After Postmodernity

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substantive (content).

In any event, I bear the sole responsibility of the theses as expressed throughout the project.

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Rorty sees the history of culture as replacing old gods with new gods. After the demise of theology and metaphysics, philosophers divinized rationality, science, and the moral self. Romantic poets divinized imagination, poetic genius, and the creative self. There is a deep metaphysical urge to claim that science, morality, or poetry puts us in touch with something greater, more real and authentic, than the sheer contingencies that make up our lives....But all these projects have failed, all have fallen victim to the ironist's "radical and continuing doubts."

-- Richard Bernstein (1990:44)

0.1 A History of Much Ado About Nothing

The problem of the ancients, as Friedrich Nietzsche observed in On the Genealogy of Morals (1969:162), "was not suffering itself, but that there was no answer to the crying question, 'Why do I suffer?'" -- until God\(^1\) offered them a helping hand to answer it; only then did many ancients have their suffering soothed, feel to be "human," possess "human dignity," and live like "free human beings."

The problem of the moderns is not suffering itself either, but that, by contrast, there are conflicting answers to the crying question, Who is to succeed God, now that It is dead? -- until Science\(^2\) offers a helping hand to answer it; only then do many moderns feel proud in contending, as Martin Heidegger put it in a 1938 lecture delivered in Freiburg im Breisgau, "for the position in which [they] can be that particular being who gives the measure and draws up the

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\(^1\) The metanarrative of a traditional cosmic order.

\(^2\) The scientific/instrumental ethos of modern times.
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guidelines for everything that is." (C. Owens 1983: 66)

The problem of the postmoderns is not suffering itself for sure, but that, however, there are cacophonous voices not adding up to anything, giving too many answers to the crying question, Who is to take the place of Science, now that its age of innocence is also gone? -- until it is to be recognized, someday, that there is really nothing left, that humans are just nothing in the end, to be eventually superseded by post-humans at some point after postmodernity.

But why? The point of departure is to examine the very phenomena of modernity (and postmodernity, for that matter) anew.

0.2 A Synopsis of What to Come

The re-examination of the very phenomena of modernity (and postmodernity, for that matter) has the virtue of helping to explain why the global spread of formal rationality contributes, I claim, to a critical mindset of science which comes to undermine human values and beliefs (including the scientific ones themselves). It makes no difference as to whether or not the values and beliefs are ancient, medieval, modern, and now postmodern as well. To say that the critical spirit of science has undermined ancient and medieval values and beliefs is not news, to be sure, since this is what it means to be modern (as I shall devote some sections in the first five chapters elaborating this point). But to claim that the undermining holds true to modern, and now postmodern, values and beliefs as well (including the scientific ones themselves) undoubtedly invites surprise and incomprehension among many.

This is so, in special relation to my model of seven major dimensions of human existence, which I term the True (about knowledge), the Holy (about religion), the Good (about morals), the Just (about justice), the Everyday (about consumeristic culture), the Technological (about technophilic culture), and the Beautiful (about the arts).

The undermining not only has happened in the Same (the Western world) but
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is spreading to the Others as well (the civilizations of the non-West). The
undermining, when carried to its logical conclusion, will yield what I refer to
as the post-human consciousness after postmodernity, in that humans are nothing
in the end (other than what culture has shaped them to be), to be eventually
superseded by post-humans (androids, robots, genetically altered superior beings)
at some point after postmodernity.

A synopsis of what is to come in seven chapters of this project follows.

Chapter One, titled "Modernity and Its Trinity," offers some background
analysis of what modernity is. After introducing an anecdotal debate on the idea
of modernity in Section 1.1, I then propose my own conception, which is that
modernity is (a) free-spirited, in Section 1.2, (b) capitalist, in Section 1.3, and
(c) hegemonic, in Section 1.4.

(a) My claim, in other words, is that the modern project is to be understood
as a bitter struggle exemplified by the succession war between the Enlightenment
thinkers and their Romantic enemies after the death of God. This thus constituted
the central cultural discontent of modernity, in special relation to what I call
(i) the Everyday and the Technological, (ii) the True and the Holy, (iii) the
Beautiful/Aesthetic, and (iv) the Good and the Just.

(b) The Capitalist Transformation during the Industrial Revolution provided
the social condition for this bitter struggle to be further fought out. And
(c) the bitter struggle was not confined within the Same (the Western World) but

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3. Since this project is broad in scope, the sources which it relies on must be equally
diverse as well. For those who are intellectually inclined to certain disciplines, the
following rough guide of the next seven chapters in terms of academic classifications can be
helpful (even though the classifications are not exhaustive),

- Chapter 1: modern intellectual history, and international political and economic
  history.
- Chapter 2: cultural, media, environmental and technology studies.
- Chapter 3: sociology of religion, religious and science studies, epistemology, and
  philosophy of the natural and social sciences.
- Chapter 4: art and literary theory, and sociology of art.
- Chapter 5: moral and political philosophy, and social theory.
- Chapter 6: international political economy, international relations, and
  cross-cultural studies.
- Chapter 7: artificial intelligence, cosmology, astrophysics, cybernetics, neural
  networks, and some science fiction.
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has been spreading to the Others (of the non-West) as well. For instance, the modern experience of the Sinitic Other equally confronts a comparable cultural discontent of modernity as exemplified by what I call the equivalent tension between its soul-searching modernity and the state-market counterpart in the post-Mao epoch (in Section 1.5).

The history of this centuries-long struggle within modernity, be it in the Same or in the Others, clearly shows that the project of modernity (and now that of postmodernity as well) needs to be revoked, for reasons that will be analyzed in the next four chapters.

Chapter Two, titled "The Consumeristic and Technophilic Lifeform, and Its Price," examines the first element in the bitter struggle within free-spirited modernity, that is, in special relation to the Everyday and the Technological, and how this has been spreading to the Others through hegemonic modernity.

After an introduction to the rise of consumeristic and technophilic cultures in Section 2.1, I first argue that the modern lifeform in its average everydayness is (1) comfortable yet banal (in relation to consumeristic culture), in Section 2.2, and (2) affluent yet costly (in relation to technophilic culture), in Section 2.3.

(1) The rationale of the first argument of comfortableness and yet banality in consumeristic culture is based on a five-fold ambivalence in the cognitive and appreciative realms of modern humans: that is, in a consumeristic culture which is (a) highly tolerant yet equally inane, (b) highly entertaining yet equally trivial, (c) highly imaginative yet equally psychotic, (d) highly educational yet equally misinformational, and (e) highly liberating yet equally decadent.

And (2) the rationale of the second argument of affluence and yet costliness in technophilic culture is made in relation to practical and psychical concerns, in that (a) technological emancipatory power is as much productive as destructive and (b) it is as much creative of new possibilities as equally destabilizing to the human psyche. This psychic destabilization in (b) contributes to a
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fragmentation of the modern self by blurring the two-fold distinction, that is, (i)between the symbolic and the imaginary, and (ii)between the organic and the mechanical --, with profound implications for the emergence of a posthuman consciousness at some point after postmodernity (as will be discussed in Chapter Seven).

I then evaluate, secondly, in Section 2.4, what the postmoderns have suggested as a solution to this modern malaise of costliness (in technophilic culture), or to this dead ideal of technological emancipatory power for practical everydayness -- and conclude that the postmodern solution is as much naive as problematic as the modern one which it supposedly superseded. The reason is four-fold, in that none of the four possible solutions within the postmodern disposal can resolve the modern problematic of costliness, namely, (i) melancholic technological pessimism, (ii) resolute technological optimism, (iii) nostalgic Arcadianism, and (iv) ecology-conscious late capitalism (insofar as the very capitalist legacy of modernity remains in force and the politics of dissensus in postindustrial society reigns supreme).

And in relation to the modern malaise of banality in consumeristic culture, the postmodern appeal to a psyche-satisfying lifeform is equally unpromising. As will be clearer in Chapter Three, the banality process will be even more intense in post-consumeristic culture.

Even more seriously, this price of modern life in the form of banality in consumeristic culture and of costliness in technophilic culture has been spreading to the Others as well (as is the case of the contemporary Sinitic Other in Section 2.5).

Chapter Three, titled "No Objectivity, Nor God, and the Critical Spirit of Science," looks at the second element of the bitter struggle within free-spirited modernity, traceable back, once more, to the succession war between the Enlightenment thinkers and the Romantics. The key problems concern the True (about what it is to know) and the Holy (about what it is to be and to belong),
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and how they have been spreading to the Others through hegemonic modernity. My argument, after an introduction to the rise of the godless world in Section 3.1, is two-fold, (1) the first in relation to the True, and (2) the second in relation to the Holy.

(1) In relation to the True, I argue, in Section 3.2a, that the modern search for scientific objectivity is untenable, for two reasons. (a) What constitutes factual is contentious in nature, by reasons of (i) conceptual/theoretical presuppositions, (ii) heuristic/extra-theoretical considerations, and (iii) historicist delimitations. And (b) it is also untenable, because such a search presupposes a naive substance metaphysics (behind the correspondence theory of truth) which is problematic in its core.

But this should not be conflated as endorsing the idealist, realist, and historicist views of reality. I reject them as well --, though not failing to learn something from each. The idealist view, as exemplified by positivism, is rejected, since (a) it is self-refuting, (b) it is not compatible with the lay and scientific view that there are material objects (not just as sense-data or, in a different form, as observable things) in the real world, and (c) the positivist heuristic concern for prediction and simplicity is not as feasible as is often assumed. Neither is the realist view accepted, since, though the realist’s idea of reality can be used solely as a critical term, its view that the success of science must be accounted for in terms of the test of truth (as correspondence to reality) or of approximate truth (as approximate correspondence to reality) is problematic, since we cannot know reality independent of theory. Nor should this be taken as endorsing the historicist alternative either, since it has never been able to adequately account for the tremendous scientific and technological achievements in modern times.

And the postmodern solution? Even the postmodern alternative in terms of a performative criterion of knowledge to this naive modern search for scientific objectivity should not be taken at face value either, I further argue in Section 3.3b, because of its instrumental tendency which, when carried to its extremity,
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can be easily translated into terror (besides the problematic of historicism as aforeindicated).

What is left, so I propose, is to maintain the critical spirit of science (solely as a critical mindset), together with the imaginary seeing of its enemies, and yet without the naivety nor dreams of either side and likewise without endorsing realism, idealism (as in positivism) and historicism (the performative turn of the postmoderns included), while still learning something from each of them.

(2)In relation to the Holy -- , the spread of formal rationality in the socio-economic realm contributes instead, I argue in Section 3.2b, to spiritual/social discontent in terms of (a) the loss of being (in relation to a suprasensual realm) and (b) belonging (in relation to a communal realm). One major result is socially dysfunctional, as reflected in high rates of mental illness, suicide, violence, and family breakdown in modern (and now postmodern) times.

And the postmoderns fail, I further argue in Section 3.3a, to offer any promising solution to this modern malaise, since their call for a revival of religion and for the proliferation of new religions (as opposed to the orthodox conception of the Holy in the old days, for instance) are unable to solve the spiritual/social and intellectual crisis of modern (and now postmodern) times, in terms of knowing, being and belonging.

My argument is five-fold, in terms of the trend of this religious revival to become (a) commoditized into the logic of late capitalism, (b) psychopathological in character, (c) subcultural in formation, (d) contextualized within a politics of resentment, and (e) marginalized in an increasingly instrumental world.

And this bitter struggle within free-spirited modernity in relation to the True and the Holy has been spreading, I further argue in Section 3.5, to the Others as well through hegemonic modernity (as is the case of the contemporary Sinitic Other).

Contrary to what the postmoderns would like us to believe, the
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secularization process has yet to slow down in our postmodern times. Instead the spiritual/social discontent becomes more intense. The idea of a post-secular society is a postmodern myth, just as the vision of a liberating secular society was a modern myth.

Chapter Four, titled "The Ideal of Artistic Autonomy, and Its Disillusion," accounts for the third element of the bitter struggle within free-spirited modernity, in special relation to the modern search for an aesthetic inner logic --, and how this has been spreading to the Others through hegemonic modernity.

After an introduction, in Section 4.1, about why the ideal of artistic autonomy was related to the emergence of bourgeois self-understanding, I argue that such a search in modern arts (as in Bourgeois Art, as a historical successor to the pre-modern Sacral and Courtly Arts), turns out to be illusory. This is for three reasons (in Sections 4.2 & 4.3), in that it has been (a) much politicized, (b) much commercialized, and (c) much reduced to meaningless solipsism of nowhere.

And the postmodern reaction to this modern malaise is not helpful either, I further argue in Section 4.4, and needs to be rejected as well, for three reasons, that is, (a) its pathological effect of even more unconstrained celebration of human instincts and sensuality, (b) its impotence and misery in stylistic eclecticism, and (c) its alienating abyss in centerless pluralism. The death of God in the aesthetic realm (as in postmodernism) is not something to be celebrated --, though not without the deconstructive heritage of historical avant-gardism preceding it (as discussed in Section 4.2).

The promise of the realization of the other half of human freedom/potentiality in aesthetic autonomy (as long dreamt by the Romantics) is nowhere to be found. And this problematic has been slowly yet steadily spreading to the Others as well through hegemonic modernity (as is the case of the contemporary Sinitic Other), for similar reasons (as dealt with in Section 4.5).

Chapter Five, titled "Moral Universalism and Localism for a Just Society,
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and Their Incredibility," treats the last element in this bitter struggle within free-spirited modernity, that is, that which concerns the Good and the Just --, and how this has been spreading to the Others through hegemonic modernity.

(1) After an introduction in Section 5.1 to the historical context within which the search for moral universalism for a just society became fashionable, I first argue in Section 5.2 that the four justifications for the liberal vision of a just society (in its favour for toleration and plurality of diverse notions of the good) is problematic for various reasons. And the four justifications take the form of (i) skepticism, (ii) experimentation, (iii) autonomy, and (iv) the modus vivendi view. My main concern, however, is with (iv), though not without critically assessing the other three as well, since it is gaining increasing currency in contemporary talk on liberalism, and my argument against modus vivendi liberalism is four-fold (though some of the arguments can be used against the other three justifications as well).

(a) Firstly, modus vivendi liberalism is morally disorientating. It tends to elevate rational conversation to the status of a new public virtue, which reason, however, cannot fulfill, since moral-political questions cannot be answered rationally unless diverse minds are stringently shaped by authority and custom which are now repudiated in modern (and now postmodern) times.

(b) Secondly, it marginalizes circumstantially disadvantaged others. Especially when contextualized within a capitalist modernity, it tends to benefit more the business-professional and upper strata by nature of a minimalist, non-intervening state so much congenial to liberal political neutrality, at the expense of marginalized groups of women, minorities, and the lower class (whose members have never enjoyed adequate voice nor receive sufficient hearing in liberal society).

(c) Thirdly, it is hegemonic to its enemies. The liberals are exemplary creatures of the soft, of the weak --, and the victims (of the liberal superego, that is, its stringent imperative of critical, rational conversation) are none other than, as in the Nietzschean categories, the strong, the noble, the
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aristocratic, the willful, the instinctual, who are now excluded from acquiring political power in the liberal public realm.

(d) And lastly, it is in-efficacious in achieving justice under modern (and now postmodern, especially) conditions. In post-industrial society, for instance, myriad power strata representing different interest groups push for their parochial demands with no (or little) sense of the common good, such that a politics of dissensus is on the rise. At best, the social outcome is often one in which laws and policies are made on the basis of those groups which are the most organized, most vocal, most interested, and most influential, at the expense of the majority of the less so.

(2) I then argue, in Section 5.3, that the political romanticists (both the communitarians and the anarchists), in their battle with this four-fold liberal malaise, have also failed to offer a moral universality for a just society. Indeed, their visions, when carried into practice, more often than not bring institutional terror, social dysfunction, or inadequate regard of individual freedom.

(3) Nor do I spare the postmodern alternative, that is, the postmodern moral localism for a just society (that is, its politics of difference). The postmodern politics is, I claim in Section 5.4, impotent for a major reason, in that what is justice for some groups becomes injustice for others in post-industrial society (of our postmodern time). The main reason is that in post-industrial society, the increasing process of professional specialization into more and more diverse roles and occupations creates a problem of social tension in which the members of this remarkably diverse community find it hard to achieve consensus on social issues (ranging from abortion and gun control through gay rights and women's rights to environmental protection and nuclear power). Maybe the brutal fact is that there is no justice in the end, and such fanciful terms as 'local justice' and 'particular justice' are postmodern oxymorons.

And this disquieting phenomenon has been spreading, I argue in Section 5.5, to the Others as well through hegemonic modernity (as is increasingly so in the
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Sinitic Other), as they become modernized -- and, in due time, post-modernized, for that matter.

Chapter Six, titled "Four Legacies of Modernity, and After Modernity," asks what is there to be said, now that the modern project (as fought out between the Enlightenment thinkers and their enemies back in the heyday of modern times), and now its postmodern successor as well, turn out to be illusory.

I argue that there are four legacies of modernity to our postmodern time to be learnt.

The first legacy, as discussed in Section 6.1, is that this bitter struggle (in both its modern and postmodern forms) has been spread to other civilizations, be they in Latin America, Africa, the Middle East, East Asia, or South Asia (with substantive evidences from cross-cultural studies to support the claim). The result is a global civilization in the making, however slow and long the process might take.

