense. First, nature began to be studied as 'a set of empirical processes in accordance with strict logical-mathematical canons ... and later in accordance with the method of experimental replication.'[v] Since nature was no longer a book revealing God's word, this honor passed to the Bible, and biblical exegesis and scriptural 'hermeneutics' became the focus of Reformation scholarship. At the same time, these scholarly interpretive techniques were turned towards the classical texts of the ancient, pagan world, feeding the Renaissance appetite for historical artifacts of secular value as a source of cultural rejuvenation.

The peace between modern science and modern interpretive understanding lasted only until the Enlightenment, when science gained ascendancy, and philosophies like utilitarianism began to explain human values in terms of quantifiable measures of personal gain. An initial response to this was that of Giambattista Vico, who asserted that history and culture were more readily intelligible than nature since man's understanding of nature was itself wholly a cultural artifact. Although Vico's ideas were championed by romantics and idealists, industrialism squelched these voices of dissent, and utilitarianism became allied with the positivist claim that true knowledge could only derive from empirical science.

One of the seminal thinkers of early German Romanticism who almost single-handedly transformed hermeneutics from a theological practice of biblical exegesis to a general method of textual interpretation was Friedrich Schleiermacher. The ultimate goal of his hermeneutics was biographical, in a sense: to understand the individual within a historical and cultural context as a kind of microcosm of the society. This was a holistic response to the individualism of the Enlightenment, and was adopted by Wilhelm Dilthey, the primary architect of the *Geisteswissenschaften*, or sciences of mind and spirit. As a philosophical and methodological bulwark against positivism, the task of the 'mental sciences' was to determine the internal, psychic experiences and animating spirit of the authors of cultural documents. Like Vico, Dilthey maintained that interpretive understanding of human beings was easier than fathoming the more opaque workings of nature, which were only accessible through abstract explanations that hypothesized uniformities and causal relationships. Unfortunately, Dilthy's 'psychologism' was vulnerable to the transformation of psychology into an empirical discipline. In response to this development, Heinrich Rickert and others drew from the Kantian distinction between fact and transtemporal norms to transform Dilthey's 'mental sciences' into 'cultural sciences', or *Kulturwissenschaften*, that not only were immune to charges of 'psychologism', but which brought a sense of order and cultural significance to history by linking it with normative values.

It was Max Weber, one of the founders of sociology, who cast that discipline as a cultural science that related social phenomena to the cultural meanings and intentions of actors, and not to causal laws (although determining the latter was an important preliminary step to the study of the former). Although his sociology was committed to an

interpretive understanding of 'social action' – 'action' being purposive, and 'social' meaning oriented toward other people – this approach was still basically focused on individuals as agents, not groups. Weber's emphasis on individual agency was overlooked by later positivistic social theorists, like Talcott Parsons, who had appropriated many of Weber's concepts. Parsons, for one, argued that a 'social system' , not social action, was the proper focus of sociology, and that social action could be explained as meeting the necessary goals of system maintenance or adaptation and could be judged in terms of contributing to system stability in a 'functional' or 'dysfunctional' way. While for Weber scientific explanation of social context was preliminary to cultural understanding, for the empiricists the reverse was true.

However, at the very moment when empiricists were abusing Weber's legacy, there were developments afoot in philosophy that would alter the underlying issues in question. These developments took place in two very different contexts but both pointed the way to the ubiquity of interpretive understanding. The first one developed within the positivistic milieu of Anglo-American philosophy's 'analytic philosophy of language', and the other on the Continent in the new schools of 'phenomenology' and 'existential analysis'.

Language analysis implied not only that empirical reality could only be grasped through an adequate conceptual framework based on language, but that all human action is necessarily social because it is also articulated through a shared web of significations. However, language analysts initially spurned the concepts of purposive meaning and interpretive understanding. The leader of the group, Ludwig Wittgenstein, tried in his Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus[vi] to construct a transparent or 'ideal' linguistic

framework modeled on formal logic, granting access to empirical reality and unobscured by opinions and purposes (which were banished from the realm of experience, and relegated to the external limits or linguistic parameters of the world). Like Wittgenstein, semanticist and linguistic pluralists continued to construct specialized language frameworks, like those used in scientific inquiry as meta-languages, without reference to interpretive understanding, but these meta-linguistic conventions were "treated either as simple factual premises or as arbitrary fiats of experts. The contours of a rapprochement emerged only in the writings of the later Wittgenstein, especially in his emphasis on ordinary language and the notion of 'language games' embedded in commonsense conventions; once linguistic practices were seen as intimately 'interwoven' with concrete 'life-forms' and worldviews, the feasibility of a 'cultural interpretation became apparent."[vii]

The phenomenological school emerging on the continent derived from the hermeneutic tradition. However, although Husserl's early work attacked psychologism and the reduction of mind to empirical processes as had the 'cultural sciences', Edmund Husserl's phenomenology went far beyond neo-Kantianism's focus on normative values and extended its scope of inquiry to the whole spectrum of human cognition, natural and cultural. However, the "phenomenological method of 'bracketing', or *epoché*, in his treatment signified basically an attempt to unravel the meaningful core, or 'essence', of phenomena as disclosed in (or 'constituted' by) a purified consciousness. At least in this respect his approach replicated the solipsistic dilemma of early language analysis and of much of traditional philosophy: to the extent that consciousness was presented as 'transcendental limit' of the world, the domain of intersubjective understanding and

clarification of meaning was obliterated."[viii] Although Husserl sought to capture what is common between and to people – that is, what is common in both the senses of the communal and the mundane – by introducing the concept of the 'life-world', his philosophy retained its individualistic focus on consciousness. It was only with Martin Heidegger's 'existential ontology' or 'hermeneutic phenomenology' that *Dasein*, or human 'being-in-the-world', was understood as intersubjective or cultural, and enmeshed in a fabric of social 'pre-understandings' (prejudices).

American Philosophy: Postmodern Pragmatism

This study concludes that late twentieth-century American academic theory is characterized by the collapse of dualisms, as long-standing dichotomies were discredited in both philosophy and the social sciences. These dichotomies were based on the subject-object dualism; in philosophy, the fact-value distinction was a classic manifestation of this, whereas in the social sciences the culture-structure antinomy (among other antinomies) became the focus of various efforts to integrate terms that had been considered oppositional and problematic. The focus here is to see how this trend played itself out in American philosophy, particularly in the pragmatist tradition.

The American pragmatist tradition in philosophy emerged in the last part of the twentieth century in a new incarnation that fit the times. Often labeled "neo-pragmatism", it was largely a reaction against the kind of positivism that had revitalized the pragmatism of mid-century American philosophy, but had fallen out of favor because of its privileging of science and its implicit legitimization of technocracy. Just as positivist pragmatists celebrated the work of classical pragmatist as (supposedly

primitive) versions of their own commitment to scientific method, neo-pragmatists found in the classical pragmatists an assumed shared commitment to undermining the oppositional dualisms that pervaded the tradition. This study takes as exemplary of 'postmodern pragmatism' three American philosophers of the late twentieth century: Hilary Putnam, Donald Davidson and Richard Rorty.

Hilary Putnam

Hilary Putnam might seem a peculiar example of what Depew and Hollinger refer to as 'postmodern pragmatism', considering that Putnam's philosophical career has been committed to 'realism', which can be summarized as the belief that knowledge consists in the direct apprehension of an external world. In the early twentieth century, pragmatists and realists had been the two main contending schools in American philosophy, and the realists had begun to eclipse the pragmatists by the middle of the century – just prior to the rejuvenation of the pragmatist school by its encounter and joining with European positivism. If, despite their naturalism, classical pragmatists like Dewey had exhibited a 'psychologism' that seemed averse to realism (pragmatism was based on 'experience', and to realists this smacked of subjectivity), postmodernism, with its tendency to reduce the intelligible world to symbolic systems, might seem the least likely ally of realism. But Putnam is in many ways aligned with what might be called 'postmodern pragmatism'.

That Putnam's realism is compatible with a kind of 'postmodern pragmatism' is evident in essays like 'The Meaning of Meaning'. Here, Putnam envisions (in a thought experiment) a 'twin earth' (TE) that resembles earth in every way except for the fact the

'water' on TE is composed of a different chemical compound (although it is identical with H2O). Extension, or human knowledge of the physical world, is determined ***not*** by theories, since a change of theory would entail change in the entities of the physical world (which also implies that different theories refer to different entities, and so are incommensurate). Putnam advocates instead an understanding of the causal relationship between speakers and what they refer to, that also emphasizes social and contextual (that is, pragmatic) factors like shared stereotypes and the input of experts. For Putnam, the extension and meaning of a term (e.g., 'water') refers to a theoretical entity (H2O) by virtue of a 'linguistic division of labor', by which experts (e.g., chemists) make theoretical distinctions that the rest of the linguistic community cannot or do not make.

Yet another example of what might be seen as Putnam's 'postmodern pragmatism' is found in his treatment of quantum mechanics. One could joke that the mundane analogy to the central paradox of quantum mechanics is whether or not the light in the refrigerator really turns off when the door is closed. For example, Heisenberg's uncertainty principle stipulates that the values of certain pairs of physical parameters (say, position and momentum) are limited in precision when measured *simultaneously*. The Copenhagen interpretation of this principle states that because of this indeterminacy, simultaneous sharp values cannot *ever* be ascribed to such pairs of physical parameters (that is, whether they are being measured or not). However, empirically, a sharp value is attained whenever any *one* magnitude is measured by itself, suggesting that it is the act of measuring – like opening the refrigerator door – that triggers the transition from an indeterminate to a well-defined state (known as 'collapse'). Since such a theory defies the sensibilities of realism, Putnam set out to reinterpret its ramifications.

In The Logic of Quantum Mechanics, Putnam argues in mathematical terms that in quantum theory, although the variable Q may always have a well-defined value on its own, as does the system constant P (which is a physical magnitude), according to Heisenberg's uncertainty principle, together p·q(i) is necessarily false.[ix] What Putnam claims to do here is nothing less than the revising of logic on the basis of empirical considerations. Along these lines, in 'It Ain't Necessarily So', he advocated replacing the idea of necessary truth with a more contextual notion of relative necessity, and in Rethinking Mathematical Necessity, characterized logical truths as 'formal presuppositions of thought' rather than as truths as ordinarily understood (as true in themselves).[x]

Putnam moved away from this position in Quantum Mechanics and the Observer, which advanced a 'perspectivist' interpretation of quantum mechanics, according to which collapse is not a physical process but an epiphenomenon created by the shift from one perspective to another.[xi] For example, when M performs a measurement on system S, quantum mechanics is compatible with either the view that 1) M interfered with S from without, inducing the collapse of S, or 2) S and M comprise a unified system, and an external observer triggered its collapse. These perspectives were both empirically equivalent and in agreement with quantum mechanics hence equally legitimate yet exclusive, so that realism was internally consistent with any given perspective but not across perspectives (discrediting 'metaphysical' realism and supporting an 'internal' realism).

Putnam's explicit rejection of what he called 'metaphysical' realism came late, and was first presented in 1978 in Meaning and the Moral Sciences.[xii] But the peculiarity

of Putnam's realism as it evolved at this moment is evident in the claim that he finds the 'verificationist' view of truth, with its emphasis on the role of method, to be compatible with a correspondence theory of truth that conceives empirical reality as more directly apprehensible. Moreover, Putnam describes this as 'Kantian', in that "Kant had a view which included a correspondence view of truth *within* the empirical realm (on my reading, anyway) *and* a stress on the mind-dependence of a truth."[xiii] However, this is a "demythologized Kantianism, without 'things in themselves' and 'transcendental egos'."[xiv] As the founder of 'transcendental idealism' in particular and the origin of German idealism in general, Kant is an unexpected inspiration for a realist, but Putnam illuminates his difference with Kant at the end of his book.

> Let me close with a last philosophical metaphor. Kant's image was of knowledge as a 'representation' – a kind of play. The author is me. But the author also appears as a character in the play (like a Pirandello play). The author in the play is not the 'real' author – it is the 'empirical me'. The 'real' author is the 'transcendental me'.
>
> I would modify Kant's image in two ways. The authors (in the plural – my image of knowledge is social) don't write just *one* story: they write many versions. And the authors *in* the stories are the *real* authors. This would be 'crazy' if these stories were *fictions*. A fictitious character can't also be a real author. But these are true stories.[xv]

What's even more counter-intuitive about Putnam's realism is the sociological or cultural dimension evident when he writes "The realist explanation, in a nutshell, is not that language mirrors the world but that *speakers* mirror the world – i.e., their environment – in the sense of *constructing a symbolic representation of that environment*."[xvi] The point of this book is that the metaphysical realist, in claiming to have found a perfect theory that explains everything, erroneously assumes a vantage point external to that theory, when, in fact, we are always interpreting the world from a conceptual scheme that is in accord with that theory. However, as a realist, Putnam is

quick to attack epistemological skeptics – who deny the existence of the world – with the same accusations, that they are already situated within a particular language or interpretation (that reflects reality).

In 'A Reconsideration of Deweyan Democracy', the final chapter of Renewing Philosophy, the resonance of Putnam's theory with John Dewey's pragmatism is made explicit.[xvii] He uses Dewey's thought as an alternate to the cultural relativism – and the Romanticism underlying it, in his opinion – that he finds rampant in the social sciences. By his reading of Dewey and the pragmatists, ethical thought is a form of problem solving grounded not in metaphysics but on the methods developed in the actual problem solving of everyday life.

The implications of this are that while there are no absolute or transcendent standards for ethical life, relativism is discredited because there are common sense criteria for distinguishing alternative courses of action as better or worse. In fact, philosophy has no real metaphysical or methodological content of its own, and consists only in critique of the methods of other fields. In a way, a philosopher is a kind of 'critical journalist' for Dewey, and the function of philosophy as such is inherently democratic; part of the task of the Deweyan philosopher is to disseminate and clarify knowledge that would otherwise serve only to buttress a class of self-interested 'experts'. That philosophy has no real content and logic no pre-established form but relies on context for that is a position we have seen Putnam take.

But Putnam does have a bone to pick, so to speak, with Dewey. According to Putnam, while philosophy is concerned with proper method and communication, the ends of action for Dewey comprise a dualism. "For Dewey there are fundamentally two, and

only two, dominant dimensions to human life: the social dimension, which for Dewey meant the struggle for a better world, for a better society, and for the release of human potential; and the aesthetic dimension. To the criticism that he ... fundamentally saw all of life as social action, Dewey could and did always reply that, on the contrary, in the last analysis he saw all 'consummatory experience' as aesthetic."[xviii] To Putnam, this is too close to the positivist or empiricist division of life into prediction and control of experience, on the one hand, and the enjoyment of experience, on the other hand. Putnam's perspective here also accords with his rejection of the fact/value distinction embedded in positivism. This kind of deconstruction of the subject/object dichotomy is also evident in another so-called postmodern pragmatist, Donald Davidson.

Donald Davidson

In terms of the collapse of boundaries between traditional dichotomies, the philosopher Donald Davidson's writings have boldly deconstructed such dualisms for decades. For example, in 1963, Davidson asserted in 'Actions, Reasons and Causes' that a human agent's reasons for acting can be considered a cause. This assertion destroyed what had become a consensus within the discipline of philosophy of segregating (human) reason from (natural) causality. In a way, Davidson's move is the converse equivalent of the Kuhnian extension of cultural interpretation to the practices of scientific explanation, in that it sunders the barrier between the natural sciences and the social sciences (and humanities), and between human agency and the laws of nature. Although the concept of action is central both to Davidson's theory and to the social sciences, the conventional (Weberian) tendency in the social sciences is to emphasize the intentionality of ***action*** as

distinct from the unintended nature of mere ***behavior***, whereas Davidson underlines the shared nature of purposeful action and causal behavior as spatiotemporal events.

An event for Davidson is a unique concrete particular located in time and space. Causation is a type of relation between events, and action is a type of event that joins mental and physical events. This being said, any particular event (be it physical or mental) can be described, according to Davidson, in different ways. Thus, there is an interpretive character to describing even physical phenomena. Conversely, mental events can be described as 'physical' events when they enter into causal relations that conform to exceptionless laws, that is, when they exhibit the regularity typical of the physical world.

In this manner of breaking down the distinction between the physical and mental worlds, Davidson challenged Quine's distinction between language and the external world (a connection which had been always been uncertain). For Quine, the intentional or purposive aspects of consciousness – that is, everything involving human agency – were nonsense in the face of the constricting scientific rigor inherent in inquiry within any particular language (for example, within the restrictions of the unique terminology of any particular scholarly field or theory therein). This led Quine to assert that the *choice* of any particular language or theory to engage in inquiry was context-dependent; Quine thereby used pragmatism (contextuality) to salvage a small pocket of human agency. This insight led Quine to destroy two dogmas of empiricism, the analytic-synthetic distinction, and the possibility of piecemeal verification of sentences with "sense data". Davidson argues that Quine failed to expose a third dogma: the myth that language or mind is a "conceptual scheme" that can be applied to an independent "content" in a kind

of Kantian dualism of subject and object. Counter to Quine's brand of pragmatism, Davidson asserts that we do not pick and choose between languages to perform particular tasks, nor can a language even be compared to an outer world, nor are languages incommensurate.

For Davidson, a theory of meaning concerns itself with questions of truth *within* any particular language. Truth is a semantic concept, not an epistemological one involving a correlation with the world. Philosophers should limit their investigations to the triangle of speaker, interpreter and world, and not look for a pre-existent match between the world and a language. Of course, the world does play a part in setting the truth-conditions for our statements, but it does so as a cause influencing the language and not as an entity corresponding with the language. In fact, languages are basically already verified in the world since the presupposition exists in any given language that most of its statements are true – although the world still does not correspond to our language(s) (although our language(s) and their truth-conditions are still caused by the world).

Remembering Davidson's theory that mental and physical events exist along a kind of monistic continuum, so that consciousness does not exist distinct from matter (which negates the possibility of mind corresponding to or representing matter), so also language does not correspond to the world. And just as Hilary Putnam's rejection of metaphysical realism also entailed a rejection of skepticism (since both schools assumed that there was a point outside of theory or language by which one could judge a theory of the world), so too does Davidson's rejection of representation imply a rejection of relativism in his eyes. "Beliefs are true or false, but they represent nothing. It is good to be rid of representations, and with them the correspondence theory of truth, for it is

thinking that there are representations that engenders thoughts of relativism."[xix] Again, the relation between language and the external world is not referential or evidential, but causal. In a very pragmatic way (although Davidson is reluctant to describe himself as a pragmatist), psychologistic phenomena for Davidson (like reasons, desire, value, purpose, culture) therefore have a naturalistic basis. The larger intellectual ramification of this collapse of the boundary between a physical, causal realm and an intentional, mentalistic realm is the discrediting of the distinction in the academy between the natural sciences and the humanities.

Richard Rorty

Richard Rorty epitomizes "postmodern pragmatism" to the point that he is almost a parody of it. He is almost single-handedly responsible for the current revival of interest in classical pragmatism, yet his own interpretation of the pragmatist tradition is comprised of a grab-bag of the most outrageous of the theoretical perspectives that were fashionable in late twentieth-century American academia. In a way, Rorty seems to follow Dewey's interpretation of philosophy as having no content of its own and serving, rather, a quasi-journalistic role of explaining or clarifying to the wider public various specialized areas of culture. In Rorty's case, however, this is manifested negatively, and he is very much what could be called a 'muck-raking' philosopher, disabusing Western civilization of its most treasured philosophical illusions.

Epistemologically, Rorty follows Quine's denial that the justification of our knowledge claims can or must be ultimately grounded in beliefs or statements that serve as a foundation of knowledge. Although Rorty accepts that we do justify beliefs and

statements by referring to other beliefs and statements that, in a particular context, do not themselves require justification according to the standards implicit in that particular mode of inquiry. Since this process of justification is rooted in community practices and not in foundations, Rorty asserts, skepticism is a non-issue. Building on this, Rorty also claims that there is no particular discipline or part of culture that serves to justify or clarify all the rest of it, so that neither God nor ultimate reality nor human subjectivity can be posited by philosophers as the justificatory basis of practices (like scientific methods) and institutions (like political democracy).