But the global emergence, I further argue, is not without some historical delimitations which take the form of three clashes of civilizations, which constitute the other three legacies. These three clashes take place in the realms of (a) rechantment, (b) resentment, and (c) regional divisionism (regional integration and the North-South economic divide as exemplars), in the Others (as discussed in Sections 6.2, 6.3, & 6.4, respectively).

My main point, however, is that in the long run, the first legacy of modernity to the postmodern epoch will be more important than the other three (which are meaningful especially in the foreseeable future). A global civilization, that is, will emerge someday after modernity, maybe in the more distant future --, thanks to this fundamental legacy of modernity.

And finally, Chapter Seven, titled "A Final Thought: No God, Nor Solace, and After Postmodernity," explores some implications of the global cultural emergence (as analyzed in the last six chapters) for the ultimate human future.
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This emergence is exemplified by the continuous spread of the bitter struggle within Western modernity (and now its postmodern successor as well) to the Others, with its leaving behind nothing save the critical spirit of the Enlightenment and the imaginary seeing of its enemies, yet without the naivety nor dreams of either side in the history of formal rationality in modern and now postmodern times.

I first argue, in Section 7.1, that this intersocietal transformation is a historical trend, not an inevitable law, nor does it imply necessary progress. The spread of formal rationality embodied in this intersocietal transformation in modern and now postmodern times, when carried to its logical completion, will yield, solely as a historical trend once more, what I call a posthuman consciousness (in Section 7.2), in that humans are nothing in the end (other than what culture has shaped them to be), to be eventually superseded by posthumans.

Then in Section 7.3, I inquire as to what forms these posthumans may take and suggest, based on current research on cosmology, astrophysics, cybernetics, artificial intelligence, genetic engineering, neural networks, and other technologies, that they will be androids, humanoids, robots, cyborgs, and genetically altered superbeings at some point after postmodernity (perhaps some hundred or thousand years from the present). I do not, however, deny other possibilities, for instance, that humans may as well destroy themselves sooner in a nuclear Armageddon or in a gigantic natural calamity.

Finally in Section 7.4, I raise the prospect of the loss of human privilege in this posthuman world, in that the very question which has since time immemorial been asked in myriad ways, Why are humans at all?, can now be thus answered: that is, the brutal truth is that humans are nothing in the end (with no God no solace to console them, now that all metanarratives in all human history hitherto existing, be they ancient, medieval, modern, and now postmodern as well, are to be, if not already in some places, deconstructed --, as has been discussed in the first six chapters), to be eventually superseded by posthumans.

To be sure, I am not unaware of how disquieting my thesis may be to my
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fellow humans. I am willing, however, to bow to their reproach, but I still have no consolation to offer them.

This long intellectual journey is a formidable challenge I am confronting. In accepting it, let me now proceed, with no further delay, to the reexamination of the very idea of modernity (and postmodernity, for that matter) -- to which I therefore turn to Chapter One hereafter.
To Everyone and Yet No One
Chapter 1. Modernity and Its Trinity

To be modern is to know that which is not possible any more.
-- Roland Barthes (Y.Bois 1992:329)

What happens...is that the social imaginary of modern society simply borrows its contents from fragments of rationality. The result is an imaginary which is empty of any existential purpose or comfort -- which can no longer play its cultural role. It is here that Castoriadis locates the central cultural discontent of modernity.
-- John Tomlinson (1991:159)

This chapter offers some background analysis of what modernity is. After introducing an anecdotal debate on the idea of modernity in Section 1.1 --, I then propose my own conception, which is that modernity is (a) free-spirited, in Section 1.2, (b) capitalist, in Section 1.3, and (c) hegemonic, in Section 1.4.

(a) My claim, in other words, is that the modern project is to be understood as a bitter struggle exemplified by the succession war between the Enlightenment thinkers and their Romantic enemies after the death of God. This thus constituted the central cultural discontent of modernity, in special relation to what I call (i) the Everyday and the Technological, (ii) the True and the Holy, (iii) the Beautiful/Aesthetic, and (iv) the Good and the Just.

(b) The Capitalist Transformation during the Industrial Revolution provided the social condition for this bitter struggle to be further fought out. And (c) the bitter struggle was not confined within the Same (the Western World) but has been spreading to the Others (of the non-West) as well. For instance, the modern experience of the Sinitic Other equally confronts a comparable cultural discontent of modernity as exemplified by what I call the equivalent tension
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between its soul-searching modernity and the state-market counterpart in the post-Mao epoch (as illustrated in Section 1.5).

The history of this centuries-long struggle within modernity, be it in the Same or in the Others, clearly shows that the project of modernity (and now that of postmodernity as well) needs to be revoked, for reasons that will be analyzed in the next four chapters.

1.1 An Anecdotal Debate Between Two Obscure Individuals in History

The word, 'modern', has its forerunner in moderne, a French word, from modernus (late Latin) and modo (Latin), and means "of something existing now, just now", as was common from the late 16th century on. (R.Williams 1985:208 & 1992:23-27) Modernism, modernist, modernize, and modernity followed, in the 17th and 18th centuries. The term 'modernize', for instance, from the 18th century on, had special reference to buildings (Walpole 1748:"The rest of the house is all modernized"), spelling (Fielding 1752: "I have taken the liberty to modernize the language"), and fashions in dress and behavior (Richardson 1753: "He scruples not to modernize a little"). By the 19th and especially 20th centuries, the word 'modern,' Williams continues, became increasingly equivalent to IMPROVED (satisfactory, or efficient). Modernism and modernist were then specialized to refer to trends in experimental art and writing (c.1890-c.1940). And modernize and modernization had become more generally related to INSTITUTIONS and INDUSTRIES: often indicating something unquestionably favourable and desirable in some transformation or improvement of extant institutions and industries. Modernity then referred to the historical epoch which concerns this improvement, as much of art and literature (modernism) as of institution and industry (modernization).

But this does not tell us exactly what something modern is, as contrasted
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with something medieval and, farther back in time, something ancient. Modernity, if defined simply as the period of Western history after the Middle Ages (from 1450 A.D. on) -- as does Webster’s New World Dictionary (1978:913) --, then this conceptual construct rather raises difficult questions than answers what it is. Why, for instance, is the medieval/modern epochal frontier to be stabilized precisely at 1450 (or, roughly put, around 1500)? And what is the quality of being modern, as opposed to being medieval and, farther back in time, ancient?

The first question involves periodization. In its origins, the historical periodization which separated the Middle Ages from modern times around 1500 was formalized by a late-17th century German philologist-historian, Cristol Keller. (W.Green 1986:54) The rationale behind his epochal stabilization was based on the break between the fall of Constantinople (to the Ottoman Turks in 1453) and the onset of the Protestant Reformation (in the 16th century), and thus affirmed the orientation held by Italian humanists three centuries earlier and supported by early Protestant historians that regarded the millenium after the fall of Rome (that is, from 330 when the Roman emperor Constantine the Great moved the capital from Rome to Byzantium, then renamed Constantinople, to its fall to the Ottoman Turks in 1453) as what Petrarch called the "dark centuries." (E.A.1992:653;D.Gross 1992:139;R.Williams 1985:207)

Later, between 1860 and 1886, Jacob Burckhardt in The Civilization of Renaissance on Italy and John Symonds in The Renaissance on Italy constructed a Renaissance conception of Western history, according to which Europe had experienced profound epochal change by the 16th century (in terms of "the discovery of world of man", that is, a spiritual world of creativity and enterprise that Europeans had by then discovered, or re-discovered, within themselves). This periodization found further support in the English-speaking world with the appearance of the Cambridge Modern History in 1902. In our times, such a Renaissance-based conception of modernity finds its further refinement in Stephen Toulmin's Cosmopolis: The Hidden Agenda of Modernity (1990).

But even in the Cambridge Modern History itself, a debate was carried out
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between Mandell Creighton, who wrote the "Introductory Note", and his colleague, William Cunningham. (W.Green 1986:55). Mr.Creighton argued that the starting point of modern European history was the competition among emerging nation-states, in special regard to the rise of nationalism and the growth of individual freedom -- in brief, the discovery of a free human spirit. Mr.Cunningham, however, suggested instead that the medieval epoch ended with a "veritable revolution in commerce" and later, the emergence of capitalism -- and thus began the modern era. But neither gave sufficient attention to what world-system theorists in our century call the role of the discovery and exploitation of the New World, the development of plantation slavery, the Atlantic slave trade -- or, in short, the impact of overseas empires on European economic development. (I.Wallerstein 1974,1980; A.Frank,1969)

The three positions taken by Mr.Creighton, Mr.Cunningham, and their critics, so I here suggest, have some merit, partial as each is, and surprising though this appears. Mr.Creighton's view ethoes the traditional Eurocentric historiography of a genealogy of the West as a progressive success story in that, as criticized by Eric Wolf in Europe and the People Without History (1982), a mythical European tale runs as follows: "ancient Greece begat Rome, Rome begat Christian Europe, Christian Europe begat the Renaissance, the Renaissance the Enlightenment, the Enlightenment political democracy and the industrial revolution." (W.Green 1986:62) The Eurocentric prejudice is to be avoided here, Wolf argues, since much indeed have different peoples in different places encountered each other economically, politically, militarily, and culturally -- in a perpetual, diffusive, multi-lateral historical interaction.

William McNeill in The Pursuit of Power (1982) shows how the expansion of market activity in 11th-century China intensified the growth of trade and towns in Europe. And John Merson in an article entitled "The Transmission of Knowledge" talked of the spiritual contamination of Pope Urban II's Christian knights after the retaking of Jerusalem in 1099 (merely four years after his order of the first Crusade to the Holy Land in 1095) with Arabic ideas and tastes (for refined
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food, clothing, music, and technological and cultural institutions from the east) which eventually helped to undermine the power and credibility of the Catholic church. (J. Merson 1990:82-3)

This influence continued, in its brighter side, during the Dark Ages when European cultivation of learning and inquiry came to center in the Madrassas and the libraries of the Arab world, leading to the spectacular transformation of cathedral schools into universities along the Islamic Madrassan line of education, giving primary emphasis to argument and debate. (J. Merson 1990:84) Wallerstein in *The Modern World System* likewise argued how much the transition to capitalism and the subsequent European global hegemony owed not to an evolutionary internal process in Europe but to the external exploitative process in dependencies of the New World, which saved Western Europe from internal disorder and fratricidal class warfare at the end of the Middle Ages. (I. Wallerstein 1974:ch.2 & 1980:ch.5; W. Green 1986:61) A classic tale concerns, for sure, the growth of England and the Netherlands, much benefited as they were with the increase of investment in industry via savings acquired (by those of the commercial class) through bullion inflow (gold and silver) from the New World.

Yet Mr. Creighton's view is not totally without merit, partial though it is. Those defenders of a view comparable to his rightly stress some internal circumstantial advantages which can only be attributed to Europe's internal evolutionary process. Europe, Eric Jones in *The European Miracle* (1987:ch.2) suggests, has, as compared with other regions, always benefited from a more favourable ecological environment less susceptible to disasters, be they geophysical (earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, tsunamis), climatic (hurricanes, typhoons, hailstorms, floods, droughts), biological (epidemics, epizootics, outbreaks of crop disease, locust invasions), or social (settlement fires, collapse of man-made structures). A Europe which suffered from fewer natural disasters, from a less burdensome disease environment, from a less irrigation-dependent agriculture, from less ravages of horse nomads (too distant from the
steppe), and from less unnavigable rivers and unindented sea coasts encouraged the development of maritime trade and political plurality -- a point also shared by Wallerstein, McNeill, and Patricia Crone (as in *Pre-Industrial Societies*) in different ways. (P.Crone 1989:ch.8; W.Green 1986:63)

A similar argument was put forward by Joseph Levenson in *European Expansion*, in that the great age of Greece, as the forerunner of that element in European life which has been characterized as individualistic, democratic, and scientific-oriented, has such origins in those small islands and promontories washed by Mediterranean waters and inhabited by "peoples who could scarcely subsist upon the produce of their own but were obliged, by circumstance and temperament, to traffic freely overseas" -- that is, the growth of maritime trade and its subsequent emergence of a merchant class. (J.Levenson 1967:70-1) No doubt though this is, James Blaut's critique of this "environmental determinism" in *The Colonizer's Model of the World* should guard us against the danger of "the myth of the European miracle" so understood. (J.Blaut 1992:69-94) Yet one need not be environmentally deterministic in order to appreciate some relevancy of ecological factors in accounting for the historical genealogy of European cultural temperament.

But this is not to fail giving Mr.Cunningham's point about a revolution in commerce (and later the emergence of capitalism) the credit as due either. After all, Karl Marx (1915 & 1978) made a convincing point that the capitalist mode of production in its triumphant conquest first of the English economic base and later of other Western European countries became the most effective agent in overcoming feudalistic institutions that had been so dominant during the medieval epoch. But Max Weber (1958) made a qualifying point in tracing this capitalist mindset (endless production, time as money, profits to be saved and reinvested) to Calvinist ethics (thrift, hard work, honesty, and piety in a predestined world).

The point of a detour into an anecdotal debate between peoples like Mr.Creighton and Mr.Cunningham (insignificant, obscure figures as they were in
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human history) is that, if the medieval/modern epochal frontier is to be stabilized around 1500 as many contemporary historians want to do, then it is necessary to consider both "external" factors (hegemonic as in world-system theorists' argument) and "internal" ones (both free-spirited as in Mr. Creighton's and capitalist as in Cunningham's), while being equally critical towards the partiality of each.

I therefore thus appropriate ideas from this reconstructed debate for my own purpose here, and say that what is modern is then to be understood as involving three facets which constitute the trinity of modernity: namely, free-spirited, capitalist, and hegemonic modernity. These are to be understood in the sense elaborated hereafter (not reducible, that is, to the anecdote thus appropriated). No one before has understood modernity in this way, whose treatment thus constitutes a contribution of mine to the literature.

Consequently, to the second question (as asked at the beginning) of how the quality of being modern, as opposed to being medieval, is to be understood --, one has to understand the history of the phenomena of the discovery of "the world of man" as Burckhardt and Symonds would put it, the transition to capitalism, and the rise of European hegemony. The twin dangers here are tracing a genealogy into time immemorial which becomes too irrevocably historical and confronting the matter in a shallow way without any historical perspective.

Let me start first the discussion of why this discovery of "the world of man" (next section) in free-spirited modernity is important in understanding the quality of being modern -- to be followed by an enquiry into the second and third facets of modernity, namely, capitalist modernity (Section 1.3) and its hegemonic counterpart (Section 1.4).

1.2 Free-Spirited Modernity: The Death of God, and The Succession War Between the Enlightenment & Its Enemies
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Late medieval Europe had the good fortune, though with a price, to benefit from its cultivation of the learning and inquiry accomplished by other worlds, as it began to emerge from the "dark centuries." "No other civilization", Alfred Hall (1957:717) suggested, "seems to have been so widespread in its roots, so eclectic in its borrowings, so ready to embrace the exotic" -- an admirable faculty, indeed, for assimilation (totally unlike the xenophobic isolation of the Chinese which of course eventually led to their humiliating downfall in the 19th and early 20th centuries). The sources seemed as much diverse as vast: or a cite a few instances, Chinese ideas on medicine, alchemy, navigation, paper-making, printing, and astronomy; and from the Arabic world new tastes for refined food, clothing, music, science, medicine, mathematics, the Indian decimal system (A.Sabra 1983:177-200), astronomy, clockwork (D.Hill 1983:231-248), and Chinese gunpowder and ballistics via Muslim trade.(J.Merson 1990:82-3) Particularly important to the present enquiry is the role which Arabic libraries at the time played in transmitting to medieval Europe knowledge concerning the works of classical Greek mathematicians, physicians, and scholars (including those saved from the famous library of Alexandria which was destroyed with the collapse of the Roman empire -- Euclid’s geometry, Pythagoras’ mathematics, Galen’s medical theories, and Aristotelian logic).

The transmission of knowledge was based on a modeling of universities along the Islamic Madrassan line stressing argument and debate, which helped the rediscovering of Greek philosophy and science (Aristotelian tools of argument, logic and investigation --, and Socratic dialectical method not to be ignored). Despite initial repression by the Church, Christian intellectuals (St.Thomas Aquinas especially), later championed the virtue of critical thought, though perhaps without knowing of its destructive dangers for the future of the Church, they hoped that Christian teachings should be subject to logical reasoning (rather than to the Augustinian tradition of faith and revelation) as the better road to ultimate truth.(J.Merson 1990:85)

But when used for the wrong reason, this emphasis on argument led to a
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shallow scholasticism with the notorious debate about "how many angels could fit on the head of a pin." However, the importance of this intellectual twist to a more critical method of thought consists of its creation of a tradition of respect for the light of reason which later spread not only to European political and legal institutions (as in the stress on debate as a means of reaching the truth) but also to a scientific worldview which is critical and skeptical in its orientation: that is, in appealing to the real world, to nature as the ultimate arbiter of truth. Eventually the Christian metaphysics was put aside and left to the small confines of the monastery and the church, while philosophers and other scholars engaged in enquiry concerning natural laws and the nature of man, away from the dogmatic issue concerning God's "hidden hand" in biblical texts.