Like Davidson, Rorty rejects correspondence and coherence theories of truth, endorsing William James' dictum that like the good in the realm of ethics, the true needs no account to justify itself in the realm of belief. In all of its dimensions, language is merely one part of the repertory of devices the human species has developed for dealing with the world, and representational tendencies to match reality and language have no deeper philosophical significance: there is no real match, it's just a kind of heuristic device. The quest for objectivity is therefore merely an intersubjective ideal within a community of inquirers, promoting inquiry and group solidarity. Rorty's position on this is not, he claims, relativistic, but rather 'ethnocentric', since it is not about determining the truth but rather about furthering established community practices. Although critics charge that this type of legitimization of methodological practices is inherently irrational, Rorty appeals to Kuhn's account of scientific revolution. Kuhn notes that paradigm shifts involve the adoption by communities of inquiry of new standards and practices that were not justifiable by the methodological criteria of the old paradigm. To add to this paradox (that the guiding principles or methodological criteria of the new paradigm are,

irrationally, only adopted ***after*** the reconstituted community of inquiry has adopted the revolutionary new vocabulary and beliefs) is the paradox that this transformation, once accomplished, enables both the ***rational*** justification of the new assumptions and terminology and ***rational*** criticism of the old.

Rorty also borrows from Davidson's philosophy of language on this matter, particularly from Davidson's article 'A Pleasant Derangement of Epitaphs'. In this essay, Davidson argued that because language does not ***represent*** reality so much as it causally ***engages*** with it (so that there is no contrast between our constructions and the world as it potentially exists independently of us, neither can there be any difference between metaphorical and literal uses of language. In fact, literal terms are really the routinized metaphors of the past. As soon as a metaphor is taken for granted, it ossifies into a literalism and is considered a given truth. Until that happens, the metaphor is considered false and irrational.

Rorty adds a normative dimension to Davidson's semantic theory. Rorty asserts that we should remove impediments to the creation and use of new metaphors, contrary to the constraints placed on our discourse by literalists. In fact, philosophers (like priests) have traditionally been the self-appointed guardians of rational discourse, and for this reason Rorty has called for the 'end of philosophy'. This experimentalism is at the heart of Rorty's pragmatism, but it is also central to his 'postmodernism', since, like Kuhn, he is exposing science as itself engaged in creative, even literary interpretation.

Rorty's modification of Davidsonian semantic theory is also at the root of Rorty's liberal political philosophy, supplying Rorty's liberalism with its theoretical justification. However, Rorty's thought is thereby marked by a certain paradox, since his postmodern

pragmatism, as radically contentious as it may be, is used to justify an unrelentingly bland and complacent bourgeois liberalism. It is as though Rorty's openness and belief in a historical 'end of ideology' translates in theoretical terms into a radical rejection of all doctrinaire '-isms' – but in practical terms this leads to an embrace of the American status quo.

Rorty, therefore, understands the program of liberating discourse as resonant and consistent with liberalism and its advocacy of individual liberties, and he takes Dewey to be the greatest American proponent of this program. But Rorty's liberalism and its ethos of toleration neglects the role of public inquiry in building a democratic community, as Dewey advocated as a social democrat dedicated to reform. Although Rorty acknowledges the value of science in public life in predicting and controlling the social and natural worlds, for him intrinsic value is to be found instead in the private pursuits involving the exploration, creation, expression and fulfillment of the self, best achieved through the arts and humanities. Ironically, this disavowal by Rorty of the inherent value of scientific inquiry makes him – ***rather than Dewey*** – a technocrat, since Rorty would have us simply let the technicians use their 'arts' to run society while we engage ourselves in our own self-absorbed creativity. This appropriation of Dewey stands in contrast to Richard Bernstein's democratic and commutarian reading of Dewey, which he compares to the luminaries of the European hermeneutical tradition (like Heidegger, Gadamer, Habermas and Arendt) who seek to restore the primacy and autonomy of Aristotelian practical reason (*phronesis*) against its displacement by technical rationality, and who argue that practical reason is genuine and effective only when it is deeply embedded within a hermeneutically thick appropriation of living cultural traditions.

In a way, then, Bernstein and Rorty both seek to draw Dewey's rendering of scientific inquiry closer to a humanistic notion of interpretation. However, although they might be inspired by Dewey in their attempts to dissolve such an apparent dualism, they go about it in different ways – but in ways that are ***more similar to one another than to Dewey!*** For example, Dewey's strategy for dispensing with the traditional philosophical notion of contemplation (as the apprehension of independently existing or transcendent objects) was to merge philosophical reflection with inductive scientific inquiry, so that both were, on the one hand, virtually synonymous and, on the other, were subsumed under a general mode of problem solving. This is a classic move by Dewey of lumping together what had been the antinomies of reflection, science and practical problem solving, and Bernstein and Rorty seem to emulate this kind of move when they seek to bring scientific inquiry into the realm of the humanities.

As Thomas Alexander asserts, however, although Dewey joins science and aesthetics into a functioning whole of sorts, they remain decidedly distinct from one another. For Dewey, there is a pre-reflexive aesthetic mode of experience epitomized in artistic self-expression, which provides the vision and imagination for creating a new social order and its system of ethics. The democratic potential of Dewey's aesthetic theory therefore mirrors and complements his theory of inquiry in its democratic and communal orientation. Rorty adopts the strategy of merger in his proposition that science (inquiry) is a genre of literature, whereas Bernstein's strategy is to nest practical reason (inquiry) within the cultural matrix. In contrast with either Rorty or Bernstein, Dewey's move, however, maintains the distinction between reflection (inquiry) and pre-reflective aesthetic experience. Moreover, it subordinates inquiry under aesthetics, since Dewey

posits that the experiential presuppositions that underlie inquiry derive from aesthetic experience (so that the 'poet' is the creator of a social order and its forms of inquiry). In this way, even Bernstein's interpretation of Dewey is decidedly similar to Rorty's 'postmodernist' tendencies to fuse the antinomies of science and culture, quite a divergent interpretation from that of Alexander's critique of Dewey's aesthetics.

So far, the term 'postmodern pragmatism' has been used to describe general tendencies in a few American philosophers, at least one of whom, Donald Davidson, is reluctant to describe himself either as a postmodernist or even as a pragmatist. The narrative above has justified this classification by generally associating pragmatism with a theoretical appeal to context as a justification of method in inquiry, and by abstractly linking 'postmodernism' with a tendency to collapse boundaries or dichotomies. In what follows, a more informed treatment of postmodernism is provided.

Postmodernism, poststructuralism and the social sciences

Postmodernism in the context of philosophy refers to the fundamental transformation of the values and practices that emerged, flourished and established themselves in the 'modern' West (which itself is dated to the Renaissance, Reformation or Enlightenment, depending on the frame of reference used). This modernism is distinct, therefore, from the twentieth-century art movement of the same name, and postmodernism is distinct from the 'poststructuralism' that is often linked with it. Modernity can be seen as an epoch defined by a worldview grounded on the assumption that reality is fundamentally unified and explicable by a single theoretical system. The universalistic scope of this vision of unity shifted in the Renaissance from a religious to a

secular vision, manifested in the 'realist' portrayal in art and science of space and time as infinite and uniform.

As Lyotard explained in The Postmodern Condition, it was the very success of the modern project that undermined its own premises.[xx] This, he claims, can primarily be attributed to the phenomenal growth of the scientific endeavor led to the proliferation of fields of research so diverse that science has lost its prior semblance of unity. In Lyotard's account, postmodernity is a trans-historically applicable concept, and refers not to a particular era but rather to the condition of lost absolute standards wherever and whenever this condition may appear – although it appears with a vengeance in our own time, especially with the passing away of the uniform measure of time and space as homogenous and neutral, the very basis and paradigm of modernity. Indeed, Lyotard's parsing of the concepts of the premodern (characterized by a cyclical worldview), modern and postmodern from particular periods of history itself seems typically postmodern, breaking up the linear trajectory of standard historical narratives.

The postmodern collapse of a conception of reality as unified and therefore potentially intelligible through a single conceptual scheme brings in its wake a discrediting of realism, representation and empiricism. This, in turn, illuminates the role of culture and language in shaping human perception. This most famously happened in the development of linguistic structuralism in 1916 by Ferdinand de Saussure, who argued that language works reflexively, not referentially, because words pointed not to the world, but to ideas within a system of meaning in which each word has its place in a network of binary oppositions. That is, words are not defined by the world, but by their contrast with other ideas in the language.

The structuralist model of language as a complex, coded system of meaning and value was applied to every field of human activity in what Jacques Derrida called the postmodern moment, 'when language invaded the universal problematic'. However, by recognizing that we are engaged simultaneously in multiple systems of communication at any given time, even unconsciously, the sense of a lost common denominator rooted in an objective world becomes even more acute in the postmodern condition. The response by postmodernists to this condition is celebratory, and their attention shifts reflexively (and creatively) away from the outer world to the system of meanings to explore their inherent possibilities. Furthermore, the category of 'postmodernist' in this sense extends beyond contemporary cultural theorists to embrace artists and scientists who have creatively and reflexively tested the limits of the conceptual systems in which they find themselves embedded.

While postmodernism may seem like just another theory of relativism, there is a profound difference between the two. While both agree that no system has privileged access to the Truth, or even that the Truth is impossible to determine, relativism still maintains that there is such a Truth, whereas the postmodern epiphany is that systems of meaning construct the world as a kind of fiction. There is no autonomous outer reality of meaning and values that transcends and underwrites all finite human modes of intelligibility. While there have been arguments against the existence of ultimate truth in other contexts, the emphasis on the finitude of human subjectivity is directed in postmodernism against the sense of secularized, uniform infinitude characteristic of modernity.

Postmodernism implies certain problems, but it has also generated certain normative attitudes and courses of action. Again, the postmodern condition makes problematic the 'object' (which is now, by Sausseure's account, an idea, not a thing) and the sign (which is now a symbol in a system, not a marker for a thing). The 'subject', likewise, becomes a problematic member of multiple interpretive communities (a complex position, which, ironically, imbues the subject with an even greater uniqueness as it performs playfully at the intersection of multiple discourses). But postmodernism also comes with its own ethic, one of tolerating difference, a tolerance that derives from a self-conscious awareness of the ubiquity and the constructedness of contrast as a basis for definition, and an insight that this need not make for social and political conflict. Moreover, postmodern art and science advance a method of selective and flexible eclecticism, of borrowing freely, playfully and without consistency from diverse systems of codes in the process of advancing limited agendas. Since the relevance of postmodernist theory to the social sciences is closely tied to a 'poststructuralist' critique, the latter must be studied here in order to better understand the former.