In this sense, the rebirth of classical thought in the 14th, 15th and 16th centuries (the 'renaissance') constituted a transitional stage between the medieval era and its modern successor. In rejecting the Augustinian tradition of faith and revelation and replacing it with a more critical, more skeptical, and more tolerant style of thought in the light of reason (Aristotelian logic and Socratic dialectics especially), the Renaissance was quite un-medieval at the time (S.Toulmin 1990:29; D.Gross 1992:23,139) and created an intellectual precedent for the emergence of rationalism later in the seventeenth century. Yet neither was the Renaissance fully modern, since it sought for a restoration of a classical heritage long lost and, consequently, was still a backward-looking orientation in its core (though perhaps a less dogmatic one). The Renaissance was therefore transitional from medi evality to modernity not yet fully developed.

The same can be said in regard to the Protestant Reformation in the 16th century. Surely, it was un-medieval enough to attack the scholastic dogmatism of Catholic traditions. The Calvinist doctrine, for instance, of predestination (the view that salvation was already decided at the beginning of time) facilitated a shift of focus to this-worldliness and thereby seriously challenged the Catholic other-worldly orientation, though without abandoning the moral imperatives of hard work, honesty, piety, and thrift. (M.Weber 1958; R.Collins 1994; D.Landes 1994)
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But it sought only to refine the more valuable traditions of the early Church -- back to the original, "authentic" traditions of the Apostolic Age and immediately after (before they were corrupted by Catholic exegesis). (D. Gross 1992, 139) The Protestant Reformation was, therefore, not inherently anti-traditional.

One has to wait until the emergence of empiricism and rationalism in the 17th century, and more importantly the Enlightenment in the 18th century before the breakdown of European tradition occurred in its strict sense (though with the combined assault by socio-economic and political forces, as in the emergence of the absolutist state and the capitalist industrial revolution -- as will be discussed in the forthcoming two sections). The term 'tradition' here means, as is conventionally understood, a set of practices (be it a set of rituals or a type of behavior) and beliefs (be it a mode of thinking about self and world or a collection of doctrines or teachings) that exist in the present through transmission from the past. (D. Gross 1992, 8) A tradition, in enduring for a long time, thus brings the past in the present and preserves a sense of continuity. (D. Gross 1992, 12)

Francis Bacon was the important spokesman of this new way of thinking about self and world: empiricism, that is, the notion that only what can be directly confirmed by observation and sense experience can be known to be true. (D. Gross 1992, 24) "There is no knowledge", declared Samuel Butler, "without demonstration." (K. Thomas 1971: 644) As opposed to the medieval mode of inquiry which relied on the holy Bible and the ecclesiastic tradition as source of authority for any claim to truth (on pain of being rejected by Christian scholars of the day as unorthodox and risking excommunication by the Church), an empiricist mindset favored instead a more scientific method which opposes any exegical-hermeneutic dogmatism of the religious source. (D. Crosby 1988: 201-2) The search for an autonomous method of enquiry so understood shifted the focus of issues to those regarded as properly scientific, namely, those concerning the workings of efficient causes, the discovery of general laws -- as opposed to those more theo-valuative in nature, namely, those concerning the chief ends of
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human existence, life-meaningfulness, Creation, God, and immortality, with which the Church was so much obsessed.

An empiricist mindset like this clashed head-on with the medieval, Augustinian tradition of faith and revelation which was now regarded as "dogmatic" -- not empirical. The term 'dogmatic' is therefore a modern concept. Tradition cannot help but be undermined. And it was hard indeed for a modern at the time not to have some great expectations of a new utopian future. After all, Bacon himself believed that tradition distorts the human mind through the imposition of "insidious preconceptions" from the past which prevent a clear, objective understanding of reality -- and gave the natural sciences the motto "Knowledge is power" --, and Auguste Comte later did the same to the social sciences with "Prevoir pour pouvoir" (Foreknowledge is power). (B.Smart 1992:100)

What is embedded here is a dual optimism (which seems very naive to us today, with the benefit of historical hindsight) of the empiricists (and later of the positivists and realists in our centenary) -- namely, the faith in science and technology. In rejecting any revealed suprasensory truth as in Christian faith and revelation, empiricism equally discredits the light of reason and logic as the sources of truth (as they had been held to be by Aristotelian logic and Socratic dialectics in the Renaissance) until their deductions are supported by the testimony of observations and sensual experience. (P.Sorokin 1956:89) This then challenged the rationalist canon (which emerged around 1600) that what can be known with certainty can be discovered not through sense experience but through the exercise of reason. (D.Gross 1992:25) A rationalist mode of thought like this surely has its origins in classical Greek antiquity (and more recently its revival in the Renaissance). Rene Descartes was the important spokesman with the rationalist motto "I think; therefore I am". His stress on "clear and distinct ideas" helped to undermine tradition as perpetuating past "errors" (that is, tradition as a set of unverified opinions which mostly fail the test of reason) and therefore as preventing us from "correct reasoning."

In this sense, both empiricism and rationalism -- rival as they were as
modes of enquiry -- constituted an intellectual modernizing force in undermining
the medieval, Christian monastery mode of thought. The idea of a new beginning,
of starting with a clean slate, of the coming of a new world -- which looks down
on the past as backward and on tradition as dogmatic -- increasingly gained
currency, among the intellectual elites especially. By contrast, in a medieval,
traditional setting, the idea of a new beginning did not make much sense, since
tradition as a historiography of preserving historical continuity only allowed
one origin from which everything else followed (D.Gross 1992:14,26), and even
when the transmission of knowledge experienced some amount of generational
noncongruence of definition of reality, a small readjustment was all that was
needed. In Christian sacred literature, the only instances of new beginnings were
Noah after the flood and the Incarnation of Christ, and even then the new
beginnings were not radically new, in its being tied to antecedent Judeo-
Christian religious history, and, moreover, were inaugurated by God, not by
humans.

The idea of a new beginning for the moderns, by contrast, dispensed with
the notion of a supernatural being and shifted the focus to the role of humans
as the new Archimedian point. The new beginning therefore was to be progressive,
that is, better than what preceded it. (D.Gross 1992:27) To be modern means to be
'new', to be 'of today' -- as opposed to the 'old', the 'backward' in the
ancients, in the past, in tradition. (P.Berger 1994)

One cannot ignore the role of the Scientific Revolution (with such giants
as Galileo, Kepler and Newton) in the 16th and 17th centuries, which added a
decisive influence encouraging a more critical, skeptical intellectual climate
towards the medieval past, be it about either the Christian canons or the
folklore of magic and supernatural power (both of the latter are fundamental aims
in any sacred tradition of the religious type). (R.Collins 1994; A.Musson 1969:10)
After all, the new natural sciences came to question the intellectual foundation
of astrology, chiromancy, alchemy, physiognomy, and astral magic -- as shown in
the works of Marin Mersenne and Pierre Gassendi against magical animism, of
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Robert Boyle against alchemy, and of William Harvey against witchcraft. (K. Thomas 1971:643-5) And the notion that the universe was in fact subject to immutable natural laws rendered the very concept of miracles problematic, weakened the belief in the physical efficacy of prayer, and challenged the faith in direct divine inspiration -- not without, sometimes, causing negative reaction from the Church (the case of Galileo as a good exemplar). Even the formulation of probability theories (by such brilliant mathematicians as Cardan, Fermat, Huygens, Pascal, the Bernouillis and de Moivre), benign as they might look, helped to show how chance events and human misfortunes could be understood and predicted through the use of statistical laws. (K. Thomas 1971:655) As Bacon put it, Fortune was a non-existent entity upon empirical scrutiny.

And from the end of 17th century on, the new social sciences of economics, sociology, social contract theory, and psychology further contributed to a higher awareness among the intellectual elites that social events can equally be subject to general laws. "No government", James Harrington declared, "is of so accidental or arbitrary an institution as people are wont to imagine; there being in societies natural causes producing their necessary effects as well as in the earth or the air." Human misfortunes, instead of being explained away as the work of witchcraft, fate, or divine providence, could now be understood through the structure of social institutions and the victim's family history. And social contract theorists like Thomas Hobbes and Samuel Pufendorf regarded the social contract which converted the state of nature (where life was "nasty," "brutish" and "short") into a civil state as a new beginning, a starting-all-over which constituted progress over the past. (J. Schneewind 1989; T. Hobbes 1909; D. Gross 1992:27)

Surely, one ought not give too much credit to the role of intellectual ideas in changing traditional superstitious beliefs and practices; their social context is important as well. Superstitious beliefs (such as magic ones), the renowned functional anthropologist Bronislaw Malinowski argued, provided to the practitioner valuable psychic side-effects: they lessen anxiety, reduce
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And these psychic needs were precisely rendered dispensable at the time in the European scene with the betterment of material life (increased food production, better control of the environment), with the improvement in communications (printed materials to increase popular literacy, advertisements in mass media), with the establishment of life and health insurance, and with the advancement in fire-fighting (manual fire-engine, increased use of brick in housing construction). (K. Thomas 1971:650-4)

In any event, a great expectation of the coming of a new era, of one with progress, was most beautifully put by Francis Bacon in his desiderata which included the prolongation of life, the restitution of youth, the curing of heretofore incurable diseases, the mitigation of pain, the speeding up of natural processes, the discovery of new sources of food, the control of the weather, and the enhancement of the pleasures of the senses. (K. Thomas 1971:661)

The boundless optimism of a new beginning in increasingly demeaning the hermetic wisdom of the past and recognizing the unprecedented scientific achievements of the present helped to legitimize two assumptions of modernity at the very start, namely, (a) the faith in scientific objectivity and (b) technological emancipatory power. And it seemed to some indeed that the moderns had themselves become gods: "The end of our foundation", Bacon in New Atlantis confidently affirmed, "is the knowledge of causes and the secret motions of things and the enlarging of the bounds of human empire, to the effecting of all things possible." (K. Thomas 1971:662-3)

In other words, the faith in this emerging scientific mindset which was in its core critical, skeptical, experimental, innovative, and flexible yet did not fail to have a dream of its own, of attaining the impossible (as was the case before in many previous historical ages), though with a peculiar distinctiveness: that the seemingly impossible will ultimately surrender to the patient, systematic assault of science and, when applied, technology. (A. Hall 1957:719)

And with the Industrial Revolution first in England in the mid-18th century
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and later in continental Europe, as in the cotton industry (Paul's carding machines in 1750's, Hargreaves's jenny in 1765, Arkwright's water frame in 1769, and Crompton's mule in 1779), in the iron industry (Carron's cast-iron blowing cylinder in 1760, J.Hall's furnace bed of roasted tap cinder in 1830's), in the coal-steam industry (T.Savery's fire-engine in 1698, Watt's double-acting engine in 1780's, J.Hornblower's two-cylinder engine in 1781, A.Woolf's compound engine in 1804), and in the chemical industry (J.Ward's and J.White's continent of the bell process in 1736, J.Roebuck's and S.Garbett's large lead-lined vats, C.Tennant's bleaching powder in 1790's) --, the faith in technological emancipatory power received a huge boost of acceptance. (D.Landes 1989:84-114) The Industrial Revolution became what David Landes called "the unbound Prometheus".

But modernity has its other dreams, besides the initial naive hope of scientific objectivity and technological emancipatory power. The intellectual climate of the Enlightenment in the 18th century welcomed an even more belligerent, irreverent attitude towards the past, towards tradition -- to the point where even Bacon and Descartes as respective spokesmen for empiricism and rationalism, by comparison, did not go as far. Bacon, after all, was not willing to deny the value of tradition altogether, since he still hoped to reformulate it for social usefulness (in eliminating those "insidious preconceptions" from the past through the testimony of the senses). (D.Gross 1992:24-5,35) Neither did Descartes intend to destroy tradition as his primary goal, since he still hoped, though differing from Bacon's position here, to integrate tradition under a rationalist framework: "As far as the [traditional] opinions which I had been receiving since my birth were concerned, I could not do better than to reject them completely...and [then] resume them afterwards...when I had determined how they fit into a rational scheme....[B]y this means I would succeed in conducting my life better than if I built only upon the old foundations."
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In sharp contrast, the philosophes, as the spokesmen of the Enlightenment, held an explicit, uncompromising anti-tradition stand. (D. Gross 1992:35-6) Surely, the philosophes were receptive enough to the intellectual thought of their 17th-century predecessors, namely, the empiricists and rationalists, as to bring them together, to synthesize them effectively, and to share their euphorious faith in science and technology. (B. Smart 1992:9) Knowledge was now to be based on a unity of reason and observation made possible by the advance in scientific enquiry. Their enemies in the war of ideas were therefore not so much empiricism nor rationalism but more the superstition of folkways, the tyranny of the aristocracy, and the dogmatism of the Catholic Church (as will be further addressed in Section 5.1).

Tradition became the hiding place for these out-dated institutions and must be combated against, since, firstly, something previously thought of and done (as in tradition) was no good reason thereby to repeat it, as John Locke wrote in Treatise of Civil Government, "an argument from what has been to what should of right be has no great force," and, secondly, the institutions became an incurable cancer (the perpetuation of past prejudices, superstitions, and corruption). The only solution must therefore be radical: that tradition had to be dissolved altogether. "We the moderns are the progressive ones," and."You are suddenly sick and tired of this antiquated world" (P. Jameson 1991:310,323) -- slogans like this summarize well the irreverent, optimistic tone of the philosophes. Immanuel Kant in the essay "What is Enlightenment?" (1784) expressed a similar negative view of tradition as preventing humans from becoming "mature". In order to free humans from this "self-imposed minority", the moderns needed to regain their autonomy (their own understanding and reason), not relying on what was passed down by the authority of tradition, not being dictated to by the opinions of the past. "Think for yourself" -- this maxim, for Kant, constitutes the great spirit of the

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1. This term so used here refers to Enlightenment thinkers in Europe and America --, not just to those in France. The same usage will be kept in the rest of this project (Section 5.1, for instance).
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Enlightenment. (H. Putnam 1987:46-7)

A defense of tradition, for the philosophes, meant not just a defense of the superstition and ignorance that were pervasive among the masses (only thereby affirming the suspicion that wherever tradition rules, narrowness and provincialism result), but also a perpetuation of hereditary rule, of absolutist rights and privileges so much held onto by the declining aristocracy and the Catholic Church. In fact, Lord Acton’s classic warning that "power corrupts, and absolute power corrupts absolutely" had in mind the corruptive nature of the Catholic church in the early and late Middle Ages, and the Cistercian reform movement (first led by St. Bernard of Clairvaux) in the 12th century (well before the Protestant Reformation in the 16th century) was precisely to crack down on various forms of corruption within the church, once it got too wealthy and powerful. (R. Collins 1994) In any event, be it associated with the peasantry, the nobility, or the church, tradition represented backwardness, not progress. For this reason, a new legitimacy for political authority was sought for -- without the stains of folkloric superstition, aristocratic tyranny, and religious dogma.

This constitutes one more (the third) dream of the moderns, namely, (c) the utopian search for moral universality for a just society. Since the 18th century, numerous attempts to legitimize political authority through a rational foundation for ethical principles, away from the old traditions of aristocratic and ecclesiastic dominance (P. Patton 1986:128), owed their intellectual legacy to the Enlightenment. "Inalienable rights", "Rights of Man and of the Citizens", "separation of church and state", "the will of the people" (E. B. 1994a:281) --, or in short, a democratic conception of political authority quickly gained currency in the public realm, as in the American Revolution of 1776 and the French Revolution of 1789. Even such tyrants as Napoleon III in France and Adolf Hitler in Nazi Germany later claimed to legitimize their dictatorial reigns on the basis of democratic and constitutional justification, however propagandistic though these claims were.

But this is not the end of the matter. Once the aristocratic and
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ecclesiastic privileged status was no longer regarded as sacred, its aesthetic taste came to be challenged as well. What was accepted previously as beauty turned out to be in the service of the interests of the nobility and the Church. The voice of the other, of the lower segments of social hierarchy, had long been repressed. Many pre-Romantic paintings (as in Sacral and Courtly Arts), for instance, seldom failed to idealize aristocratic values or to champion Christian ones. (P. Burger 1992:58) It was not coincidental, if put in this context, for Kant to argue for an enlightened conception of "disinterestedness" in artistic appreciation. The search for aesthetic autonomy, for an artistic inner logic, for an art-for-art’s-sake aesthetic criticism, aimed at freedom from the practical bondage (often political and religious) of the aesthetic tradition of the aristocracy and the Catholic Church. The aesthetic was therefore to be socially useless, void of practical considerations; only then could it achieve its sublimity in the highest sense (the boundless infinity of totality). (T. Eagleton 1990:110) This then constituted still another dream (the fourth) of the moderns, namely, (d) the search for aesthetic inner logic.

To summarize --, the discovery of "the world of man" from the Renaissance to the Enlightenment can be understood as the window to free spirits, or better, the Western ideal of the modern self, a kind of emancipated self which sought for a four-fold freedom, namely, (a) the freedom from want, from subservience to nature (that is, technological emancipatory power), (b) the freedom from insidious preconceptions of the past (that is, scientific objectivity), (c) the freedom from external distortion of aesthetic pleasure (that is, artistic autonomy), and (d) the freedom from theo-political tyranny (that is, moral universality for a just society) -- whose problematics will be addressed in the next four chapters, that is, Chapters 2-5, in that order.