One of the features of structuralism that might have been lost in the discussion above is that systems of meaning are not to be regarded as subjective, but as objective and independent of human consciousness. Therefore, although these systems are abstract in character, in contrast to the usual description of social structure as concrete, they are no less objective than structures like class and status. Not only are the concepts, values and meanings of abstract systems grounded in the structural relations between their elements, but these structural relations are solely binary oppositions. In this way, structuralism was a kind of reincarnation of Cartesianism, with its logical, rigorous

systems of knowledge based on sharply defined categories. Poststructuralism challenges both the assumption that systems are autonomous, independent structures and the possibility of precise classification within systems.

There is a controversy about where structuralism ends and poststructuralism begins, and if the latter is a rejection or extension of the former. More accurately, poststructuralism can be seen to be a reflection or commentary on structuralism and its limits, and this is evident in Foucault's The Order of Things, which elucidates the systems of knowledge that underwrite the thought of particular historic epochs.[xxi] Foucault revealed how the idea of subjectivity was but a product of the modern worldview, and was phasing out, most notably in the face of structuralism. Yet structuralism could not account for the historical transformation of such change in conceptual systems, and Foucault denied that he was a structuralist. Like Foucault, poststructuralists maintain the structuralist refusal of a subjective, Cartesian foundation of knowledge, but they reject all foundations, including those based on logic and coherence, a basis of structuralism itself.

Poststructuralists also argue that the conceptual dualisms comprising structuralism's hypothesized systems of meaning are arbitrary. However, this critique was extended to Western philosophical thought in general by Jacques Derrida, who characterized the Western tradition as consisting of a network of dichotomies constituting what he called 'logocentrism'. Derrida claimed that at the heart of the Western philosophical tradition was the distinction between speech (***logos***) and writing, and that the former was granted a privileged status as the expression of what is immediate and certain – and association that was evident in Plato's analogy of the cave. Writing, in

contrast, was devalued as an inferior imitation of speech, the mere residue of what is no longer present, and was associated with appearance, deception, uncertainty. Derrida unmasks the arbitrariness of the hierarchical dualism that underpin Western philosophical thought by the method of 'deconstruction', which involves the close textual analysis of such antinomies to reveal how they are contradicted in the very attempt to devise and then use them. For example, he notes that, on closer inspection, even speech and writing are implicitly forms of one another. According to Derrida, there is always a 'trace' of its opposite lurking in the heart of any conceptual term, and object of analysis will slip through the conceptual grid formulated to capture it.

The instability of meaning systems becomes apparent in the ambiguity of texts that becomes apparent under their dissection. While structuralists sought to show how literary texts could be analyzed regardless of the intentions of the author (again, the death of the Cartesian subject, affirmed as well by poststructuralists), the poststructuralist approach goes even further by arguing that there is no autonomous text with a fixed meaning, that the text is a locus of an endless proliferation of conflicting interpretations. This insight, in turn, effectively abolishes the distinction between a primary text and its critique, since a commentary on a text is not so much a summary of its content or meaning than it is an interpretation inspired by the text – a kind of Rorschach ink blot test of free association.

Richard Rorty can be and often has been classified as a poststructuralist, but he argues not from a Continental perspective drawing on structuralism, but from contemporary Anglo-American analytic philosophy. Rorty maintains that the foundationalist project of grounding scientific knowledge in philosophy has been the

central feature of philosophical discourse since Descartes, but has been debunked by the likes of Quine and Davidson. Philosophy is no longer privileged as a final court of appeal, thus freeing communities of inquiry to determine their own practices.

This begs the question of what a poststructuralist social science would look like. In Foucault's case, he eventually resolved the issue of how conceptual systems evolve by tracing their relationship to the forces of power in society. Although the 'episteme' or forms of knowledge that prevail at any given moment in a society may maintain their intellectual integrity and are not simply forms of power, they are installed and employed by the dominant constellation of localized sources of power in a society at a given time. As he elaborated in Discipline and Punish, social control (like the punishment of crime) is intimately connected to forms of knowledge (like the social sciences and criminology), a relationship he alludes to when he writes of the connection between 'discourse' and the control of human 'bodies'.[xxii] In this way, Foucault's social science is also a probing critique of social science and its historical function in the modern West. This relationship rewrites the traditionally perceived relationship between science and technology, since it is power that sponsors the sciences as instruments of domination (which are, thus, themselves forms of technology), since forms of knowledge serve to constitute or define 'bodies', particularly through the propagation of ideas of normality. If there is an ethical attitude that runs through Foucault's work, it is one of tolerance of difference.

As we saw in the survey of pragmatist philosophy at the last part of the twentieth century, pragmatism was influenced by a kind of convergence between the European hermeneutical tradition and the Anglo-American school of analytic philosophy. At this time, there was a kind of erosion of the boundaries between the empirical world and

conceptual schemes (in analytic philosophy), and the newly perceived relevance of hermeneutical theories of interpretation to the forms of explanation in the natural sciences undermined the boundary between the natural sciences, on the one hand, and the social sciences and humanities, on the other. Both of these developments represent a breakdown in the subject-object dichotomy that underlies all these issues. Moreover, the emergence of structuralism propagated the idea that language does not represent the world but rather exists as a self-contained system of meaning. On the one hand, this led to the postmodern condition, in which the world, severed from the totalistic symbolic systems modernity that imbued it with a sense of universal order, was no longer perceived as fundamentally unified and uniform. On the other hand, it also led to the poststructuralist recognition that symbolic systems were themselves disordered and multiple, and that the binary oppositions of which they were supposedly comprised bled into each other. Jacque Derrida's method of deconstructing texts through close analysis revealed the way that these binary elements blended into their opposites, but he also advanced a greater critique that Western philosophy was underpinned by the 'logocentric' antinomy of speech and writing. The general tendency in the philosophical literature in this era is the collapse of antinomies, more specifically the dualism of subject and object. Not only does this trend carry over to social theory, but social theory itself merged with philosophy at this time.

Social Theory: deconstruction and synthesis

In the last few decades of the twentieth century there was a creative ferment within the social sciences that sought to reconstruct the tradition of social thought.

Significantly, this was concomitant with a kind of theoretical soul searching or critical reflection. As Piotr Sztompka explains in Agency and Structure: Reorienting Social Theory, in this period there was a "return to philosophy" within sociology, a movement toward exposing the philosophical underpinnings of social thought as a challenge to a still-prevalent positivism. In sociology's nineteenth-century birth as a reaction against individualism and a rebuke to the conception of society as an aggregate ('sociological nominalism'), social thought immediately embraced 'sociological realism', naturalism and positivism. Yet, ironically, the nineteenth-century Romanticism that birthed sociology also laid the seeds of anti-positivism, and -- nourished by controversies over the status of symbols, signs, culture, meaning, values, and norms -- these had fully blossomed by the late twentieth century and harkened a return to theory.[xxiii]

Initially, this philosophical renaissance in social thought was epistemological in nature and was closely connected to questions of methodology and of how things can be known. But the theoretical focus within social thought soon shifted away from epistemology and toward ontology, that is, away from the process and methods of the production of knowledge, to questions about the object to be known.[xxiv] This entailed a reversal of sorts, since it came to be recognized, most famously with Foucault, that in many ways knowledge-seeking as a social practice produces the object under study. Not only was theory and even philosophy deigned relevant to sociology, but sociology itself could be seen as essential to philosophy.[xxv]

The return to theory involved not just a growing recognition that theory was relevant to sociology, but the ascendancy of a particular type of synthetic theory. As Sztompka notes, sociology had become divided between "macro-theories emphasizing

hard organizational, institutional and structural aspects of society (e.g., conflict theory, structural Marxism, neo-Weberian institutional orientation), and micro-theories emphasizing individual actions, meanings, symbols, awareness and subjective construction of reality (e.g., exchange theory, ethnomethodology, phenomenology)."[xxvi] One of the first projects in this vein was "the monumental effort to reread the sociological classics undertaken by Jeffrey Alexander ... subordinated to the search for multi-dimensional theory."[xxvii]

Jeffrey Alexander

An exemplary attempt to reflect critically upon the underpinnings of the social sciences is found in the first volume of Jeffrey C. Alexander's *Theoretical Logic in Sociology*.[xxviii] Alexander schematizes the continuum of elements that comprise scientific inquiry, ranging from the poles of 'metaphysical' to 'empirical' environments. The components of this spectrum are, from the most to the least abstract: general presuppositions, models, concepts, definitions, classifications, laws, complex and simple propositions, correlations, methodological assumptions, and observations. Alexander analyses and compares various social theories according to this schema, identifying which theoretical logic underwrites various sociological approaches. The ultimate goal of this effort is to determine if there is one possible theoretical logic that can subsume all the others. Throughout this ambitious masterwork, the author seems to exhibit a kind of nostalgia for the catholic system building of the classical sociologists such as Marx, Durkheim and Weber.

Alexander's ultimate admiration seems to be reserved for the synthetic efforts of Talcott Parsons. Parsons fused the thought of the classical thinkers into the grand theory of structural functionalism, which practically defined American sociology in the mid-twentieth century. Sometimes known as the "big animal theory" of sociology, it envisioned society as a predictably structured organism whose components function to maintain the whole primarily through the assignment of social roles. Alexander maintains that Parson's was a heroic effort to mount a general logic that guided all social thought and that incorporated more particular theoretic logics. These lesser theoretic logics should, he asserts, maintain their place within an overall theory, but instead have come to dominate competing theories that aspire to sociological comprehensiveness, and that exclude all other theoretic logics. So the affliction of contemporary sociology is the reduction of general logic to such elements as 1) political commitment to particular ideologies, 2) methodological choice (positivist versus phenomenologist), 3) empirical proposition (conflict versus consensus), and 4) model selection in terms of functionalism (systems models). Alexander himself proposes a final, synthetic classficatory scheme for social theory built on Parson's theory and based on the two axes of order and rationality.

Again, the point of observing Alexander's efforts here is not so much to adopt his proposed general theoretic logic as it is to note how he critically surveys his field of social thought and unearths the presuppositions upon which theories and research strategies are founded. There is a pervasive skepticism in the field that social thought most probably cannot be reduced to any particular classificatory scheme based, no matter how synthetic. Indeed, as Nader Saiedi in The Birth of Social Theory: Social Thought in the Enlightenment and Romanticism (1993) points out, the single "most frequently

contested arena in sociological thought" is the debate between historical materialism and historical idealism, but "such a category is not included in Alexander's list of classifications".[xxix] The contribution of Alexander's work is mainly critical (in that it exposes the assumptions of other theories), and not so much creative (in providing an alternative).

It is argued here that there is, in fact, an approximation to a general theoretical logic in social thought, this being the subject-object dichotomy central to the tradition of Western thought. Not only does the academic tradition divide itself along the lines of subjectivity versus objectivity, but there are numerous variations of this theme that diverge from or contradict one another but still to share the same basis. Even reconciliations of the dichotomy vary dramatically from one another, and there were some impressive attempts at reconciliation between subject and object in the 1980s and 1990s.

However, this tendency toward synthesis in social theory is actually much more complicated than the interest in the relationship between agency and structure, which is primarily a Continental European concern. By way of contrast, in the United States, the focus had been more on micro-macro linkage. (And just as there are multiple types of macro and micro theories, so there are many conceptions of agency and structure.) Ritzer and Gindoff connect this tendency to the evaporation of Cold War geopolitical extremism, but they ultimately attribute this international movement toward theoretical integration to a rejection by social theorists of the confining and irrelevant choices offered them by philosophers of science between methodological holism and methodological individualism in favor of methodological relationism. There are both

subjectivist and objectivist tendencies within both individualist models (i.e., mind versus behavior) and holist models (i.e., culture versus structure). "[N]either micro nor agency is always equated with individualism, and macro and structure are not always equivalent to holism. Micro and agency can refer to collectivities, while macro and structure can relate to parts of the social whole."[xxx] As an alternative, the authors asserted that "*Methodological* relationism contends ... that explanations of the social world must involve the relationships among individuals and society."[xxxi] Relationism represents a movement not only to confirm the oppositional terms within social theory dichotomies, but to understand the relationships between the various dualisms.

> The view here is that neither social individuals nor social wholes can be explained without analyzing the social relationships between them. Furthermore, neither individuals nor wholes can be adequate explanations of relational phenomena. Relationists can be concerned with subjective (e.g., mind and culture) and objective (e.g., behavior and structure) relationships, or some combination of the two. Second, relationists do not deny the existence of either individual or wholes, but those concepts must be defined to include the relations between them. Third, individualistic and holistic concepts may be useful for gaining an understanding of social phenomena, but relational concepts must be employed if our goal is explanation.[xxxii]

Examples of this relationist orientation is found in the works of Anthony Giddens and Pierre Bourdieu, whose social theories provide the guiding orientation of this study in the first place. A summary of their theory needs to be provided to show the thoroughness of the way they relate various dualisms to one another in their social thought.

Giddens and Bourdieu

The social theories of both Giddens and Bourdieu benefit from a deep and expansive conception of reflexivity that relates social structure to culture. Reflexivity

serves to integrate the subjective and objective realms of social life within themselves and with each other. This dissolves the antinomies that typically cripple traditional sociology. Indeed, the best summaries of their respective social thought can be found in Bourdieu's An Invitation to Reflexive Sociology[xxxiii] and in Gidden's The Constitution of Society.[xxxiv] Bourdieu's title advertises both the methodological role of reflection on the part of the social scientist into his or her own social placement as it influences his or her perspective, as well as the need to observe Durkheim's dictum that the truly critical sociologist needs to envision and describe the social world in a way that runs contrary to the dominant interpretation. Likewise, Giddens' title expresses his conception of the social world as shaped or constituted by its participants reflection on that very social process – especially by scholars in their academic discourse, since their representation of society acts as a kind of self-fulfilling prophecy that alters the society.

Bourdieu's program is to create a unified political economy. Indeed, Bourdieu has become best known for concepts like "cultural capital", and for theories in which even cultural and ideological elements have symbolic power so that they are produced, circulated and consumed within their own politically agonistic economy. His work is a wholesale assault on the antinomies which cripple the social sciences, like the divorce between theory and practice, the symbolic and material, the subjective and the objective, structure and agency, and micro- and macro-analysis. Similarly, Bourdieu's interests run the gamut across all established academic disciplines. Central to this attempted integration of social studies and the displacement of traditional antinomies is a structural dualism manifesting an explicit reflexivity.

The structures of the social world lead, for Bourdieu, a "double life". They exist twice, first in the distribution of material resources and means of appropriation of "capital" (scarce goods and values), and second in the systems of classification, the schemata that function as symbolic templates for the practical activities of social agents. This social science is bifocal, in that it effects a double reading of reality, both objectivist *and subjectivist.*

The first, objectivist or "structural" reading of society (an "objectivity of the first order") treats society from the outside, and focuses on structures which can be materially observed, measured, and mapped out independently of the representations of those who live in it, in order to uncover the "determinate relations" which produce social existence (but of which actors are themselves not fully aware). This is in line with Durkheim's dictum that any serious social science must produce portraits of social life which diverge from that held by the society under study. Of course, the problem with this outside perspective is that it quite easily reifies the structures which it imagines, and also negates the agency of actors.

The second, subjectivist or "constructivist" viewpoint (an "objectivity of the second order") recognizes social reality as a contingent ongoing accomplishment of its social actors who construct their social world. This perspective privileges symbolic systems and human agency, and its focus on interpretive schema has an obvious similarity with ethnomethodology. The problem with this approach is that conceiving social structures as the mere aggregate of individual strategies and acts of classification fails to account for the resilience of these structures, and around what principles this reality is produced.

These two foci of analysis mesh with each other for three reasons. First, cognitive and social systems are homologous, that is, they resemble on another. Second, this homology exists because mental schemata embody social division – primarily because elites sponsor the normalization or naturalization of the social order through its 'internalization', that is, the social order is replicated in cultural categories, particularly through the mechanism of the educational system. Third, this social division as it reproduces itself culturally lends symbol systems the power to be instruments of domination.

Here we have a bold departure from the conventional notions of structure and agency. In fact, Bourdieu ultimately rejects the idea of 'society' for that of "fields", which are relatively autonomous spheres of play that prescribe their own values and possess their own regulative principles. A field is a patterned system of objective forces that imposes on all the objects and agents that enter it. But it is also a space of conflict and competition, in which the very shape and divisions of the field are contested, in which the name of the game is to try to change the rules of the game. If social life is predictable, this in part derives from the culture or "*habitus*". The *habitus* is a system of dispositions that individuals rely upon as a source of strategies to cope with unprecedented change and a diversity of tasks.

Related to Bourdieu's concept of the *habitus* and the field is his obsession with reflexivity, with his proclivity to turning the instruments of his science on himself. His commitment to the centrality of reflexivity in social analysis has several dimensions: 1) its primary target is not the individual analyst, but the social and intellectual unconscious embedded in analytic tools and operations; 2) it is a collective enterprise; and 3) it seeks

not to assault but to buttress the epistemological security of sociology. That is, reflexivity is a way of removing one's research away from one's own *habitus* and thus better evaluating the field under study, of achieving a better objectivity of the first order (structural orientation) by recognizing one's own bias in a self-conscious exercise of objectivity of the second order (cultural orientation). These prejudices exist at many levels and with varying scopes: from individual bias, to disciplinary presupposition, to scholarship or the quest for knowledge as itself a foundational orientation. But in academia, reflexivity is actually discouraged despite its enhancement of scholarship, because it ultimately challenges the social and political grounding of the habitus, closely tied as it always is with class interests. Scholarly rigor, Bourdieu claims, should be defined by the capacity for self-criticism; however, he adds, this is rare in the academic world. Instead, intellectual rigor has been institutionalized in the form of glorified rigidity – the opposite of self-critique and reflexivity.

In Anthony Giddens' social theory, reflexivity likewise plays a central role in promoting rather than destabilizing research. Giddens has an expansive and ambitious conception of reflexivity, and it has at least three senses for him, ranging from self-reference to self-awareness to the constitutive circularity of accounts or texts. Moreover, reflexivity has three referents: agency, science, and society. Subjects are reflexive insofar as they are "concept-bearing animals" possessing the capacity to "turn back upon" and monitor their own actions. This capacity refers to nothing less than the possession reason itself by individuals, for those who lack reflexivity are 'mad'. Social science is reflexive in the sense that the knowledge it generates is injected back into the reality it describes. Scholarship not only influences policy, but actually constitutes what society is

via its self-understanding. And society is reflexive in that it evolves the capacity to control and program its own development.

While Giddens maintains a much more conventional attachment to the concept of structure than Bourdieu, reflexivity lies at the heart of his theory as it does in Bourdieu's. And for Giddens, as with Bourdieu, reflexivity binds together what are usually cast as the antinomies of agency and structure. For Giddens, structure consists of the rules and resources, recursively implicated in the reproduction of the social systems; structure is an abstraction, and exists only as memory traces, the organic basis of human knowledgeability, and as instantiated in action. But here it gets complicated:

> The social systems in which structure is recursively implicated, on the contrary, comprise the situated activities of human agents, reproduced across time and space. Analyzing the structuration of social systems means studying the modes in which such systems, grounded in the knowledgeable activities of situated actors who draw upon rules and resources in the diversity of action contexts, are produced and reproduced in interaction. Crucial to the idea of structuration is the theorem of the duality of structure, which is logically implied in the arguments portrayed above. The constitution of agents and structures are not two independently given sets of phenomena, a dualism, but represent a duality. According to the notion of the duality of structure, the structural properties of social systems are both medium and outcome of the practices they recursively organize. Structure is not external to individuals.... Structure is not to be equated with constraining and enabling.[xxxv]

Gidden's utilizes far more conventional concepts in his theorizing than does Bourdieu, but the sheer variety of ideas which are synthesized in his thought is staggering. And considering that these are geared toward re-tooling the notion of reflexivity (in several forms!) as functional at several levels, reflexivity can be seen as lying at the heart of his theory. Moreover, reflexivity is what unites previous antinomies in his work, and does not serve to destabilize research or alienate those who reflect.

Even Giddens drew a rich vision of human nature, with reflexivity serving a functional purpose within the social world. He divided consciousness between discursive and practical modes, underlain by an unconscious layer of cognition. The social (and psychological) world, in Gidden's account, is very structured, although multiple modes of reflexivity continuously transform these structures through the mechanism of feedback. Likewise, with Bourdieu the cultural and social worlds are in a state of agonistic flux precisely because we can reflect on their structures and transform them.

Reflexivity is, therefore, the essence of the relationism of Giddens and Bourdieu. The crux of reflexivity is, for the former, the relationship between abstract structure (as rules recursively constituted, most notably those formulated by the social sciences) and concrete social systems, and, for the latter, the relationship between habitus and fields. Both of these dialectics, for the purposes of this study, refer to the culture-social structure dialectic. Of course, this study has not, as yet, provided an account of a changing social order to match its description of the evolution of culture – which, drawing from Giddens, reflexively includes theories of culture, the focus of this paper. But a brief attempt will be made here to orient the philosophy discussed above with the social phenomena of American society which had the greatest influence on it.