Yet intellectual ideals do not shape the course of human history as much as armchair thinkers like to assume. Humans do not change history as they please, Marx (1978:595) rightly observed, but only under appropriate material conditions: "No social order ever disappears before all the productive forces for which there
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is room in it have been developed, and new, higher relations of production never appear before the material conditions of their existence have matured in the womb of the old society." And precisely here some powerful socio-economic and technological forces (as in the Industrial Revolution and the Capitalist Transformation) were at work in shaping the fate of Western modernity at the time as well -- and in the process posed serious problems to this Western ideal of the modern self itself. Thus emerged counter-Enlightenment free spirits --, as in the romantic themes of the fantastic, the imaginary, the grotesque, the mythic, and the demonic (E.Tiryakian 1992:85); in the rebellious search for a return to simplicity, for the primacy of the subconscience, for the donning of the bohemian appearance, for a communal reunion; and in the nostalgic revival of religion. (T.Lears 1981:57,74; H.Kellner 1973:202-7,214; B.Wilson 1985:17)

As will be elaborated later, free-spirited modernity so understood was deeply ambivalent, torn apart as it was between its ideal of the modern self and a variety of counter-ideals as championed by the Enlightenment’s critics (back to nature, back to the past, back to religion, back to the unconscious, socialist utopia, communist promised land) --, in the aftermath of the Industrial Revolution and the Capitalist Transformation. The counter-Enlightenment free spirits were to reject the ideal of the modern self in their awakening to the sober reality that capitalist modernity was too philistine, too alienating -- against its utilitarian preoccupations, mediocre conformity, bureaucratic rigidity, social inequalities, colonial oppression, and baseness of taste. (M.Calinescu 1987:45; M.Weber 1958:182) Their search for a new utopia constituted a reenchanting effort in a much disenchanted world.

Noble as their goal was, the counter-Enlightenment free spirits failed miserably, as will become clear in later chapters, to institutionalize a workable alternative order as a substitute for a secular age in which the very foundation of traditional life-meaning was destroyed. This failure rendered, ironically, their reenchanting effort even more disenchancing in result. Once society, needless to say, was regarded as having lost its sacred structure (the breakdown
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of the Christian interpretation of history, of the sacramentalism of nature, of the Great Chain of Being, and of the analogy of the various planes of creation), everything seemed up for grabs. (C. Taylor 1992:5, 85)

After all, how many nowadays could find the Christian cosmological thought of the past (absurd as it is) persuasive, in that history was treated as a play, with a definite beginning and end, punctuated by special, theocentric events like the Genesis (with its hierarchical ranking of lowliest microorganisms at the bottom through the apes to humans at or near its apex), the birth of Jesus, the giving of law to Moses, and the Second Coming? (T. Ferris 1988:220, 223) Current talk of multi-culturalism in an increasingly pluralistic social structure is less something to celebrate than it is a reflection of a chaotic syncretism underlying the very spiritual crisis of the modern age when "God is dead," in what some literary critics have referred to as the deconstruction of the "meta-narrative", the traditional cosmic order.

The project of post-modernity in our time only carries this nihilistic spirit to the extreme (Derrida, Foucault, Lyotard, Baudrillard). (C. Taylor 1992:60 & 1989:456-8; D. Bell 1976:51; S. Seidman 1990:233) Discourses on literary theory (deconstruction), cultural theory (feminism), art theory (postmodernism), social theory (social differentiation, poststructuralism), epistemology (perspectivism, constructionism), historiography (fragmentary history), political philosophy (liberal toleration, the postmodern politics of difference), and ethics (emotivism, prescriptivism) hardly fail to remind us how much life meanings, beliefs, and values have disintegrated in a modern secular, pluralistic culture. The Good, the Beautiful, the Holy, the True, the Just -- all of these narratives which once made our ancestors' lives so pious, ethereal, ascetic, sublime, heroic, righteous and certain become something of which no one can say for sure what they are anymore (as will be clear in later chapters).

My claim is that the whole project, whether it takes the form of the ideal of the modern (and now postmodern) self or takes the form of one or another of its counter-ideals, is livable only with too high a price to pay and would better
be abandoned --, save its critical spirit. That still stands for the paradigmatic spirit of the Enlightenment, or in a Nietzschean ethos, "clear thinking of reason, rigorous thought, cautious judgment, logical conclusions" (A.Megill 1985:66), constrained within sense experience and observation, coupled with something more, as in Susan Wolf's calling (1992:83-4) on us: to think creatively, to look and listen sensitively and with an open mind. That is, to think critically, to look sensibly, to imagine freely, to contemplate creatively, yet without any great expectations of the philosophes nor romantic sentiments of their enemies --, this seems to be what is left. And this has some disquieting implications for the emergence of what I call the post-human consciousness after postmodernity (now that human values and beliefs, be they ancient, medieval, modern, and now postmodern as well, are, if not already in some places, to be deconstructed) --, as will be cleared in the final chapter (Chapter 7).

1.3 Capitalist Modernity: Commoditized Indus-reality & An Awakening To Sober Reality

The notion of a self which could exist apart from communal interests, even in 17th century Europe, was still a new idea. (D.Gross 1992:29) The term 'self' here, merely as a generic device, denotes a set of mental processes of thinking, judging, naming, directing, desiring, and what not (J.Charon 1989:291). Let us put aside the issue of its anatomic structure, whether it is duopartite (as in James Coleman's dichotomy of an object and acting self) or tripartite (as in Sigmund Freud's division into an id, an ego, and a superego, or in George Mead's into an "I", a "me", and a "generalized other", or in William James's into a material, social, and spiritual self). (J.Coleman 1990:504-8;S.Freud 1933:107;R.Collins 1988:232;A.Neel 1977:57-8)

In pre-modern times, when a hegemonic spiritual framework, often buttressed by mythical and religious symbols, reigned supreme or almost so, a collectivist
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spirit or what Emile Durkheim referred to as the conscience collective in mechanic solidarity often discouraged individualist personality development. (A. Giddens 1977:217, 285 & 1985:75-7) Individualist development of the self was not regarded as a virtue.

Things did change over time, as social structure became more fragmented and social life became more differentiated. Historians and social scientists disagreed on the causes of social fragmentation in European life -- more so than in any comparable civilizations of the Others. John Merson, for one, suggested the lack of an irrigation-based agriculture which required a high degree of social discipline and cooperation (as was the case in imperial China). (J. Merson 1990:26) Joseph Levenson, on the other hand, traced it back to the development of maritime trade in Greek of antiquity, which, under disadvantageous environmental circumstances of small islands and promontories washed by Mediterranean waters, forced its inhabitants to traffic freely overseas and thereby produced characteristic political and social features which later spread to other European regions -- individualist doctrines, democratic principles of government, and the spirit of scientific enquiry. (J. Levenson 1967:70-1) Patricia Crone, however, talked of the feudalistic contractual system in medieval times which allowed decentralization into several social fragments as in church/state and village/city state dichotomies. (P. Crone 1989) Rhoads Murphey had greed and power of the emerging merchant class at the dawn of modern times as the usual suspect. (R. Murphey 1977:15) And Alfred Hall argued that medieval Europe, because of fiscal and other reasons of prudent policy, often tolerated other forms of occupations, as in trade and industry. (A. Hall 1957:716) In fact in some communities as the north Italian states, the Hanse towns, the Rhineland Free Cities, the City of London long before the dawn of modern times -- the merchant class grew so powerful as to constitute a rival political force.

Whatever the final cause(s) might be, by the 18th century a more tolerant social accommodation (among the aristocratic and religious strata) of a growing commercial class known as the capitalists already existed. And they powerfully
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shook, in the process, the foundation of traditional values and ideals -- at the expense of the decline of the nobility, the clergy, the peasantry, and the feudal world (the manor, the village, the craft guild). (J. Schumpeter 1947:135) Max Weber, of course, wanted to link the capitalist spirit (hard work, competition, accumulation of capital) to the Calvinist doctrine of predestination, that is, the notion that since salvation was already decided at the beginning of time and since any doubt as to the certainty of election is an evidence of imperfect faith, an intense this-worldly activity (diligence, "good works", honesty, thrift) is the most appropriate means to maintain this self-confidence. (A. Giddens 1985:129-30) But Marx's critique of the capitalists' brutal exploitation of their factory workers and their mutual mean spirit against each other, and Thorstein Veblen's critique of them as greedy, dishonest, and callous, should warn us against the Weberian idealization of the origin of modern capitalism. (K. Marx 1915: v.1, 268-75, 507-8, 728, 780, 836; R. Merton 1968: 195-6)

Yet something characteristic can be attributed to the value ideals of this capitalist stratum. Unlike many previous social strata --, they were, after all, most instrumental (treating individuals, not as ends in themselves but as means to an end), efficiency-oriented (evaluating all undertakings according to their productiveness, not according to their past legitimations), forward-looking (thinking in terms not of historical veneration but of behavioral consequences in foreseeable time range), calculative (guiding action in terms of cost-benefit analysis, instead of moral evaluation), transformative (remaking everything at hand into something new, rather than adjusting it to existing norms), competitive (fighting for market success to the point of seeking success for its own sake, instead of striving for the common good), and what Robert Heilbroner (1995) calls insatiable (always wanting more, accepting no limit of what to acquire). In brief, the capitalist self is fiercely individualistic, pragmatic and materialistic in outlook. (G. Viksnins 1987; J. Schumpeter 1947: 131-45; D. Gross 1992: 29)

It was this valutative orientation which made the capitalists most adaptive
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to the pressure of technological invention and innovation in 18th-century English economic conditions, and thus made a good marriage of English capitalist development and the first Industrial Revolution in history. The linkage between technological change and capitalist development could not be closer, since sustained economic growth, especially driven by fierce competition among rivals in the search for wider markets and cheaper inputs, was not possible without advances in real productivity (the technological residual), that is, could not be sustained without technological advances. (D. Landes 1993:159) In this sense, expansion in trade and industry had the virtue of accelerating technological development, which twisted the direction of scientific research towards utilitarian importance -- something which had not always happened in the pre-modern period. This bridging of the gap between scientific research and technological application, even if not complete, had fundamental consequences for the emerging dominance by science in modern times -- as opposed to earlier times when even the revolutionary discoveries of Gilbert, Harvey, Galileo, and Kepler, for instance, had no immediate practical importance. (A. Musson 1969:12) And the capitalist industrial revolution had changed all that: everything was to be evaluated on the basis of its pragmatic, utilitarian, and materialist importance.

That England experienced the first Industrial Revolution was not without certain circumstantial advantages back in the 18th-century, as compared with other European societies: a domestic consumption pattern favourable to the growth of manufactures, a higher social mobility, a less uneven income distribution, a more peaceful environment, less restrictive legal and customary codes for commercial activity, a better social infrastructure, more superior skills and knowledge of entrepreneurs and workers, vast overseas markets in British colonies, more advanced banking and credit institutions, a social atmosphere more favourable to change, and above all, an exceptional sensitivity and responsiveness to pecuniary opportunities. (D. Landes 1989:46,48,52-4,66,71-4,80) As Landes concluded, "This was a people fascinated by wealth and commerce, collectively and individually."
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The Industrial Revolution was not just about the substitution of machines for human skills, the use of inanimate power for human and animal strength, and the exploitation of metallurgical and chemical raw materials (D.Landes 1989:1) -- which the English capitalists adapted as quickly as the market demanded, especially in the well-known cotton, iron, coal, steam, and chemical industries (Section 1.2). Moreover, the Industrial Revolution involved also a transformation of production organization: the factory system -- which, again, the English capitalists were quick to adapt in response to market pressure (high wages, rapid market growth, inadequate labour discipline). (D.Landes 1989:114-7)

The factory system made use of an organization invention whose technical efficiency was unsurpassed in any previous mode of production, or what Allan Toffler refers to as the "industrial codes" which have characterized much of the triumph of science and technology in modern times: specialization, standardization, synchronization, concentration, centralization, and maximization. (A.Toffler 1980:40-51) Adam Smith, in a classic passage, marvelled over how ten specialized workers in a manufacturing workplace, each performing one specific part of the task of making pins, ended up producing 48,000 pins per day (4,800 pins per worker per day), as opposed to only a handful of pins per day for a worker doing the job alone. (A.Smith 1937; A.Toffler 1980:42) And many of these industrial codes penetrated into the working structure of many other organizations (that is, non-factory ones) as well, as exemplified by the institutionalization of bureaucratic administration. (S.Eisenstadt 1966:9)

In the process, the capitalists, as the main agents driving this techno-economic revolution, put their own valuative stamp on this emergent "indust-reality" (A.Toffler) in a distinctive way: the commoditization of everything there be in a highly individualistic, materialistic civilization. Capitalist modernity, from this perspective, can be understood as an epoch when the world was radically transformed into a commoditized industr-reality of space and time, which, if put on a 12-hour clock chart, represents only the last couple of minutes (E.B.1994a:280) -- often with an euphoric tone of a coming utopian
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future. In the heyday of the English capitalist industrial revolution, David Landes rightly remarked, "the middle and upper classes were convinced by the marvellous inventions of science and technology, the increasing mass and variety of material goods, the growing speed of movement and convenience of everyday activities, that they were living in the best of all possible worlds and what is more, a world getting better all the time." (D.Landes 1989:123) Oh yes --, this was true for the winners of the capitalist industrial revolution in England: those managers, merchants, and shopkeepers, those newly skilled of the "labour aristocracy", those consumers of the new commodities, those multiplying professionals in growing towns and cities. (D.Landes 1993:161)

Or the worst of all possible worlds for some? It is a healthy exercise to read Voltaire’s sarcastic treatment of the very idea of the best of all possible worlds in his work *Candide* (1947). In the case of the supremacy of this commoditized indust-reality, there was a price to be paid. Even at its very start, capitalist modernity as a world of commoditized indust-reality created its own discontent. There were those who "mourned a merrie England that never was; deplored the soot and ugliness of the new factory towns; bemoaned the growing political power of crass parvenus; cried out against the precarious poverty of a rootless proletariat." (D.Landes 1989:122) There was an irony in all of this: after all, did not the capitalist self exemplify the modern heroic spirit striving to be free from the traditional oppression by aristocratic and feudal interests, from the pre-rational narrow-mindedness of the peasantry, and from the backward submission to the brutal forces of nature in the ancient world? (H.Dubiel 1986:79)

Yes, it did. Yet the capitalist historical striving ended up creating a new oppressive stratum against a "rootless proletariat", those countless women, children, and men working in English factories under most brutal conditions, which Marx was rightly most indignant about -- and more, a "soot and ugliness of the factory towns" made possible by the most advanced organizational innovation of the time (in fact an exemplar of the scientific and technological achievements
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during the Industrial Revolution). And to those pauper apprentices, those
displaced craftsmen, those Irish immigrants who did the dirty work, and those
social untouchables in villages and urban slums/wynds in the 1790's -- the best
of all possible worlds was a most preposterous idea there could ever be. (D.Landes
1993:161) As time went on, the social scene looked uglier still: pollution, urban
ugliness, corruption, inflation, alienation, unemployment, loneliness, racism,
class conflict, bureaucratic red tapes, family dissolution, mindless consumerism,
and many more. (A. Toffler 1980:314) In response, counter-Enlightenment ideals
(back to nature, back to the past, back to the religious quest, back to the
unconscious) and alternative paths to the Enlightenment project (socialist
fraternity, communist emancipation, fascist nostalgia) emerged. And the Great
Depression in the post-war period, coupled with the rise of Fascist, Nazi, and
Communist totalitarianism, as well as the widespread fear of global ecological
deterioriation made a serious skeptical reassessment of the Enlightenment project
all the more necessary. (I. Wallerstein 1991:232)

The Western ideal of the modern self was therefore in trouble. Was it
really "enlightened" to regard tradition as backward --, or were modern times
necessarily "progressive", when compared with other ages? Where was the just
society as envisioned by the philosophes -- in light of the degeneration of the
French Revolution into Robespierre's bloody reign of terror with the Committee
of Public Safety at the helm, of the Revolution of 1830 into Louis-Philippe's
July Monarchy, and the Revolution of 1848 into Louis-Napoleon's coup d'etat?
(G.Kateb 1983:27,94; E.B.1994b:502,511-3) Was technological power as emancipatory
as Bacon thought it would be? Did artistic autonomy in modern avantgarde
practices lead us anywhere other than to its eventual absorption into the
commoditized "mass culture" (B.Buchloh 1994), the politics of resistance and
solipsistic, semantic atrophy?

The crucial issue here is why capitalist modernity (as a world of
commoditized industri-reality) awakened a more sober appraisal of the modern
condition without the utopian fever of the philosophers (and for that matter,
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since the Renaissance), as embodied in the Western ideal of the modern self. This is the subject matter of Chapter Two (on technological emancipatory power and its price in a consumeristic lifeform, that is, on the Everyday and the Technological), of Chapter Three (on the deconstruction of scientific objectivity and religion, that is, on the True and the Holy), of Chapter Four (on artistic autonomy and its disillusion, that is, on the Beautiful), and of Chapter Five (on moral universality for a just society and its incredulity, that is, on the Good and the Just) -- which, concern as they do the future of this ideal of the modern self, are too costly, I claim, when put in practice. These features thus capture the major facets of human existence in modern times: the True, the Holy, the Good, the Just, the Beautiful, the Everyday, and the Technological.