The Human Resources Movement

The human relations movement in labor relations did help to sensitize managers to the need for better interpersonal relations, morale and group relations in the workplace. However, even during the 1950s it was common to design factory work in terms of simplification and specialization, with planning and coordination handled by upper

management, which "eliminated employees from most creative roles, and tended to degrade their motivation. Such practices in auto assembly led to rules laid down by time-study experts, while management tried to appease workers through the usual human relations formula of a pleasant work-place, good medical facilities, and a nearby canteen." (B 215) Even in the 1950s there were voices calling for greater employee empowerment, like Erich Fromm who in 1955 called for "active ad responsible participation" of employees so they could act as "co-managers." Likewise, in 1960 Douglas McGregor argued that managers had to abandon their negative stereotype of workers as lazy and irresponsible who needed to be coerced into work and who were content to forego decision-making in exchange for greater pay. Only by giving workers greater control would the workplace become a creative enclave.

In the wake of the turmoil of the 1960s, according to Bernstein, there emerged a generation that questioned authority and found in community and participative democracy a solution to technocracy. In terms of work, this led to a "rampant individualism" among activists who saw themselves as more than just their job. Workers wanted instant gratification (Howard and Wilson), but also fulfillment in work and lessened supervision (Zimpel). Challenging the overly rationalized structure of the contemporary workplace in 1960, Kenneth Keniston argued that although labor entails rationality, it need not suppress individuality, and needed to "challenge the heart, imagination, or spirit." In 1963, "Thomas J. Watson of IBM argued that technological change had to be implemented with human considerations in mind." [B 218] In 1964, Jacque Ellul warned of the effects on individuals of a lack of autonomy in their work and lives.

Looking back in 1974 on these critiques of working life in America, "Brigette Berger suggested that the trend toward meaningful work was 'legitimized' rather than caused by the cultural revolution of the sixties." (B 218) Bernstein seems to agree with Berger when he notes the demographic changes in the American population that encouraged the transformation of work values.

> Behind the social tides of the sixties and early seventies lay a series of socioeconomic changes that gave the Human Relations Movement additional propulsion. Most important was the emergence of an increasingly well-educated workforce. Between 1959 and 1977 the percentage of high school graduates in the workforce rose from 32% to 42%, while the number of college graduates in this category jumped from 10% to 18%. Even more significant was growth in the median years of education of the American workforce which leaped from only 8.7 years in 1940 to 12.7 in 1980... This, in turn, led to a professionalization of the labor force. By 1977 the number of professionals had grown by 97% as compared to 1958, while managers and administrators experienced a 42% increase during the same time frame... Or put another way, there was a decided trend toward white collar employment, a category in which the worker had greater discretion over commitment to the job. In 1920 only 25% held white collar jobs, but by 1981 the number reached 53%... America became a "post-industrial society" in which service jobs became increasingly important. In this changed setting "cooperation and reciprocity rather than coordination and hierarchy" held sway... This trend continued throughout the eighties when 18 million positions were created in the service sector... It was this expansion of educated employees who added fuel of the fires of self-fulfillment. (219-220)

Yankelovich's research shows how deeply these new values took root in the population as a whole in the 1970s. The new conception of success was oriented toward "expression, satisfaction, actualization", and away from "keeping up with the Joneses", and these new employees placed greater value on creativity, time with friends, and on interesting work. By 1977, Yankelovich estimated, 52 percent of all Americans subscribed to this "new breed" work ethic that was "inner directed" not in the traditional sense of building character through labor, but in terms of achieving self-fulfillment. For

instance, Yankelovich found that 58 percent of the public agreed in 1968 that "hard work always pays off", but only 36 believed it in 1981. Also, in the mid-1970s workers placed friendly and helpful co-workers at the top of their list of job requirements, and also highly valued interesting work. By 1979, Yankelovich was able to find only 15 percent of those surveyed as typical under-35, money-oriented and ambitious "go-getters". Indeed, Yankelovich noted of the "new breed", "the less they give to the job the more they seem to demand." [B 221] A 1983 study by Yankelovich and Immerwahr showed that respondents equally valued respect from co-workers, interesting work, recognition and skills development, they wanted managers who were informative as well as interested in feedback, and 75 percent felt that their managers did not know how to motivate them. Only 23 percent said they were working to their full potential.

This research began to effect changes in the redesignation of work so that it conformed to the needs of people. Robert Dubin argued as much in 1976, and Louis Davis in 1978 called for organizational design that emphasized "cooperation and responsive adaptation" within "composite self-directing work groups"; managers should think of jobs as sociotechnical systems in which social and technical components meshed together. [B 224] Surveys of this era showed that above all else, workers tended to want from work responsibility, recognition, respect, control, flexibility. In fact, a 1979 study by Cooper et al. (based on 175,000 worker responses collected since 1950) found that while managers expressed a high degree of work satisfaction, wage workers, although not displeased with pay, complained about the absence in their work of what management was perceived to have: communication, respect, challenge, recognition.

Throughout the 1970s, there were numerous experiments by employers to empower workers, with the General Foods' Gaines pet food plant in Topeka, Kansas as perhaps the most notable example. Constructed in the early 1970s, the plant organized workers into self-managed work groups of seven to fourteen persons responsible for high quality standards and empowered to make policy through consensus. Each job involved planning, problem-solving and liaison work, and employees were given a pay increase for every new skill learned. Despite the increased productivity of the plant (it produced 4.17 tons of pet food per worker, while the old plant produced only .75, and with an overhead 33 percent lower than the old plant's), top management at General Foods resisted these reforms and the relative loss of control by management they entailed. Similar team-management reforms were carried out at GM both because of Japanese competition and joint ventures with Japanese companies like Toyota [B 229, 230]; the mid-1980s opening of a Saturn plant in Spring Hill, Tennessee was also inspired by the Japanese model. General Electric under CEO Jack Welch was another famous example of delegation of managerial authority to self-managed teams to achieve greater productivity and profits through increased creativity.

> A survey of 553 global firms by the Boston Consulting Group found that the most successful were those that fostered "cooperation among employees". The difference between American and foreign companies could be found "in how people work together, how decisions get made and how leadership is practiced"... It pointed to the need for an organizational value system that supported career development and personal fulfillment. Without these, employers "will have an increasing number of unmotivated and ultimately unproductive workers"... In an age of brutal competition, companies wedded to the philosophy of control will have satisfied managers but reluctant employees. Unless they retrain existing managers and seek new candidates from younger entrants to the labor force, their firms will lose control or cooperation. But unless the internal emphasis is on teamwork and the external thrust is on

> competition, their ability to survive in a global economy will be compromised. (Bernstein, 234)

The motive of the corporate sponsors of worker empowerment is readily identifiable as rational self-interest. Certain employers in late-twentieth century America began to perceive that recognition of and greater responsibilities for employees would result in greater productivity and innovation, as enthusiasm and cooperation would displace disenchantment and friction within the workplace. Ironically, the greatest obstacle to this strategy was the resistance by many in management over the loss of decision-making control that they would experience relative to workers; after all, the premise behind such reforms was that empowerment meant at least as much to people as did pay, and many management positions would not only be disempowered, but eliminated with the advent of a flatter management structure. The motive behind worker disenchantment that necessitates the need for such reforms is likewise historically situated. Work was no longer popularly held as a sign of salvation as derived from the Protestant work ethic, largely thanks to industrialization. With the advent of mass production, the working classes in the factories were largely resigned to alienation in their mechanized labors, while the middle classes and those above them began to see work as an opportunity for advancement, no longer as a calling or vocation. However, Bernstein claims that the steadily advancing education level of the workforce generated the need by workers for work that was stimulating and challenging, creative and fulfilling.

In this trend toward worker empowerment, what Bernstein refers to as the Human Resources Movement, one finds the confluence of two developments that elevate the ideal of creativity to the premier work value. First, employers recognize the need for

worker involvement and cooperation to achieve greater productivity through collective problem solving (and here the Japanese model plays no small part). Second, a better educated work force yearns for greater self-expression in their work environment. In this way, the two senses of creativity -- that is, problem solving and self-expression -- become associated with one another in the popular mind, and to some degree are now conflated with one another because of this. If the Human Resources Movement gave workers greater power of collective decision-making (with quite a bit of resistance on the part of some reluctant managers) and not just a false feeling of participation that critics charged the prior movements (like the Human Relations Movement) of selling to gullible workers, it needs to be remembered that the objective was still improved productivity and the impetus came from management. In a sense, the technocracy sacrificed direct power for greater profits.

Social influences on academic theory

One of the facets of social theory in the United States at this time is its convergence with European social theory, and Sztompka notes that along with the fusions of antinomies in social science at this time is this scholarly convergence. Whether this represents a greater cultural convergence, one can only speculate. But there were political developments at this time that fed into the collapse of dualisms.

If there were any social influences on the development of social theory in the late twentieth century, particularly in the emergence of relationism, Ritzer and Gindoff relate it to the exhaustion of the passions of the Cold War, which had once fed the extreme positions of social theory.[xxxvi] This is informative, because the rise and ossification of

conceptual antinomies in the social sciences, particularly in the form of Parson's functionalism and his division of labor of the social sciences (he was the architect of their specialization) coincides with the long period stretching from the beginning of the Second World War through to the present time. Indeed, Parson's structural functionalism is a grand synthesis of all social theory to the exclusion of Marx's conflict-oriented sociology – a perfect Cold War propaganda coup within social science! It also coincides with the long post-Depression expansion of the American economy, and the emergence of a complacent technocracy. Indeed, even the growth of the pragmatist tradition has been linked to economic development.

Second, in a complementary vein, Fredrick Jameson explained the florescence of postmodernism in theory and the postmodern in culture as the "cultural logic of late capitalism". In late capitalism, the sale of cultural commodities as opposed to manufactured goods has become central to the modern economy, so that the mere image presented by a consumer product becomes its main selling point. This ethos has come to permetate the society, detaching signs from what they signify and shifting value onto the sign itself. Livingston uses the evolutionary stages of the concept of self from Reisman et al., but appropriates Jameson's consumer society (not Reisman's corporate culture) as the driving mechanism for this change.

Livingston's thesis is that classical pragmatism was a form of postmodernism rooted in the emergence of a consumer economy at the turn of the century. But this is perhaps an over-generalized argument in at least two ways. First of all, classical pragmatism is oriented toward collective problem solving (in John Dewey's case, in the public, political realm, as an exercise in democracy), and not toward the kind of other-

directed consumer culture Livingston attributes to consumerism, which is perhaps better associated with corporate culture described by Riesman at mid-century (with its focus on personality, as opposed to character). Second, the critique of consumerism as a source of the postmodern was limited by Jameson to 'late modernity', more specifically to the period after the economic crises of the 1970s spurred on the globalization of capital, and Livingston's thesis goes too far in finding the existence and causes of the 'postmodern' in the decades around the start of the century. The arguments put forward by Reisman and Jameson are more likely more valid for their own times than they are for the heyday of classical pragmatism. As was concluded in the third chapter, Livingston was a pioneer on the right track in drawing the connection between consumerism and the corporate economy and the rise of classical philosophical pragmatism. However, the relationship between them is much more involved and complex than the one-way causal relationship that he draws, a lineage that goes from corporatism to consumerism to pragmatism.

The reason this matter is brought up in this chapter is that Livingston's thesis begs the question of whether or not Jameson's critique of postmodernism is valid when applied to postmodern pragmatism. The postmodern is typically associated with systems of signs or semiotics, which was indeed an aspect of classical pragmatism. But this chapter's review of 'postmodern pragmatists' such as Davidson, Putnam and Rorty find that a more typical theme in their work is the collapse of the subject-object dualism, which is also a theme prevailing in the deconstructive tendencies of postmodernism.

But this kind of deconstruction is itself part of a greater attitude that emerges in the last third of the twentieth century in American life. That is, there is a general rebellion against positivism and technocracy that postmodernism is but a part of. In fact,

it should be noted here that the counterculture and political activism for which the 1960s are best known is but the left-wing manifestation of the anti-technocratic movement. For example, the Goldwater presidential campaign and the later Reagan campaign were the right-wing manifestations of rebellion against the Establishment, a movement documented by Daniel Pearl in Before the Storm: Barry Goldwater and the Unmaking of the American Consensus. (2001)

Ronald Reagan in particular is symptomatic of the ambiguity of this anti-establishment brand of conservative romanticism: a self-styled, anti-government rebel who commanded the pinnacle of political power and promoted as much as any other political figure in American history the interests of corporations. In intellectual life, perhaps the greatest expression of this anti-positivist, anti-technocratic movement was Thomas Kuhn's The Structure of Scientific Revolutions, which asserted, to popular acclaim, that science did not consist in simple cumulative linear progress, but in the sudden shift to and adoption of unconscious paradigms incommensurate with the understandings that they displace. But even here, with the apparent undermining of the positivist consensus, we find that science is, in fact, enhanced and furthered by Kuhn's theory: Kuhn was himself a scientist whose ultimate goal was to provide a powerful new understanding of science for scientists so that they could better advance their craft. This same ambiguity – the advancement of the subjective aspects of human life against the hegemony of the objective aspects, ultimately and ironically serving to further the objective, technical, material aspects of activity – is also manifest in American labor studies in the last third of the twentieth century. (The critical notes at the end of the chapter contain an exposition on the counterculture and the technocracy.)

At the end of the twentieth century in American work values, there seemed to be a merger of sorts between the ideal of self-fulfillment and self-expression, on the one hand, and problem solving, on the other. That is, creativity as problem solving and as self-expression fused in the popular imagination. That the workplace becomes the site of personal liberation is heartening, but it also exposes how human aspirations may have been appropriated by the forces of production.

The appropriation of creative rebellion by the technocracy

Thomas Frank argues in The Conquest of Cool: Business Culture, Counterculture, and the Rise of Hip Consumerism[xxxvii] that the fields of production and of consumption evolved in similar ways in the 'rebellious' 1960s. He notes that there are two main competing explanatory narratives of the 1960s: 1) that there was a successful counter-cultural revolution, or 2) that this revolution was appropriated by the Establishment. There are, it seems, quite enough examples in his text to suggest that both of these developments were taking place, but he suggests that there were at least two other developments. The third narrative is that the counter-culture in many ways was precipitated by the individualistic ethos of consumerism rather indirectly (with spoiled Baby Boomers asserting their desires over the technocracy that pampered them), but also with the deliberate inculcation of these values by the technocracy. (For example, the American garment industry engineered the launch of *GQ* magazine in 1957 in order to promote the ideal of masculine self-expression in order to boost sales of men's cloths.)

But the author really seeks to prove a fourth narrative, of how the realm of production has its own culture, and how corporate culture was undergoing its own inner

revolution. Nowhere did this revolution present itself more starkly than in the advertising industry. Although advertising has become an exemplar of creativity, in the 1950s Madison Avenue was the nadir of conformity, the land of the Man In the Grey Flannel Suit. There was a creative rebellion in this industry, led by white ethnics (Catholics), that was motivated by a sense of outrage at the repressively stultifying and formulaic nature of ads in the 1950s and of the work environment ad men labored in. But this rebellion was motivated also by the sense that greater creativity would be needed to drive the industry upward in a new age. Indeed, ad men came to perfect the art of packaging their product as youth oriented even though most consumers of the products were not young. Youth, the author asserts, is really a metaphor for creativity, which was becoming more and more an ideal in American society as the economy became more dynamic; here one finds not just homologies between the realms of production and consumption, but causal relationships in the change in values. Consumerism was marketed as anti-consumerist, a trend that persists to this day as advertisers rush to identify what item is considered rebellious and 'cool' so they can sell it before it comes to be recognized as just another mass-produced gimmick.

Summary

This study assumes that there is a cultural principle underwriting Western intellectual history: the subject-object dichotomy, which has evolved profoundly. At the end of the century, the dualism seemed to have collapsed. The implications for this were ambiguous in terms of developments in the social world. For example, various contemporary philosophical trends seem to find their meeting-point in the work of

Richard Rorty, who conceives science to be but another form of art. Rorty's notion strikes a blow against a technocratic conception of science's autonomy; yet Rorty's liberalism suggests that we retreat into our own private worlds of creative fulfillment, leaving the public realm to the technicians. Similarly, American work values seem to encourage the view that the workplace should be a place of creativity and fulfillment, but this thought is largely driven by the hopes of employers who seek more motivated and inventive workers.

The political impetus for the collapse of various dualisms, particularly between culture and science, seems to be a hope that this represents a form of liberation from a technocracy that came to dominate American life. But in some ways, the technocracy seems to have thereby crossed a border into cultural life when the boundary that had been set between subjective and objective was undermined. What is below is commentary on the nature of this conflict between the technocracy and the cultural methods deemed suitable to attack it; it is suggestive of where I want to take this study.

Critical Notes 7.1:

The social world of the late twentieth-century United States:

Technocracy and the counter culture

A blueprint for much of the social change of the late twentieth century can be found in Todd Gitlin's The Sixties: Years of Hope, Days of Rage. A leader of the prominent student activist organization Students for a Democratic Society, Gitlin's first-hand account details the trajectory of protest in the 1960s, and in doing so provides a history of broader change in American society at this time. His generation grew out of the prosperous conformity of the 1950s, in which, he claims, there were already growing signs of unease -- with prosperity itself, not so much with the pockets of poverty and injustice. In fact, the counterculture of the 1960s was divided between those who were abandoning mainstream culture, like the hippies, and those who were out to change society, like the activists; in some ways, these two branches of the youth movement did not always cohere. Over the course of the sixties, according to Gitlin, this movement ballooned, originally ignited by the civil rights movement and fueled by the Vietnam War. The sheer volume, diversity and growing militancy of rebellion against authority led to fragmentation and divisiveness by the end of the decade, as seemingly almost every disenfranchized group in society began to stake out its own claim. However, according to Gitlin, the movement simply imploded in the face of the intransigence of the government. This failure and collapse of the public political realm led to two divergent trajectories for disaffected American youth: either into the extremist terrorism that mushroomed at the end of the sixties (which was doomed) or into a retreat into private escapism and conciliation, through drugs, mysticism, encounter groups and other forms

of absorption into life's interior. In a sense, the cultural and expressive side of the sixties persisted long after the strategic, political side had channeled itself into more moderate causes, like environmentalism.

Perhaps there was a predisposition within the youth movement toward emotive self-expression over political action from the start. In his 1969 collection of essays The Making of a Counter Culture: Reflections on the Technocratic Society and Its Youthful Opposition, Theodore Roszak explains the turmoil and generational conflict of the 1960s as a romantic reaction against the technocracy, or rule of expertise, that actually governed all industrialized societies regardless of the official ideology. The hallmark of a technocracy, according to Roszak, is its ability to appropriate all forms of resistance to itself. A classic example would be the management of sexuality, which in any civilized society is a potent source of discontent. "To liberate sexuality would be to create a society in which technocratic discipline would be impossible. But to thwart sexuality outright would create a widespread, explosive resentment that required constant policing." (14) The dominant form of sexuality that emerges in this situation is a slick, glamorous commodified form typified by *Playboy* magazine and James Bond movies, in which promiscuity reins, but only as a reward for the affluent as payment for their support of the status quo. In Marcuse's words, this represents a case of "repressive desublimation", a new kind of authoritarianism in which the technocracy exhibits an "absorbant power" in providing "satisfaction in a way which generates submission and weakens the rationality of protest." The technocracy's strategic objective is, according to Roszak, the assimilation of all disgruntled factions of society, but in a way that is ultimately neutering. Marginalized Americans are tempted with the promise of

integration into mainstream American society, with all of its potential rewards; but their often desperate campaign is stubbornly resisted by authorities, until all the other values they may harbor that are potentially more challenging to the social order (such as a quest for social justice in general, or a change in foreign policy) are burned out in the exhaustion, so that eventually integration is the *sole* political platform of every disenfranchized group.