If capitalist modernity created its own enemies who, in the name of counter-Enlightenment ideals, opposed the ideal of the modern self as either unrealizable or too costly, were they then necessarily rejecting the critical, skeptical spirit so exemplified in the philosophes' effective unity of reason (as in rationalism) and observation (as in empiricism) as the better path to understanding world and self? Or differently put, how far could they escape the logic of a scientific mindset which increasingly became the dominant mode of inquiry in modern times? This is the subject matter of the chapters as aforeoutlined which also concern the destroying power of this scientific mindset in a commoditized indust-real world -- undermining not just the myth of the Western ideal of the modern self but equally all those romantic, nostalgic counter-myths (back to nature, revival of religion, back to the past, communist uotopia) as envisioned by its enemies. And this is not restricted to modern values and beliefs (including the scientific ones themselves) but starts undermining, I further claim, postmodern ones as well in our postmodern time.

I also intend to rebut those in rechantment theory (Sections 3.3 & 6.2 especially) who often cite the revival of religion in modern times as a disproof of the disenchantment thesis (that the world is disenchanted due to the undermining process inherent in a scientific lifeworld). Both disenchantment and
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rechantment of the world can be understood as two sides of the same phenomenon of an increasingly nihilistic world.

Where then does this lead us to? But what is this "us" here -- humans in the Western world, presumably? My claim is that the destroying power of this scientific mindset will spread to the Others qua the non-Western world as well, since the logic of modernity is hegemonic. But why?

1.4 Hegemonic Modernity: European Expansion, & the Origins of Inequality of Modern Nation-States & Ethnic/Racial Groups

European expansion in the New World and later in the entire globe is an exceedingly important lesson to learn for understanding the origins of the inequality of modern nation-states and ethnic/racial groups and, for my present concern, for explicating the logic of hegemony in modernity and now postmodernity as well --, and for that matter, it poses a further challenge to the Western ideal of the modern, and now postmodern, self). This is all the more so after the Industrial Revolution, when "the country that is more developed industrially", Karl Marx bluntly put it, "only shows, to the less developed, the image of its own future." (E.B.1994a:281) And by the 18th century, "the West is able to reflect on itself", Hal Foster (1992:208) rightly suggests, in Jean Baudrillard's words "'as a culture in the universal, and thus all other cultures were entered into its museum as vestiges of its own image.'" The practice of treating the Others qua the non-Western ethnic/racial groups as inferior, as second-class humans, was thereby institutionalized in modern times (and this legacy still confronts us in postmodern times). And such racial-derogatory terms as "fucking nigger", "sickly gook", and "damned native" are largely modern Eurocentric

5. Harlan Lane (1992:34) in The Mask of Benevolence takes the trouble to list the characteristics (mostly bad and sometimes contradictory, though with some good ones as well) of Africans attributed to them by the Europeans in the literature of colonialism in what follows.
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creations. But how has this come about?

The early comers of European expansion, Spain and Portugal, were driven by what David Landes called three G's: Gold (mercantilist, later capitalist), God (humanitarian), and Glory (chauvinistic). (D. Landes 1983:37; E. B. 1994) Surely, the humanitarian imperative duty of conversion (that is, converting the natives into Christians) constituted at the time a concession of the Pope to legitimize the right of conquest. (W. Prescott 1936:276) Columbus after all said it all well, "God had reserved for the Spanish monarchs, not only all the treasures of the New World, but a still greater treasure of inestimable value, in the infinite number of souls destined to be brought over into the bosom of the Christian Church." (E. Williams 1984:20)

Yet this right was often transformed into a license to kill, to commit atrocities, to the point of sanctioning the killing and plundering the natives for its own sake -- which made someone like Landes wonder, "Did these Europeans really have a soul left?" (D. Landes 1994) The excuse often ran along the line that since these pagans were not Christians, the moral imperative did not apply to them. And as these Europeans fiercely competed for colonial supremacy, they did not stop short of killing each other too. In fact, the so-called conversion imperative was later translated into a similar apology for the "white-man burden" and the "manifest destiny." (R. Murphey 1977:33) After all, it was, and still is in our times (though to a lesser extent), a rooted conviction of all Europeans and their descendants outside Europe at the time that they "represented

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<td>Barbaric</td>
<td>Arts: none</td>
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<td>Economy: none</td>
<td>Irrational</td>
<td>Lazy</td>
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civilization, confronting the barbarism of outer darkness" (V. Kiernan 1982:146-7) or simply "fiends in human shape", as one Catholic missionary from Alsace described the Others.

The story of the Spanish siege and assault, led by Hernando Cortes, of Tenochtitlan, the renowned capital of the Aztecs in Mexico, was a telling case of the uncontrolled violence and rapacity of European conquerors. (W. Prescott 1936:611-3) The fact that, after the bloody conquest, "they were kindly entertained, their wants supplied, and every means taken to infuse into them a spirit of conciliation" (W. Prescott 1936:614) did not stop the eventual imposition of a colonial institution less for socio-economic development of the natives than for the exploitative extraction of raw materials and resources, as in mining for gold and silver, plantation, and ranching (J. Parry 1963:194). As Landes asked, "Who in his right mind could go to a distant land, often full of disease and wretchedness, if not for getting rich quickly?" (D. Landes 1994) The Mexican mural artist Jean Charlot, in his "Massacre at the Templo Mayor" (1922), depicted robotic and faceless armoured Spaniards driving blood-red lances into defenceless Indians at a temple in Tenochtitlan, and David Alfaro Siqueiros in "Cuauhtemoc Against the Myth" (1950's) viewed the courageous yet unsuccessful defense of the dying empire by the young last Aztec emperor against the Spaniards as a symbol of resistance against colonial/capitalist exploitation. (D. Ades 1989:156,177)

This violent, exploitative conquest was quite common, of course, in the rest of the Portuguese and Spanish empires in the New World. The discovery of the New World in this sense sealed the fate of the Amerindians: a quadruple consequence of being killed in battlefields, epidemic diseases (smallpox, measles, typhoid), culture-shock (the remolding of a communal traditional society along European individualistic, profit-oriented lines in the 16th and 17th centuries), and physical debilitation resulted from overwork in a colonial system of forced labour. (S. Stein 1971:37; A. Crosby 1986:198-213)

A comparable tragedy befell the Africans: the notorious "First Passage" and
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"Middle Passage" in the history of "triangular trade." The story of the forced transport to the New World involved about 9,900,000 to 20,000,000 Africans (from year 1502 until the 1860's), first from their villages to European-controlled African ports ("First Passage") and then to their equivalents in the new world ("Middle Passage"). It was a most moving tale of human suffering of gruesome dimensions (mortality rate from 25% to half). (R. Fogel 1989:18; D. Landes 1994) This was done to satisfy the European demands in the triangular trade (cotton, say, being brought to Africa to exchange for slaves which were then shipped to the New World for sugar, the major imported ingredient for European cuisine at the time). This inhumane exploitation was justified in the name of socio-economic reasons for slavery: that is, scarce labour in the colonies, expensive European labour, better endurance of black slaves, the availability of unconstrained use of force against slaves, and prior practices of internal slave economies among Africans. (R. Fogel 1989:34) That this was allowed to persist for several hundred years remains a dark legacy of modern human experience.

Not just the New World and Africa but also Asia -- the Europeans did not spare in their hegemonic conquest for wealth and power. Unlike the Africans and the Amerindians, however, the Arabs were a fearsome foe, as highly aggressive and expansionist as the Europeans. Shortly after the death of the Prophet Muhammad, his fellows started conquering Persia, Syria, Palestine, Egypt, the rest of North Africa, Byzantium, and Spain --, and even threatened Christendom from both ends (across the Pyrenees in the west and against Anatolia, a Greek and Christian land, in the east), until their decisive defeat at the Battle of Tours and Poitiers in 732 A.D., and numerous unsuccessful attempts to conquer Constantinople -- to be further consummated by internal religious schism between the Sunnis and the Shiites from the 10th century on. (B. Lewis 1982:18-9)

' Nation of Islam Minister Conrad Muhammed affirms -- not without, however, stirring controversy (in regard to the intentional exaggeration of this claim) from scholars in the field -- that 200 million people were killed on slave ships over this three-hundred-year period. (R. Brustein 1994:147) This of course cannot be true, since the number of slaves brought from Africa to the New World is estimated to be, in one count, only 10 millions or so. (G. Lewis 1985:223).
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Though benefited from a new impetus by the Turks, with the advance of Ottoman arms and the vast extension of Ottoman power in the 13th century, the Islamic empire gradually crumbled to the European hegemonic forces, first in the Reconquest and the Crusades and later, all the more so, in grand imperialism of modern times.\(^{(B.Lewis\ 1982:32-3)}\) The high cost of armament and war, great inflation (as in the 16th and 17th centuries), Muslim complacency, and technological backwardness (in agriculture, industry, and transport) were combined causes forcing the Muslims eventually to accept a humiliating capitulations system (various privileges for Europeans, such as exemption from local jurisdiction and taxation, granted by the Ottoman and other Muslim states to Christian ones) -- and later a full-fledged colonial rule (by the French in north Africa and the British in the middle east) as well.\(^{(D.Landes\ 1994;B.Lewis\ 1982:47,48-9,55)}\) The time when the Muslims were accustomed to look down on the infidels and to regard the non-Islamic world as one of darkness and barbarism was much gone \(^{(B.Lewis\ 1982:39)}\) --, though there was, and still is, much hatred of them \(^{(D.Landes\ 1958:92-3)}\), of the European domination especially. "The relationship between Occident and Orient", Edward Said wrote in Orientalism, "is a relationship of power, of domination, of varying degrees of a complex hegemony, and is quite accurately indicated in the title of K.M. Panikkar's classic Asia and Western Dominance" \(^{(E.Said\ 1992:139)}\) -- "as a sign of of European-Atlantic power over the Orient." \(^{(E.Said\ 1992:140)}\)

The Indians in South Asia under the despotic rule of the Mughals and Moghuls fared no better. Karl Marx was right in characterizing India at the time when the English came in for wealth and power as an exemplar of a corrupt, divided empire open to external prey: a war of competing claims to legitimacy, the rule of violence (cross, double cross, conspiracy), an extreme social stratification (between the opulence of the few and the poverty of the many), and "a country not only divided between Mohammedan and Hindoo, but between tribe and tribe, between caste and caste; a society whose framework was based on a sort of equilibrium, resulting from a general repulsion and constitutional exclusiveness
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between all its members." (K.Marx 1968:125; D.Landes 1994) And the English wasted no time in imposing a colonial rule, grasping whatever they could and exploiting the high elasticity of Indian labour (as in the labour-intensive cotton industry). In the process, English intervention, Marx observed, "sweeping away both Hindoo spinner and weaver, dissolved these small semi-barbarian, semicivilized communities, by blowing up their economical basis" (K.Marx 1968:88) and ruining India's native industry. (K.Marx 1968:100) The results were devastating enough: "India, the great workshop of cotton manufacture for the world, since immemorial times, became now inundated with English twists and cotton stuffs." (K.Marx 1968:100) India, the great cultural absorber in the world who had successively Hindooized such barbarian conquerors as the Arabs, Turks, Tartars, and Moguls, had now whatever that was "great and elevated in the native society" destroyed by the English conquerors, who "were the first conquerors superior, and therefore, inaccessible to Hindoo civilization." (K.Marx 1968:126)

Mr. Callwell, a British artilleryman in India, taught his men the right way to handle the Asiatics: "to go for them and to cow them by sheer force of will." (V. Kiernan 1982:158) Why, Mr. Callwell? Because, answered he, the non-whites of all shades were "bands of fanatics", "savages", "tricky", suffering from "moral inferiority", belonging to "lower races". Of course, not all Europeans shared the same thought about what was to be done to the natives. A British machine-gunner in Guru wrote home, for instance, "that I got so sick of the slaughter that I ceased to fire, though the General's order was to make as big a bag as possible." (V. Kiernan 1982:160) A European officer stationed in a nearby Chinese place expressed his regret at "perpetrating all sorts of violence" within human imagination. (V. Kiernan 1982:159) And Sergeant Pearman spoke of his experience: "I never saw such butchery and murder!" (V. Kiernan 1982:161) It is important to stress, besides, that all these things were possible, even when at its very start, "[t]echnologically, economically, institutionally, as well as in more general cultural terms", Rhoads Murphey thus reminds us, "Asia remained in most respects at least in the same league with the West (however such things may
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be measured) until late in their confrontation." (R.Murphey 1977:26) Northern Europe, for instance, as recently as in the 16th and 17th centuries, was backward, as much technically as culturally -- when compared to the Arabic and Chinese civilizations. (D.Landes 1994; P.Harrison 1979:36; E.B.1994a:281)

The Manchu Chinese underwent the same fate. Here was a society demanding social conformity and cooperation (also due to a wet-rice agricultural system) rather than individual distinctiveness and creativity. It was an institutional structure skewed towards the interest of a literati-scholar officialdom not for natural mercantile growth but for the maintenance of social stability and public order (essential to the prestige and property rights of the gentry). It had a geography predominantly inward-facing (as in the great cities and nearly all urban centers) and conducive to internal colonialization (rather than external), and a government which, though not totalitarian, nevertheless monopolized the production and distribution of the main commodities and did not encourage business proliferation. It was a geo-political unit knowing no rival powers nearby as a stimulus for expansion and competition (save some threats from normadic tribes to the northwest), a culture with a dominant ethos of observing harmony between heaven and earth rather than mastering them, and a civilization which had subjugated its adjacent neighbors in an unequal tributary system. How then could the people and their rulers not regard themselves as the center of the universe (the "Middle Kingdom") and not refuse to learn from others? (J.Merson 1990:21,26,75; J.Levenson 1967:72,94-5,103; R.Murphey 1977:12-3,16,54,81; E.Jones 1981:202-22)

Precisely because of this grandious self-delusion, this Manchu Other succumbed too to the hegemonic forces of the 19th century Europeans (in special regard to the latter's warlike skills, ship-building technology, navigation techniques, and weapon manufactures) -- not without some first-hand experience of terrible European atrocities and advanced European military might. (A.Hall 1957:710) A Dutch minister stationed in this Other at the time was oppressed by "a feeling of inexpressible shame that men of the white race were after all so
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little removed from medieval barbarity." (V. Kiernan 1982:164) And by the time the natives' humiliating, countless treaty concessions constituted what John Merson nicely phrased as "The Price of Harmony" if understood within the Chinese cosmological framework --, a growing anti-foreign bitterness was hard to suppress, to the point that by the 1910's, the one feeling shared by virtually all Chinese was hostility to the "foreign devils". (T. Smith 1981:86)

This tale of European global expansion since the dawn of modernity (as aforediscussed) has a didactic exemplification of the callous reality of the balance of power in a worldly setting: whoever exists in the periphery of a power network will have to pay the price of subjugation (be it in the form of forced labour, slavery, capitulation, a coolie system, treaty concessions, or the like). As the Shepherd in one of the Noctes Ambrosianae in 1834 remarks, "International law seems to me nae better than a systematized and legalized scheme o' rape, robbery, piracy, incendiarism, and murder." (V. Kiernan 1982:154) Karl Marx's closest collaborator, Friedrich Engels, could not therefore resist crying out at European colonial violence as "cowardly, barbarous, atrocious." (V. Kiernan 1982:155)

But the Europeans succeeded not without good reasons: due to their timely exercise of the power of the modern state first under the guidance of mercantilism and later under that of the capitalist industrial revolution. This is not to suggest, certainly, that some form of institutional violence did not exist in pre-modern Europe, and for that matter in the Others as well. Old-styled imperialism abounded in human history, whether Western or not: the list could range from the Amerindian (the Aztecs and the Incas) and the Imperial Chinese empires through the Mongol Eurasian and the Islamic empires to the Roman and the Persian empires. Conquest and seizure of wealth of a conquered land -- how could pre-modern cases like that not exist? But what is distinctive in the case of grand imperialism (as exemplified in modern colonial conquest) is firstly, its destructive effects on indigenous civilizations and, secondly, its systematic exploitation of conquered peoples. (A. Toffler 1980:76-7; D. Landes 1989:35-8)
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Old-styled imperialism, by comparison, was still petty -- as "the treasure these early adventurers and conquerors sent home", Toffler observes, "was, in effect, private booty. It financed wars and personal opulence -- winter palaces, colorful pageantry, a leisurely workless lifestyle for the court. But it had little to do with the still basically self-sufficient economy of the colonizing country." Grand imperialism, by contrast, was "grand", firstly, because it brought back shipload after shipload of raw materials and products and, secondly, because it imposed an exploitative international division of labour with the home countries situated at the core of its power network.

The role of the modern state was undoubtedly important, since grand imperialism benefited from the timely exercise of the power of the modern state. The medieval feudal state, in its concerns within a basically agrarian, decentralized European setting, was, by the dawn of modern times, transformed into a type of absolute state from the late 16th through the 18th centuries. The absolute state became the center of attention, the source of legitimacy which must be sought by social forces as diverse as religious groups, trading ventures, societies of literature, and scientific institutions. (R.Wuthnow 1980:41) Its centralizing focus undermined the medieval division of power between crown and estates and assumed a larger agenda of duties and responsibilities for nationalist goals -- especially since the breakdown of the Roman Empire, which encouraged individual nation-states to compete for prosperity and power. (D.Gross 1992:30-1; D.Landes 1989:31-3)

Firstly, the modern state followed the guidance of mercantilism: that the state acted and manipulated the economy for its own wealth and power -- pragmatic and hegemonic in a "zero-sum game" of the balance of power of nation-states. (R.Wuthnow 1980:37) Nothing -- neither pride nor honour, neither authority nor faith -- could stand in the face of this new national project, which benefited from the invention and adoption of new technology, reflecting the emerging scientific mindset at the time (instrumental-rational, mastering of nature). (D.Landes 1989:31-3) The number of scientists with patronage from the
state or with positions in state bureaucracies increased substantially, as did the number of state officials having personal interests in science as amateur experimenters. (R. Wuthnow 1980:42)

Periods of intense national competition, Wuthnow (1980:51) argues, often result in rapid scientific development (and the great advance in atomic research during WWII is only a twentieth-century exemplar). In fact, even the advance in social science at the time focused on inquiry about the pursuit of state power. Niccolo Machiavelli’s The Prince was a classic, though earlier, exemplar. (N. Machiavelli 1985) This went along well with the euphoria of a new beginning (Section 1.2), a starting with a clean slate which constituted progress over the backward ancient world, based as the optimism was on intellectual advances (empiricism, rationalism, and the scientific revolution) and the social-economic equivalents (early capitalism, technological breakthrough, general improvement in material life). (D. Gross 1992:28; K. Thomas 1971) The conquest of the New World exemplified this type of a new beginning, unencumbered by the shackles of the medieval past.

Secondly, an activist, instrumental spirit of this type as in grand imperialism received its most powerful development with the capitalist industrial revolution (Section 1.3). The Marxists (Marx and Lenin) argued, in a classic theme, that grand imperialism was a logical consequence of the capitalist mode of production in the process of looking for markets and raw materials, driven as the capitalists were in fiercely competing against each other. As Lenin (1995:115) in "Imperialism: The Highest Stage of Capitalism" put it in a classic passage, "Imperialism is capitalism in that stage of development in which the domination of monopolies and finance capital has established itself; in which the export of capital has acquired pronounced importance; in which the division of the world among the international trusts has begun; in which the partition of all the territories of the globe among the great capitalist powers has been completed." This story of exploitation was much propagandized during the Cold War in standard publications and statements emanating from the Soviet Union and other
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Yet the destructive consequences imposed by grand imperialism on indigenous civilizations should be a lesson for those in our multicultural age -- where it is often more passionately endorsed than soberly argued that it is irresponsibly Eurocentric to impose Western conceptions of modernity on the non-Western world. My claim (Sections 6.2 & 6.3 especially) is that those who make such claim are as naive as ignorant of the hegemonic logic of modernity. The world of commoditized indust-reality as released from the capitalist industrial revolution shows no mercy to any great legacies of the past, be they embodied in indigenous civilizations of the conquered or the medieval institution of the Catholic Church. White or black, yellow or brown, Oriental or Occidental, North or South, Christian or Buddhist --, whenever commoditized indust-reality enters,

\[7\] How to define 'multiculturalism' makes no difference to my claim here. For instance, Manning Marable (1995:119-30) recently differentiates four views of 'multiculturalism.'

(a) There is "racial essentialism," which, first developed by Temple University scholar Molefi Asante, praises the artefacts, rituals and histories of non-Western (mostly African) people as "original," "unique," and even superior to European and white American ones -- and in the process degenerates into a rigid bipolar model of racial relations, into a dogmatic dichotomy of Eurocentrism vs. Afrocentrism.

(b) There is "corporate multiculturalism," which, in response to emergent "minority markets" and changing "labour force demographics," utilizes non-white cultures so as to conquer the growing minority consumer market, to appeal to non-white consumers. The buzzword of the corporate world in this regard is to "celebrate diversity" while "criticizing no one" --, for instance, in honoring Martin Luther King, Jr. 's Birthday or the Mexican-American holiday "Cinco de Mayo," with the active sponsorship of major corporations.

(c) There is "liberal multiculturalism," which, especially within the academic world of aesthetics, ideology, cultural studies, and curriculum theory, champions cultural diversity and pluralism and therefore does not fully address the issue of power structure which perpetuates the inequalities of power, resources, and privilege between white America and its minority counterpart. Prof. Henry Louis Gates, Harvard University's Director of African-American Studies, is an exemplary case.

(d) And there is "radical democratic multiculturalism," which, inspired by the works of W.E.B.Du Bois and Paul Robeson, identifies America's minority groups with oppressed people throughout the world and thus calls for a democratic restructuring of the system of cultural and political power itself (away from the impotent concerns with merely academic talks of literary/cultural studies, ideology, aesthetics, or curriculum theory as is the case of liberal multiculturalism), so as to transform difference for constructive ends, to create a world where individuals are judged, in Martin Luther King, Jr. 's words, "not by the color of their skin but the content of their character."

But none of these (especially the first three), romantic as they all are, confronts the brutal side of the human condition (which I have so far analyzed), that is, its hegemonic power structure of some groups at the expense of others, within the context of modern (and now postmodern) times. Hegemony is cold-blooded, and it makes no difference to whoever has the power, as Lord Acton long ago remarked, "Power corrupts, and absolute power corrupts absolutely." A multicultural world, when fully realized, only transfers power to some groups at the expense of other groups. Or figuratively put, a slave, upon successfully rebelling against his master, will himself become a new master as soon as he acquires enough power.
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its war on old structures and values is made, with no fear of whatsoever powers that be, with no respect nor mercy towards them.

Hegemony is cold-blooded. Surely, this is not to suggest that one can understand the Others (qua the Third World) solely from the Eurocentric point of view. Nothing is farther from the truth, in that development theory in these days of ours, as John Brohman (1995:124) correctly points out, has rightly moved away from the once highly Eurocentric social sciences (which inadequately examined the interrelationships among socio-economic, political, cultural-environmental factors within specific geographical and historical contexts). The important point, nevertheless, is that however contextualized a modernity of the Others is to be constructed, it has to derive from Western experience and its pioneer success.

But grand imperialism is no longer politically correct in our times, in an age of de-colonization (partly due to the Western inability to exert direct political rule and its increasingly unwillingness to risk massive or prolonged military intervention) and Third-World nationalism (qua a new form of political assertion). (T. Smith 1981: 85, 137) In this new political environment imperialism adapts itself into a new form of expression: the neo-imperialism of cultural and economic penetration best exemplified by the seductive spread of Western pop culture (Pepsi-Cola, McDonald, Hollywood, the icons of Michael Jackson and Madonna, blue jeans, the Beatles, fashions), known as what Camille Paglia (1994) calls the "global culture." It also involves the formidable global presence of Western and Japanese multi-national corporations⁸ (Sony, General Motors, IBM, .


The benign consequences include, for instance, the transfer of (a)capital, (b)technology, (c)managerial skills (talent), and (d)marketing techniques --, besides (e)job creation, (f)tax income, and (g)increased world efficiency, thereby fostering growth and improving welfare (higher incomes and cheaper goods).

The malign ones, for the critics, can include (i)autonomy foregone (as in political control and influence, less bound by indigenous social codes and economic relationships, and extra-territorial jurisdiction by powerful home countries), (ii)inappropriate technology transfer, (iii)the replacement of local capital by foreign one, (iv)job loss, or no job gain (as in employing expatriate, not indigenous, managers), (v)the misallocation of resources (as
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Mercedes, Mitsubishi, Renauld, Bank of America, Sumi-tomo Bank, Boeing, Airbus, AT&T, Honda, Mazda, or else), among other institutional and cultural ideals (as will be addressed in later chapters).

"Go to almost any village in the Third World", Paul Harrison (1979:48) wrote, "and you will find youths who scorn traditional dress and sport denims and T-shirts. Go into any bank and the tellers will be dressed as would their European counterparts; at night the manager will climb into his car and go home to watch TV in a home that would not stick out on a European or North American estate. Every capital in the world is getting to look like every other; it is Marshall McLuhan's global village, but the style is exclusively Western. And not just in consumer fashions: the minicry extends to architecture, industrial technology, approaches to health care, education and housing." By contrast, "indigenous ways are held up to scorn and ridicule -- indeed, throughout the Third World traditional culture has become a negative reference group, a group that all ambitions, go-ahead people seek to escape and deny all connection with." (P.Harrison 1979:55) In a recent finding, many indigenous cultures in Africa give place increasingly to foreign beliefs and values (as in local movie industries); what comes from abroad (mostly Western) is taken as good and what originates from within is not.

The debate has often been reduced to which theory one finds persuasive. For the Liberals (the interdependency theorists, for instance), for instance, the international economic structure benefits those who participate through mixture of trade, investment, finance, and aid. The Marxists (the dependency theorists, for instance), on the other hand, regard the international economic system as one which tends to keep rich countries rich (if not richer) and poor countries poor (if not poorer), and only through a revolution can the system be changed for the benefit of LDC's. The Structuralists, however, stand between the polarized views of Liberalism and Marxism -- and, while agreeing with the latter on the perpetuating backwardness and dependency in the Third World within the international economic structure, yet believe that it can after all be reformed (through, say, foreign aid, protection, access to Northern markets). Consequently, whether or not the presence of MNC's is benign or malign to host countries then depends on which theoretical framework is used (Marxist, Liberal, Structuralist, or else).

And to understand the issue concerning what host countries can and cannot do in bargaining with MNC's for better deals -- the works of Shah Tarzi (1995:154-64) and Joan Spero (1990:ch.8), for instance, are helpful. Also see footnote #11.


10. From Headline News broadcasted on Channel 14 in the States (10/25/95).
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John Tomlinson therefore spoke of the global spread of Western mass-mediated cultural orientation: an obsession with money and "compulsive consumerism", a constant reference to "exotic" (Third World) lands as the source of wealth there for acquisition, a reification of capitalist indust-reality as natural and morally justified, an anti-communist ideological campaign, and a depiction of the Others (women, minorities, non-Western races) in stereotypic terms. (J. Tomlinson 1991:22)

Lee Kuan Yew, that grand statesman of East Asia, makes the point well: that the old form of military conquest, now gone though it is, yet is replaced by a peaceful, more potent form of conquest, a callous economic-cultural competition for wealth, power, and hegemony among the major players in the world economic system (dominated as it is by market-oriented, advanced industrial states). Neo-imperialist hegemony so understood is more lucrative, more effective than direct colonial administration and occupation, than "costly wars and conquests." (P. Marshall 1975:465; D. Landes 1980:385) This is not to suggest, however, that modernity as hegemonic to the Others must therefore follow in the footsteps of such early comers of the industrial revolution as the British, the French, and the American.

Nothing is farther from the truth. The modernizing experience of such late comers as the Soviet Union (A. Gerschenkron 1962) and Japan (F. Tipton 1981:139-50), for instance, precisely shows their essential difference from the European early comers: the former stressing strong protectionism, directed labour, control of unions, and central supervision of banking and credit, while the latter stress individual entrepreneurship and free market economy. (E.B. 1994a:288) And in the post-Cold War era (of the 1990's), a third model in the form of "people's

1. Many economic development models can be classified within the four available theoretical perspectives, that is, (a) the international economic, (b) the domestic political, (c) the domestic socio-economic, and (d) the international political perspectives. (J. Frieden 1995)

For instance, from the international economic perspective, there are interdependency theorists (e.g., free marketeers), dependency theorists (e.g., Marxist-Leninists), and structuralists -- especially on issues concerning developed countries' trade barriers to developing countries' exports and the deterioration in the price of exports from developing countries over time. (J. Spero 1990:203-17) From the domestic political perspective, there are
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power" (R.Broad 1995:440) -- that is, popular organizations taking on ecological destruction, inequitable control over resources and land, and governments' inability to provide "adequate food, clothing and housing" as outlined by the U.N.'s International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights -- is spreading in many developing countries. (R.Broad 1995:440-6)

Modernity is therefore hegemonic in its various facets, be it petty, grand or neo-, and it does not matter which model of industrialization a country takes. The hegemonic process is an on-going process, with no end in sight in our postmodern times. Old players of this game, the Spanish and Portuguese empires, are long gone, as are many late starters including the Dutch, British, French, German, American, Italian, and Russian ones. The rivalry between the Soviets and the Americans during the Cold War was just a contemporary exemplar -- different as they were ideologically (one hegemonic in the capitalist form, the other in the Communist one). Their rivalry had done much to politicize economic life in the Others -- in provoking fierce political and social strife, with devastating effects on indigenous economic development. (P.Bauer 1981:83) Even "the operation of official Western aid to Third World governments", Paul Bauer wrote, "reinforced by certain strands in its advocacy and by the criteria of its allocation, has also served to politicize life in the Third World. These controls have wasted resources, restricted social and economic mobility and also external contacts."

Nonetheless, this is not to suggest that the Others would be better off

statists (e.g., advocates of "import-substitution industrialization" policy, or conversely, "export-oriented industrialization" policy) and institutionalists (especially in regard to bureaucratic elitism). From the domestic socio-economic perspective, there are pluralists (e.g., proponents of people's power) and class theorists. And from the international political perspective, there are realists (e.g., mercantilists and neo-mercantilists).

And which perspective is most explanatory depends on the specific empirical issues within a historical epoch in question. As socio-economic and political conditions change from a historical era to the next, so do the acceptance of some perspectives as opposed to others. During the Cold War, as an illustration, many Third World countries found Marxist-Leninist dependency theory persuasive in explaining why poor countries remained poor, if not poorer over time. Yet with the end of the Cold War in the 1990's, a worldwide trend of liberalization and market reforms renders the dependency theory less attractive among many.

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without Western contacts. "In Africa as elsewhere in the Third World", Bauer reminds us, "the most prosperous areas are those with most commercial contacts with the West" (P. Bauer 1981:70), as in "[t]he cash-crop producing areas and entrepot ports of South-East Asia, West Africa and Latin America; the mineral-producing areas of Africa and the Middle East; and cities and ports throughout Asia, Africa, the Caribbean and Latin America." And "some of the most backward countries never were colonies, as for instance Afghanistan, Tibet, Nepal, Liberia" (P. Bauer 1982:75); "many of the Asian and African colonies progressed very rapidly during colonial rule, much more so than the independent countries in the same area."

Nor is this to totally blame the problematic of underdevelopment in the Others on the international hegemonic structure of the Same. Nothing is farther from the truth, as the rise of the East Asian economies in recent times clearly show that dependency theory is inadequate for the simple reason that it treats the international political economy as what Stephan Haggard (1995:49) and Chung-in Moon call "a rigid, determinate international structure, rather than as a set of shifting constraints within which states seek to maneuver. A country's position in the international division of labour is not pre-given, but is in part determined by state industrialization and development strategies."

Besides, poor economic infrastructures (transportation, communication, banking, health, and education), backward tribal social structures (not conducive to entrepreneurial success), chronic balance-of-payment problems (buying more from, than selling to, abroad), the absence of powerful business groups, predatory and dictatorial regimes, and ill-fated import-substitution industrialization (ISI) policy pursued by many developing countries (in the 1960's and 1970's, for instance) --, all these domestic socio-economic and political barriers, illustrative (and thus not exhaustive for sure) as they are, have made rapid development in the Third World difficult. (J. Frieden 1995)

Be that as it may, the game of hegemony has no end in sight. Old players fade, just as new comers emerge. One finds no better ones in our times than the
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rapidly growing East Asian economic powers. And the most important one is the emerging Chinese superpower. But why this Chinese Other? A short reply is, It will be what Lee Kuan-yew (N.Kristof 1993:74) refers to as "the biggest player in the history of man." Because of this coming dominance of the Chinese superpower in the second half of the 21st century (and certainly in the 22nd), I feel obliged to analyze its potential in this coming Pax Sinica more closely in relation to the future of modernity in the next section.

1.5 A Tale of a Bad Learner Becoming Good, and the Triumph of the Modern West

The tale of the fall of this Other (qua the Manchu Chinese) and the gradual rise of their contemporary successor is a story of a bad learner becoming good. This history, on the one hand, involuntarily pays tribute to the triumph of the hegemonic modern West, and, on the other hand, clearly illustrates why the game of hegemony will continue unto postmodern times as well.

My tale began with the visit of George Macartney to this Other in 1793, bringing from the Court of St.James gifts, greetings, and requests for trade privileges. The Manchu emperor Ch’ien-lung, with his Sinocentric dispositions, issued an edict addressed to his English counterpart, George III (J.Merson 1990:151; D.Landes 1983:49), as follows:

The Celestial Court has pacified and possessed the territory within the four seas. Its sole aim is to do its utmost to achieve good government and to manage political affairs, attaching no value to strange jewels and precious objects. The various articles presented by you, O King, this was accepted... in consideration of the offerings having come from a long distance with sincere good wishes. As a matter of fact, the virtue and prestige of the Celestial Dynasty having spread far and wide, the kings of the myriad nations come by land and sea with all sorts of precious things. Consequently there is nothing we lack... We have never set much store on strange or ingenious objects, nor do
A grandiose self-delusion like this was not hard to notice and reflected a most xenophobic attitude which made this Other a formidable bad learner from other civilizations. By contrast, the Japanese, in their encounter with Commodore Perry, who turned up in Edo (Tokyo) harbour in 1853 (with his iron ships bristling with cannon) demanding access to trade on behalf of the U.S. government (J.Merson 1990:160-3), understood quite early the imperative to catch up with Western industrial and technological powers. After all, imitated as they had for centuries Chinese and Korean technological and cultural fabrics --, turning to a new center of civilization (this time the West) was quite a natural thing to do. Indeed, they even went as far as to detailedly adopt European dress and social habits. (J.Merson 1990:187-8)

The Chinese, on the other hand, had the misfortune to be the old center of civilization -- a highly developed economy and system of management, with a sense of self-sufficiency and cultural pride when compared with the lesser Others nearby (R.Murphey 1977:102). For so long had they accepted no one as their equal, that their ignorance of others was so pathologically profound (and came to be embodied in their extreme xenophobic mindset, which served as a consoling defensive mechanism for rationalizing their backwardness at the time, though not before), that it rendered their eventual downfall -- though combined with a relatively static economy unable to cope with increasing demographic pressure (R.Murphey 1977:116) -- hard to escape in its encounter with the hegemonic 19th-century Europeans. As Lester Thurow (1995a:676) recently puts it, the Mandarin economy, like those of the Pharonic, Roman, and Medieval, "had no competitors and subsequently stagnated for centuries before they finally disappeared."