> But, at last (why should we doubt it?), all the disadvantaged minorities are accommodated. And so the base of technocracy is broadened as it assimilates its wearied challengers. It might be almost a trick, the way such politics works. It is rather like the ruse of inveigling someone you wish to capture to lean his weight on a door you hold closed ... and then, all of a sudden, throwing it open. He not only winds up inside, where you want him, but he comes crashing in full tilt." (13-14)

In this context, the technocracy's tendency to appropriate all forms of resistance cannot be met with traditional methods of social and political activism. The technocracy itself -- which exists regardless of ay type of ideology -- must be rooted out. And it is from within the self that the technocracy springs; it is primarily consciousness that must be transformed. As Roszak writes:

> A discerning few [in the movement] ... have a shrewd sense of where the technocracy leaves off and the New Jerusalem begins: not at the level of class, party, or institution, but rather at the non-intellective level of the personality from which these political and social forms issue. They see ... that building a good society is not primarily a social, but a psychological task. What makes the youthful disaffiliation of our time a cultural phenomenon, rather than merely a political movement, is the fact that it strikes beyond ideology to the level of consciousness, seeking to transform our deepest sense of the self, the other, the environment. (49)

If there is something in common between the hippy and the activist, he writes, it is that the "underlying unity of these differing styles of dissent is revealed by the extraordinary personalism that has characterized New Left activism since the beginning"

(56), an orientation that reflects the psychological focus in the struggle against the technocracy. Roszak understands this approach to be a form of Romanticism, and he defends it against those who argue that the Romantic celebration of the irrational culminated in the fascist movements of the first half of the century. Roszak asserts that fascism was in substance technocracy *par excellance*, and that, in fact, it dressed itself in the trappings of neo-Romanticism in a kind of public relations ploy worthy of Madison Avenue.

Rebellion against the technocracy, when understood as a species of Romanticism that has the potential for either political activism or for withdrawal from the mainstream, is not necessarily exclusively a phenomenon of the Left. Nor is it limited to white, middle-class youth. The early 1970s saw the resurgence of ethnic identification among white ethnics, typically the Catholics and Jews of the east coast who had strong working class roots. This can be seen as both inspired by as well as a reaction against the celebration of the black heritage that accompanied the civil rights movement. But as Michael Novak, the conservative intellectual spokesman of this movement, wrote in The Rise of the Unmeltable Ethnics (1972), there were two main reasons for this celebration of ethnicity that were not quite politically conservative the typical sense. The political crisis of the sixties alienated the ethnic working class from not only mainstream politics, but from mainstream culture as well, just as it had disenchanted many of the young. Indeed, the white ethnics were already wary of the mainstream, as historical experience had taught them to be. But this involved a deeper political alienation, according to Novak, since American political life had come to be seen as a technocracy by the white ethnics. This in turn involved a more profound disillusionment among the white ethnics

with the Enlightenment project itself and with the public use of reason that underwrote not only American political life, but American life as a whole. The ethnic revival represented a Romantic movement, and this could, Novak claimed, be appropriated by either the left- or right-wing of the American political spectrum.

Understanding the ethnic revival in terms of a Romantic movement that rejects the perceived hegemony of a technocracy cast the movement in a light that gives it a greater depth than is usually attributed to it. For example, in The Ethnic Myth, Stephen Steinberg delves into the factual conditions of the so-called ethnic revival, only to reveal an unprecedented level of assimilation, socially, culturally and economically, among the so-called white ethnics. He attributes the ethnic revival to a nostalgia for things past. Similarly, the extensive survey research conducted by Richard Alba and analyzed in Ethnic Identity also discloses a pattern of heavy assimilation among white ethnics. Although the erasure of ethnic identity is related proportionately to both the number of ethnic groups in one's heritage, as well as to the number of generations one's family has been in America, there is no correlation between ethnic identity ad the factors usually attributed to it, such as economic status, neighborhood demographics, etc. The one factor that seems to correlate with ethnic identity according to Alba is educational level -- an unexpected and completely counter-intuitive finding. It is the better educated among Americans of Irish, Italian, Polish and Jewish descent who identify themselves by ethnicity. Alba explains this by observing that the American national identity has undergone profound revision in the past century, so that Americans no longer see themselves as descendants of colonists who settled a frontier, but rather as a "nation of immigrants" who negotiated and contributed to an already established society. Ethnic

identification therefore lends white ethnics a sense of distinction or symbolic or cultural capital that is not always born out by any objective measure of ethnicity.

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[i] Robert Hollinger and David Depew, *Pragmatism: From Progressivism to Postmodernism* (London: Praeger, 1995), 227.
[ii] Ibid., 227-228.
[iii] Ibid., 228.
[iv] Ibid., 3.
[v] Ibid., 2.
[vi] Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* (London: Routledge and Paul, 1961).
[vii] Depew, 7.
[viii] Ibid., 9.
[ix] Hilary Putnam, *Rethinking Mathematical Necessity* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 1984).
[x] Hilary Putnam, *Quantum Mechanics and the Observer* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1987).
[xi] Putnam, Ibid.
[xii] Hilary Putnam, *Meaning and the Moral Sciences* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1989).
[xiii] Ibid., 5.
[xiv] Ibid., 6.
[xv] Ibid., 138.
[xvi] Ibid., 123.
[xvii] Hilary Putnam, *Renewing Philosophy* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 1992).
[xviii] Ibid., 196.
[xix] Donald Davidson, 'The Myth of the Subjective', in M. Krausz,.ed. *Relativism: Interpretation and Confrontation* (Notre Dame, IN: U of Notre Dame Press, 1989), 159-72.
[xx] Jean-Francois Lyotard, *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge* (Minneapolis: Minnesota UP, 1984).
[xxi] Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences* (NY: Vintage Books, 1973).
[xxii] Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (NY: Pantheon Books, 1977).
[xxiii] Piotr Sztompka, ed. *Agency and Structure: Reorienting Social Theory* (Langhorne, PA: 1994).
[xxiv] Ibid.
[xxv] Anthony Giddens, *Social Theory and Modern Sociology* (Stanford: Stanford UP,1987).
[xxvi] Sztompka, xii.
[xxvii] Sztompka, xiii.
[xxviii] Jeffrey C. Alexander, *Theoretical Logic in Sociology* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1982).
[xxix] Nader Saiedi, *The Birth of Social Theory: Social Thought in the Enlightenment and Romanticism*. (London: UP of America).
[xxx] George Ritzer and Pamela Dindoff, "Agency-Structure, Micro-Macro, Individualism-Holism-Relationism: A Metatheoretical Explanation of Theoretical Convergence between the United States and Europe", in Piotr Sztompka, ed. *Agency and Structure: Reorienting Social Theory*. (Langhorne, PA: Gordon and Breach, 1994).
[xxxi] Ibid., 14.
[xxxii] Ibid.
[xxxiii] Pierre Bourdieu, *An Invitation to Reflexive Sociology* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992).
[xxxiv] Anthony Giddens, *The Constitution of Society* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984).
[xxxv] Ibid., 25.
[xxxvi] Ritzer and Gindoff, 4.
[xxxvii] Thomas Frank, *The Conquest of Cool: Business Culture, Counterculture, and the Rise of Hip Consumerism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997).

CONCLUSION

After a brief summary of what I sought to prove in this study, I will explain what I feel are shortcomings of this work. This study was never intended to be a monograph, but rather a work in progress – more a collection of notes than a finished and polished text. My intention was to engage in broad-ranging study, creative brainstorming and wild speculation in order to build up a stock of ideas for a serious dissertation. I feel I have done that. If I do continue on with this work, it will focus on a very narrow aspect of what I have covered. I would like to study the influence of Emerson on European thought and the way that thought fed back into American social science theory. This study was but a way of discovering a choice topic like this.

But now for a summary of the ambitious work we have just plowed through.

I argued that there are at least three major moments of nihilism in American intellectual history. Against European tradition, Emerson had advanced a conception of culture that was radically interpretive, pluralistic and anti-foundationalist, and this eventually worked its way back into the United States through the social sciences (via Nietzsche and then Weber). Likewise, American pragmatist philosophy, conceiving science as serving plural values rooted in human needs, originated with Emerson. The various European conceptions of value had always conceived value as objective and transcendent, and this was reflected in the European ideas of culture; the chasm between subject and object was a feature of the Western intellectual tradition. This notion of transcendent value was discredited, it led in the European tradition to a crisis of nihilism. In contrast, the early American culture idea united (subjectivity) values and culture with objectivity (science and technique); this revolutionary conception conceived value as

immanent and not transcendent, and some critics felt that this was a nihilistic betrayal of eternal truths and ideals.

By the middle of the twentieth century, especially in the United States, the close union of subject and object characteristic of early twentieth-century American academic theory led to a new kind of nihilism, in the form of the technocratic subordination of values to technique and the negation of existential meaning by rationality in American thought and society. The early balance between an interacting subject and object was lost in positivist pragmatism and in the functionalist social sciences.

Since the 1960s, the response to this crisis was ultimately counter-cultural protest, and consisted of undermining the legitimacy of the technocracy by attacking rationality in general. On the theoretical level, this was accomplished primarily by collapsing the distinction between subject (culture) and object (science). However, this libertarian rebellion drew its values of self-expression and self-fulfillment largely from consumerism, and in its quest for greater individual empowerment laid the groundwork for the information age by equating technology with personal creativity. This is an ambiguous victory over the technocracy.

My single biggest regret in this thesis is not securing a solid theory that would explain nihilism as a truly sociological phenomenon. I sought to weld field theory, an old staple of the social sciences, to the notion of a value system as spatially contextualized; I then tried to explain nihilism not just as a loss of a sense of value, but as the loss of a field – be it a transcendent field or an immanent one. (All fields are created in discourse and are therefore fundamentally abstract in their nature, despite their 'invisibility' and their association with particular places and geographies.) This may yet prove to be a

fruitful area of inquiry. But literature on 'value systems' was not available to me, and it is not exactly in fashion. This, I think, is a serious obstacle.

I tried to show that fields have their own particular values and discourses, a topic common in postmodernist theory, and I tried to link this to a sociological stream that observes that each field has its own capital and economy, and that fields exchange capital. This is a valid linkage, but I do not think that the connection between the two fields is apparent. There just is not enough work in this area to draw from, at least not in terms of linkage.

I also focused on academic theory with the understanding that theory and interpretation are locked together in a way that Charles Taylor has explained. And I assume that theory is but another homologous field in society, so it resembles the rest of society at a given time. But I did little research on social history other than a review of literature on the evolution of the consumer economy and how it paralleled both the culture of the producer economy and the subject-object dialectic found in academic theory in general in the twentieth-century United States. More focus is needed.

I spent an enormous amount of time theorizing, but the empirical chapters were too skimpy. The theory has potential and needs development, but only with more focus on the empirical side will the theory seem less obscure and more relevant. This is what I hope to do in a dissertation.

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