This makes the modern/medieval (pre-modern) epochal frontier of this Other to be periodized much later than the Western one: four hundred years or so. Historically, this could hardly have been otherwise: that is, if the game of
modernity is historically a Western invention, whoever of the Others wants to play it too cannot help but emulate it from the status of a late comer in its encounter with the hegemonic diffusion of Western modernity. And the history of catching-up by this Other is a history of dealing with the rise of the modern West -- and thereby tells us something about the modern/medieval (pre-modern) epochal frontier in this Other.

If the Western modern/medieval epochal frontier was set around the fall of the Middle Ages (around 1500 A.D.) in its struggle for a new beginning (as in the Renaissance) -- the Chinese equivalent occurred around the fall of the Manchu Dynasty in its struggle with the Western challenge (as exemplified by the visit of someone like George Macartney in 1793). But, when exactly was the modern/medieval epochal frontier of this Other stabilized? Around 1793? Or at 1911, with the founding of Chinese Republic -- as many historians are inclined to so delineate? I suggest instead that the periodization should be set around the second half of the 19th century. Why?

The Self-Strengthening Movement (1861-94) was as important here as the Renaissance in the early modern West -- with fundamental consequences to the historical development of the ideal of the modern self in this Other. Emperor Ch’ien-lung’s rejection of his English counterpart’s request only hardened the English stand (and for that matter, those of other Western powers) into an eventual military solution -- as was the case in the Opium War in 1840, which resulted, deeply humilatingly to this Other’s pride, in semi-colonial concessions as in the Treaty of Nanking (with the British) in 1842, the Treaty of Wanghia (with the U.S.) and of Whampoa (with France) in 1844, and the Treaty of Peking (with the British) in 1860. Later, even such lesser powers as the Portuguese, the Russians, and the Japanese (an apprentice-turned master) joined in the conquest of the dying empire. These treaties forced the self-deluded Manchu Other to come to grips with a new geo-political reality: that they were no longer (if they ever had been) the center of the universe as claimed. The Opium War clearly showed a sign of dynastic decline (which was further intensified by the Taiping Rebellion
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in 1850-64, triggered though it was originally by a break of the Yellow River banks causing disastrous economic consequences for millions of the masses). (J. Merson 1990:165)

Arnold Toynbee’s point is well taken: that is, the history of the rise and fall of civilizations is full of cases of an empire which, once reaching its peak, started digging its own grave by being afflicted with a general sense of complacency and an increasing inability to face new challenges from the presumably lesser others. Once a people have indulged in a superiority complex by regarding themselves as the best of the best, as the world’s best, and therefore feeling no need of learning from the allegedly inferior Others, they start losing the ability to confront new challenges from the presumably lesser others. The Romans, the Greeks, and the Muslims are just a few exemplars: "Everyone of them was convinced that it was the only civilized society in the world, and that the rest of mankind were barbarians, untouchables, or infidels." (A. Toynbee 1966:101-2 & 1948:71) And the arrogant Americans in modern times are just a most recent exemplar, and the subsequent American decline (Section 6.3) in postmodern times is not without good reason.

Slowly yet most painfully, the awakening of this Other came in their concessions made in these treaties: equality of official recognition (as in the Treaty of Nanking), foreign privileges by virtue of the most-favoured-nation clauses (guaranteeing trading equality under the Treaty of Wanghia and Whampoa), and the legalization of a treaty-port system (as in the Treaty of Peking) --, just to cite a few instances. (J. Merson 1990:172; E. B. 1990:124) The most humiliating blow consisted not so much of the granting of utilitarian rights (trade, commerce, and eliminating tariffs) and of territorial loss (Hong Kong under British colonial rule) but the very challenge to the long established tributary relationship between the Middle Kingdom and the presumably lesser others -- and, in the long run, to the very backbone of the Imperial System itself, as in the later imposition by the Europeans of extraterritoriality (exemption from the jurisdiction of local law or tribunals), the free movement
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humiliating defeat of this Other by Western powers and forced them to pay massive reparations, besides other concessions. (J. Merson 1990:207-8) Yet the reform was not without its redemptive contribution: helping the eventual educational reforms which not only ended the ossified examination systems for traditional literati-officials but also, in a more important sense, sent thousands of young people abroad to study science, engineering, medicine, law, economics, education and military skills in the Same (Japan, Europe, and the U.S.). (E.B. 1990:133)

These lucky few, upon their return -- especially in "treaty ports" which often became havens as much for political and ideological dissidents as for open revolutionaries and political parties (R. Murphrey 1977:106), with Sun Yatsen, "the father of modern China" for many, as a classic case -- constituted a modernizing force in leading what came to be known as "The New Culture Movement", which critically scrutinized all Chinese traditions hitherto existing, guided as these early Chinese moderns were by Western ideals of individual liberty and equality, of a scientific spirit of enquiry, and of a pragmatic approach to social problematics. The carrier of these new ideals was best represented by "New Youth", a magazine founded by Chen Duxin, written (as proposed by the influential writer Lu Xun, a former student of John Dewey) in a vernacular language (pái-hua), as opposed to the classical-style inaccessible to the masses in imperial times.

But their encounter with the modern West was one of painful irony at the very start. A sense of profound resentment, and yet a need for an equally profound redefinition of what their being was to be, exemplified a spiritual crisis, or the problematic of the meaning and ideal of this Other's modern self. Confucian, Taoist, Buddhist, folkloric --, the beliefs of these types they now took to be oppressive, backward, or what Lu Xun called "man-eating" traditions. (G. Barme 1992) Shocking this iconoclastic view was, indeed -- as much to them then as to us now. Yet it is quite to be expected that a modern, be it European or Chinese, will think in this way. The term 'modern' after all refers to something "of today", something "of the new", and presumably something
progressive -- as opposed to 'tradition' as something of "the past", something "of the old", and presumably something backward. If the European philosophes in the Enlightenment had aristocratic tyranny, Catholic dogmatism, and folkloric superstition as the backward triad to be hanged, the "new youth" in the New Culture Movement equally had feudal oppression, imperial-cultural bondage, and mass ignorance as the backward trio to be combated against.

But where could they turn for a new ideal which was to be modern, not traditional -- now that this Other's past lost its sacredness and was spit upon? As a late comer to modernity (almost four hundred years late), they could only turn to the modern West (qua the inventor of the game of modernity itself) -- just as after England experienced the first Industrial Revolution, other Europeans as late comers could not do otherwise than turn to the former for emulation, in what David Landes called the "continental emulation". (D.Landes 1989:ch.3) By the same logic, we have here this Other's emulation of the Western game of modernity, though with a sense of resentment (a phenomenon of the weak too familiar in human history). The reason is easy to see: insofar as this Other's past was abandoned as backward or as unprogressive, its emulation of the ideal of the modern Western self only reflected a loss of this Other's soul in the early days of their modernity in confronting the Western hegemonic challenge. A sense of loss of Chineseness existed side by side with a championing of the ideal of the hegemonic modern West, which, after all, was precisely the very power which had badly humiliated and exploited them and which they so much yearned to expel. The search for a modern identity is still as much with them in our times as with their ancestors then.

But late comers often have the benefit of learning from first comers' experience. The ideal of the modern self as experienced in the capitalist Industrial Revolution in England, for instance, suffered a terrible blow to the great expectations of a new beginning, of a new millennium awaiting the English moderns. There were those who, saddened by the emerging urban ugliness, mourned a "merried England that never was." There were those who, angered by the callous...
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exploitation of women and children in factory works, yearned for a communist utopia which never existed. And there were those who, annoyed by the banal existence in a growing consumption culture, sought for aesthetic seclusion which never was feasible.

The "new youth" moderns, similarly, had their own schism concerning what constituted the modern ideal as a successor to that of this Other’s past. (V.Schwarcz 1986:1) A "revolutionary faction" (Ch’u Ch’iu-pai, Ch’en Tu-hsiu, and Mao Tse-dung as exemplars) embraced a Marxian ideal of the modern self, aware as they were of the problematic of the capitalist industrial revolution in England. (M.Goldman 1972:85; C.Furth 1972:66) The Marxian ideal of the modern self revised the spirit of the Enlightenment: while endorsing the values of scientific objectivity and technological emancipatory power (if only for the natural sciences), it yet imposed a class politics on the moral basis of a just society and on aesthetic realization.

There were, however, those among the "new youth" moderns (Lu Xun, Hsu Chihmo, Yu tafu, Chang Iping, Kuo Mojo, Tsung Paihua, T’ien Han, Wang Tuch’ing), in what Schwarcz called the "literary faction", who opted for a different path. (C.Furth 1972:66; L.Lee 1972:72-3) Singing along the lines of the philosophes in the Enlightenment -- these "literary" new-youth moderns affirmed the ideal of the modern European self: as not only the promotion of technical development (as in technological emancipatory power) but also the scientific mode of enquiry (as in scientific objectivity), the calling for democratic restructuring (as in moral universality for a just society), and the search for artistic autonomy. This "literary" ideal of this Other’s modern self gave them a critical vantage point from which to dissect and attack the "national heritage" which by now lost its sacred orthodoxy. (V.Schwarcz 1986:7,118,125; C.Furth 1972:62)

But history was not as receptive to the "literary" ideal as to the "revolutionary" one.
The reasons are not hard to find. The "literary" new-youth moderns were too untimely "Westernized" (hard to soothe a deep resentment as embodied in a context
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of patriotic fervor against foreign imperial powers), too ill-organized (often hasty, ill-informed social mobilization as in student rallies and strikes, boycotts, parades, and street-corner oratories), too slow-paced (lagging behind the urgent needs of an epoch full of violence from within as in warlordism and civil war and from without as in foreign imperialism on this Other's soil), and, in the end, too romantic (often indulging into a dream world of wishful thinking). (J.Grieder 1972:95; V.Schwarcz 1986:96,138-40; L.Lee 1972:75) Fu Sinian, for instance, criticized his colleague Yu Pingbo as an exemplar of the romantic tendency of the "literary" new-youth moderns: "Ensnared by his literary studies, he became a literatus (wenren) and thus departed from the real world into a dream world."

When the "revolutionary" new-youths moderns gained supremacy over the Nationalists in 1949, the very reason for the existence of the "literary" ideal was attacked: their eulogy of love, their glorification of individuality, and their craving for rebirth. (L.Lee 1972:81-3) Even were they to succeed, their romantic utopia would likely never be found, since a romantic never feels at peace with any status quo. Those "literary" moderns who did survive only sadly fell into oblivion afterwards on both sides of the divided Chinese state. And the only new-youth moderns left were the "revolutionary" ones on the continent.

But did the Marxian ideal of the modern self as incorporated into the ideological framework of the "revolutionary" new-youth moderns in Mao’s times fare any better, by comparison? The search for a new beginning, too characteristic of the modern mentality, took the form here of the cultivation of a new human, "the New Socialist Man," as Marxian ideologues used to put it. And the Maoist version of "the New Socialist Man" emphasized such ideal attributes as absolute selflessness, obedience to the Communist Party, class consciousness, ideological study, love of labour and production, versatility (to be everything), and being a red expert. (T.Chen 1969:89-93) But with the death of Communism in both Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union, the Marxian ideal of the modern self loses its once Messianic appeal, and even when it was institutionalized, the
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costs on human freedom and well-being were enormous: Stalin's Terror, Mao's Great Leap Forward and Cultural Revolution, Pol Pot's Killing Fields, just to cite some most horrible cases. Modern human experience has yet to recover from this most shameful and destructive stain in its turbulent history of searching for a new millennial fantasy.

If the ideal of the modern self as dreamt of by the philosophes in the Enlightenment suffered a serious blow from various social ills resulting from the capitalist Industrial Revolution in England and equally by the degeneration of the French Revolution into Robespierre's bloody reign of terror (G. Kateb 1983: 27, 94) --, the alternative path for carrying out the Enlightenment project in the hands of the Marxian revolutionaries helped produce instead a totalitarian state not less (if not more) oppressive and dehumanizing than what those women and children working in 19th-century English factories (of which Marx was most scornful) suffered from, or than what those, whose heads, Roberspierre's included in the end, were cut off by means of the guillotine system, suffered from.

In the name of "the New Socialist Man", the "revolutionary" ideal of the new-youth moderns, under Mao's helmsmanship, created its own monster: the folly of idolatry fused with revolutionary fervor in a tightly controlled police state. (F. Teiwes 1984: 48-50, 65) The result was neither liberty nor equality, neither fraternity nor prosperity -- but poverty, oppression, and the closing of this Other's mind. The most telling case was the Cultural Revolution (1965-75): to be precise, economic disintegration, social chaos, factional fighting (Red Guards against Red Guards, the military against Red Guards, and Party authorities against Red Guards), forced mass migration, or in brief, a hell of all this. (J. Wang 1992: 21) And no one was able to fathom the rationale of this hell, shockingly costly as this striving for the Maoist promised land was in both human and material terms.

The problematic of what to believe and value surfaced once more: What was wrong? "Why should we allow this to happen?", as the lost generation (a term Sinologists use to refer to countless those who suffered for no good reason in
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this turbulent, tragic decade) have been obsessed with this painful question ever since. How was this Other’s modernity to be redefined? Or what was the ideal of this Other’s contemporary self?

A new ideal has been in the process of formation. The de-Maoist shift under Deng’s helmsmanship has institutionalized market measures which echo some spirit of the earlier strivings in their historical heritage (traced as far back in time as to the Self-Strengthening Movement, the Hundred Days of Reform and the "literary" New Culture Movement): namely, technical and scientific development, artistic autonomy, the proliferation of business enterprise, and a pragmatic orientation to social problematics -- save the absence of a drive for democratic restructuring. But if the state still wants to remain dictatorial, is this contemporary ideal internally in conflict within itself at the very start --, a kind of unhappy marriage, with major socio-cultural consequences for the years to come?

The Tiananmen Democracy Movement in 1989 is a warning lesson. Rising inflation, official corruption -- background discontent like this at the time alone could have triggered the mass protest; yet the main concern in the end resided in the demand for democratic restructuring visibly absent in the ossified mentality of the gerontocracy. Fang Lizhi, a then major spokesman of the movement (now in exile), summarized it well: modernization could not succeed without democratic development as well. (J.Wang 1992:234) The de-Maoist shift towards market measures has cultivated a culture which is increasingly as much scientific-technocratic as market-oriented: that is, material, pragmatic, critical in outlook, which has no ear for an orthodoxy as dogmatic and impractical as the Party’s Four Principles (socialist road, dictatorship of the proletariat, leadership of the Party vanguard, and Marxism-Leninism-Mao Thought). After all, if “to be rich is glorious”, as the slogan goes, who then cares for them? (A.Walder 1986:230-3; R.Terril 1992)

In the institutional sphere --, the release of market forces has weakened party control over work units, increased business/local linkage at the expense
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of state authority over locality in what Andrew Walder phrased as "local/state corporatism", encouraged migrant workers moving from one city to the next ("floating population"), proliferated civic associations (professional, mass-media, and factory) searching for what David Strand called "independent social identity", and created what Lowell Dittmer understood as "leadership cleavages" between conservative gerontocrats and younger, pragmatic leaders/intellectuals. (A. Walder 1993; J. Wang 1992:239-40) The modernizing process thus creates an increasingly complex socially differentiated structure familiar in all advanced societies. The problematic of social cleavage, Seymour Lipset argued, is essential for democratic restructuring. (S. Lipset 1968:104; M. Schwartz 1990:20; S. Eisenstadt 1966:3-4; R. Wallace 1986:67-132) The bloody crackdown by the military only shows the process of social differentiation as an on-going process to be further completed.

If Deng’s ideal of the new Other is to be eventually superseded by an ideal of a self which searches for a four-fold freedom, namely, (1) the freedom from ossified, dogmatic thinking (that is, a scientific spirit of enquiry), (2) the freedom from life harshness and from subservience to nature (that is, technocratic emancipatory power), (3) the freedom from Communist tyranny (that is, democratic restructuring), and (4) the freedom from artistic oppression (that is, aesthetic autonomy), --, what, then, is the future of a society and culture so constructed? The ideal of this Other’s modern self could not be more Westernized than what it already is, and many who fight for the cause are themselves either Western-educated or obsessed with Western values and ideals. Unlike the untimely "literary" new-youth moderns early in our century who had the misfortune to be criticized as un-Chinese for being too Westernized (V. Schwarz 1986:289), the new ideal is increasingly welcome in a rapidly changing time when Western superiority in its broadest sense is realistically acknowledged with a concurrent determination to enthusiastically emulate it. Besides, the institutionalized Marxism under Mao was already Western in origin and had already intensified the process of repudiating, in countless campaigns, the past as "feudalistic" and
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"imperialist", that is, as backward, oppressive, unprogressive, and degenerative to foreign exploitation -- to an extreme degree unknown in many other modern civilizations.

The history of the moderns in this continental East Asia, since its beginning in the second half of the century before, is an odyssey of a people who have gone a long way from the Self-Strengthening Movement and the Hundred Days of Reform through the May Fourth Movement and the Marxian experience to the state-market reform in our times and, with a little historical foresight, a more democratic, commoditized structuring -- all thanks, not without some resentment, to the hegemonic challenge as imposed by the rise of the Same (European modernity). This is a story of a bad learner who initially indulged in treating the Same qua Europeans as civilizedly below him but finally determined to be a good learner and to accept the imperative of an all-out emulation of this Same’s game of modernity for national wealth and power. After all, these Europeans were not just another deja-vu "barbarians": "The Orient’s contact with Europe shook nations to the foundations, calling into question the roots of their civilizations and all the assumptions and institutions on which their lives were based." (P. Harrison 1979:51)

But the game of modernity is not without its costs and delusions. The European experience with their ideal of the modern self since the capitalist Industrial Revolution and the French Revolution is a useful lesson here (as discussed before). Will this Other qua a late comer in relation to the modern Same suffer from the same lesson too? Or will late comers always have the good fortune to learn from first-comers’ costly errors -- some kind of a giant leap in the learning curve? Costly errors late comers could avoid without doubt, yet there is a good reason why one modern ill is not going to fade, I claim: that is, the emerging split of this Other’s free-spirited modernity as well, or, in the absence of a better term, of their soul-searching modernity (analogous to the Same’s free-spirited modernity), in its confrontation, again in the absence of a better term, with state-market modernity (likewise comparable to the Same’s
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capitalist modernity). The two are constructed here merely as ideal types for heuristically focusing on some aspects of an exceedingly complex phenomenon which would be unmanageable otherwise.

The term state-market refers to market reforms combined with state control in this post-Mao Other. State-market modernity, a product of the sweeping economic and social changes brought about by state-market industrial revolution (P.Link 1993:202) as it is, is thus a de-Maoist industrial revolution which brings into being private businessmen, profit-driven peasants, money-motivated workers, efficacy-pressured factory managers, mass-culture consumers, and utilitarian officials. It stresses the values of scientific and technological progress, of efficient and commoditized time, of entrepreneurial freedom, of the orientation towards pragmatism, and of the cult of "Being Rich Is Glorious" --, but subject to an active, paternalistic state control.

But this triumph of state-market modernity, while much vindicating the virtue of the four-fold freedom as aforeindicated, yet intensifies a spiritual crisis, in that its value embodiment is criticized by artistic-intellectual avant-gardes, righteous officials, and political dissidents as too philistine, and/or oppressive (though acknowledging its remarkable economic results). Why philistine? It is because of the current "thought vacuum". ("No one has faith in anything except making money") and widespread decadence of various forms (bad taste, crime, greed, deceit, prostitution, pornography, corruption, and waste).

And why oppressive? It is also because of political persecution and abuse, and social inequalities --, to a degree of unprecedented intensity after the demise of Marxism-Maoism and subsequent increasing exposure to Western liberal values and beliefs. Surely this contemporary malaise constitutes one more episode of this Other's civilizational discontent in its modern history, as occurred before in the May Fourth Movement, among others. (C.Furth 1972:50; V.Schwarcz 1986:107)

Thus the term soul-searching refers to their subsequent search for a new soul, for a new Chinese identity. And soul-searching modernity is thus split within itself, between those celebrating the brave new world of freedom in state-
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market modernity, and others rebelling against its decadent double, with incredibly diverse solutions ranging from democratic restructuring, artistic realism, reformation of folklores, nostalgic yearning for the "good old Maoist days", chronic political tightening, revival of ancient "isms", and nihilist consciousness to forced exile. (P.Link 1993:200; F.Ding 1992:450; S.Lawrence 1993:34) Surely, just as the Same’s free-spirited moderns, as a group, were distinctive in their different imagery, this Other’s soul-searching moderns have their own diversity of inspirations. Just as what united many of the former was their critique of modern, capitalist values, what unites many of the latter is equally their critique of modern, state-market values. And just as many of the former were often criticized as irreverent and nihilist, many of the latter are increasingly so likewise.

This inquiry is not untimely nor merely an academic exercise. In economic terms alone, market forces under Deng’s helmsmanship already release the gigantic power of the world’s demographic billionaire into what many economists now regard as the world’s second largest economy (even surpassing the Japanese). (Section 6.3) By the early decades of the coming century, the bad learner will end up learning the game so well as to become what William Rees-Mogg, former editor of The Times of London, called "the greatest economic power on earth" -- with enormous consequences for the global balance of power. (J.Leger 1994:49; The Economist 1994b; W.Overholt 1993; P.Kennedy 1987; The Economist 1994:4-5) And this becomes a hot topic (J.Leger 1994a:50) among such concerned scholars as James Abegglen’s Sea Change: Pacific Asia as the New World Industrial Center (1994), Robert Elegant’s Pacific Destiny: The Rise of the East (1990), and Russell Lewis’s "The Asians Are Coming" in Economic Affairs (April 1992).

In the heyday of Pax Americana, a half joke was that if America sneezed, other nations would suffer a cold. But when this late player of modernity as the Chinese comes to the scene playing the dominant role, it is exceedingly important to inquire what cold other nations will suffer when le nouveau super-pouvoir sneezes. Or less figuratively asked, will the new ideal of this Other’s modern
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self be immune from the problematics other modernities before have experienced? My answer, as should be obvious by now, is that whoever plays the game of modernity (and now postmodernity as well) will have to pay for both costs and delusions, just as much as the Europeans already had. This Other's modernity (and postmodernity in the distant future) have no more privilege to be exempt from the logic of modernity (and postmodernity, for that matter) than others before and after. Surely, in due time, it will contribute its distinctive features to the game, but in order to do so, it must first catch up at the level of playing the game which the Europeans and their descendants outside Europe have long dominated since their invention of it. Before then, the ideal of this modern Other is inevitably Western in origin. But this is only to repeat the essential point that the tale of the formidable bad learner becoming good constitutes at bottom one more chapter of the triumph of the hegemonic Same in modern human history.

By the time this Other successfully contributes some innovative features to the game, it will be more proper to call them post-modern, just as many advanced industrial societies in our times have already become post-modern. The coming post-modern era for the East Asians (perhaps not until late 21st century) will be, for the first time since their struggle with the encroachment of Western modernity, a historic revival of their former prominent status. They can then proudly say, "We are Chinese", meaning here something distinctively theirs and yet post-modern enough. But this won't happen until their successful encounter with the next challenge to come: the transition to post-modernity. (Will they, while still being transitional to a modern society, want to catch up with the Same which already starts entering into the post-modern age?)

The question concerning post-modernity, as a contemporary Western construct, and its meaning cannot be understood independently of the costs and delusions inherent in modernity as an epochal phenomenon in our times. If post-modernity is a response to the problematic of modernity, then how exactly is the problematic of modernity to be understood at the outset? I therefore need to examine what this problematic has been in the Same (and in this Other). Only then
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can the very notion of post-modernity (and the postmodern problematic, for that matter) be elucidated. Chapters 2-5 (as outlined in Sections 0.2, 1.2 & 1.3) are to deal with the problematics, both modern and now postmodern as well. When generalized to non-Sinitic, non-Western civilizations as well (as will be analysed in Chapter 6), within a context of a planetary civilization in the making, though with certain historical delimitations --, the logical consequence of modernity and now its postmodern successor, when carried to its conclusion, will yield a posthuman consciousness at some point after postmodernity. It will be the consciousness that humans are nothing in the end, to be superseded by posthumans at some point after postmodernity (as will be addressed in the final chapter, "A Final Thought").

Let me begin in Chapter Two with an examination of the problematic of technological emancipatory power in a consumeristic lifeworld, as part of the Western ideal of the modern self.
Chapter 2. The Consumeristic & Technophilic Lifeform, & Its Price

Technology is gradually displacing the ORGANIC in favor of the CYBERNETIC and the SYMBOLIC with the IMAGINARY, producing a fragmentation of the self that is compensated in the intensification of pornographic and painful pleasures.

-- Celeste Olalquiaga (1992:1)

All amusement [in mass culture] suffers from this incurable malady, because, if it is to remain pleasure, it must not demand any effort.

-- Theodore Adorno & Max Horkheimer (1947:137)

No independent thinking must be expected from the audience. Will power and the ability to concentrate are not their strong point; what they prefer is sensual pleasures.

-- Jennifer Todd (1989:105)

Most people would sooner die than think; in fact, they do so.

-- Bertrand Russell (M.Caudill 1992:105)

By the early decades of the present century, there had emerged in the U.S. an entertainment industry that would eventually prove to be all-pervasive and ever more given to decking out our base impulses with sweaty and imaginative detail....The result was a pop culture more pointed and grown up, but also more shameless and adolescent.


Science and technology are sustained by their translation into power and control....Technological inevitability can thus be seen to be a mere element of a much larger syndrome. Science promised man power. But, as so often happens when people are seduced by promises of power, the price exacted in advance and all along the path, and the price actually paid, is servitude and impotence.
This chapter examines the first element in the bitter struggle within free-spirited modernity, that is, in special relation to the Everyday and the Technological, and how this has been spreading to the Others through hegemonic modernity.

I first argue, after an introduction to the rise of the consumeristic and technophilic culture in Section 2.1, that the modern lifeform in its average everydayness is (1) comfortable yet banal (in relation to consumeristic culture), in Section 2.2, and (2) affluent yet costly (in relation to technophilic culture), in Section 2.3.

(1) The rationale of the first argument of comfortableness and yet banality in consumeristic culture is based on a five-fold ambivalence in the cognitive and appreciative realms of modern humans: that is, in a consumeristic culture which is (a) highly tolerant yet equally inane, (b) highly entertaining yet equally trivial, (c) highly imaginative yet equally psychotic, (d) highly educational yet equally misinformational, and (e) highly liberating yet equally decadent.

And (2) the rationale of the second argument of affluence and yet costliness in technophilic culture is made in relation to practical and psychical concerns, in that (a) technological emancipatory power is as much productive as destructive and (b) it is as much creative of new possibilities as equally destabilizing to the human psyche. This psychic destabilization in (b) contributes to a fragmentation of the modern self by blurring the two-fold distinction, that is, (i) between the symbolic and the imaginary, and (ii) between the organic and the mechanical --, with profound implications for the emergence of a posthuman consciousness at some point after postmodernity (as will be discussed in Chapter Seven).

I then evaluate, secondly, in Section 2.4, what the postmoderns have suggested as a solution to this modern malaise of costliness (in technophilic culture), or to this dead ideal of technological emancipatory power for practical everydayness -- and conclude that the postmodern solution is as much naive as
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problematic as the modern one which it supposedly superseded. The reason is
four-fold, in that none of the four possible solutions within the postmodern
disposal can resolve the modern problematic of costliness, namely, (i) melancholic
technological pessimism, (ii) resolute technological optimism, (iii) nostalgic
Arcadianism, and (iv) ecology-conscious late capitalism (insofar as the very
capitalist legacy of modernity remains in force and the politics of dissensus in
postindustrial society reigns supreme).

And in relation to the modern malaise of banality in consumeristic culture,
the postmodern appeal to a psyche-satisfying lifeform is equally unpromising. As
will be clearer in Chapter Three, the banality process will be even more intense
in post-consumeristic culture.

Even more seriously, this price of modern life in the form of banality in
consumeristic culture and of costliness in technophilic culture has been
spreading to the Others as well (which is discussed in Section 2.5, in the case
of the contemporary Sinitic Other).

2.1 Freedom from Life Harshness, and The Consumeristic,
Technophilic Lifeform

Life expectancy of the ancients and the medievals was low, indeed. Even
by the 18th century, it was only slightly above 40 years in Europe (A.Toffler
1980:110) and increased to about 45 years in Japan by 1900 ---, in contrast to
76 years in America of our time (J.Skow 1995:69) To be able to live past one’s
sixtieth birthday was something extraordinary to experience. It was still not
uncommon, as recently as in 18th century Europe, to have seven out of ten
children died in childhood, and men often married twice or thrice (since women

\textsuperscript{12} From a televised program on economic development asroadcasted on Channel 35 (04/01/95).
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not uncommonly died in childbirth) --, neither was it common for married couples
to have long years together.(D.Landes 1994;A.Toffler 1980:110)

War, natural catastrophe, epidemic, and famine, as much in the open
countryside as in noxious towns -- made life quite harsh for the ancients and
medievals (mostly to be sure for the vast masses, since those in upper social
strata could, if not always, escape to safer places when needed). This harshness
of life, Sigmend Freud observed, was an important contributive factor to the
formation of religious and superstitious beliefs.(S.Freud 1966a:16 &
1966b;P.Ricoeur 1970:250) Sometimes it could even diminish the pre-modern folks
by one-third to one-half, as the devastating impact on European demography by the
"black death" in the 14th century was a classic tale -- though not without some
positive consequences as well (higher wages for peasants and artisans). Thomas
Malthus in An Essay on the Principle of Population (1798) was not without good
reason to therefore treat such occurrences (as famine, war, and ill health) as
a natural check to population growth.(E.B.1993:746) Yet he thus notoriously made
economics a "dismay science" in claiming that population, often growing in a
geometric progression, will always tend to outrun the arithmetical growth of
production.

The Malthusian pessimism was not warranted later in modern times, however.
Some critics, known as the "demographic transition" theorists, in correcting for
other factors on population patterns, reduce demographic change into three
phases.(P.Gray 1970;M.Drake 1969) The first phase describes a typical agrarian,
peasant society with high death rate (due as much to fluctuations in crop
seasons, epidemics and famine as to poor sanitation, bad diets and nutrition, and
limited preventive medical care) and high birth rate (due to the practice of
having larger numbers of children and the traditional role of women to bear
children). The second phase is characterized by lower death rate (due to better
preventive and curative medical care and improved sanitary practices), while
birth rate remains high. And the last phase attributes to a state where birth
rate falls within the level of the already low death rate, due to higher social
mobility, late marriages, and women’s entry to the labour force, all of which render the option of having a large family unattractive.

Modern European experience fits in the patterns well. By the 19th century, a substantial improvement of material life, thanks to the scientific and industrial revolutions, was already quite noticeable. Advance in health hygiene (even for such trifles as washing hands after release of bodily waste, wearing cotton underwear, and using better sewerage) and improvement in material life lowered death rate. While birth rate lagged for a while and led to demographic increase (still below 2% per annum) before dropping to an all-time low --, the opportunity of immigration to the New World, to southern Africa, and Australasia, on the one hand, and the increased supply of food available from overseas colonies and Eastern Europe, Russia, and Ukraine (after the overthrow of the Turks), late marriage patterns and fewer children (6.1 in 1860’s to 4.1 in 1890’s) on the other hand, successfully curbed the Malthusian cycle of poverty. Once the agricultural needs were met, the Europeans could concentrate even more fully in industrial development -- which unleashed further real productivity gains.

The acceleration of real productivity gains (the technological residual) was made possible by a capitalist-driven industrial revolution (Sections 1.2 & 1.3) which, even Karl Marx acknowledged, created unprecedented wealth and power never seen in any previous historical epoch. Critical to the capitalist exploitative source of surplus value though he was, Marx was still a child of the Enlightenment and had strong faith in the emancipatory power of scientific and technological advance. In his discussion of the English colonialization of India, Marx did not fail to mention the destructive but liberating effect of the English conquest on the Asiatic mode of production in the "semi-barbarian, semi-civilized" "Oriental despotism" (K.Marx 1968:88,126) --, and the same logic was applied to the victories of the French over Algeria and the Americans over Mexico in his times.

Technical revolutions are not, however, without historical precedents. The
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Neolithic Revolution, for instance, provided a transition from hunting and gathering preoccupations to those skewed towards agriculture and animal husbandry (though taking roughly a millennium to accomplish, in 4000-3000 B.C.) -- just as much as the Medieval Revolution encouraged widespread adoption of inanimate energy (water and wind power especially), or what Lewis Mumford called "the eotechnic" phase (W.Kuhns 1971:6) in technological history. (J.Gimpel 1976:1-28; D.Landes 1994) And even after the Industrial Revolution (or "the paleotechnic" phase in Mumford's terminology), continuous major gains in real productivity led some economists to suggest the Second Industrial Revolution as in the 1920's and 1930's (with due credit to the application of electricity, liquid gas, gasoline, and internal combustion engines for locomotives and airplanes), or "the neotechnic" phase, as Mumford put it, and then the Third Industrial Revolution later (most especially through the breakthroughs in electronics and communication, as in the invention of circuits, transitors, and computers). (D.Landes 1965:99)

Real productivity gains mean increased output per man-hour, which implies a similar trend in real income and leisure per capita. (R.Easterlin 1968:399) The impact on general living level has been, firstly, an unprecedented improvement in consumption (food, clothing, shelter, household furnitures, health, education, and recreational services) to the extent that the type of poverty and malnutrition known to the pre-moderns were largely eliminated, secondly, a decline in the proportion of consumption expenditure devoted to food, and lastly, a rise in the proportionate significance of new or modern goods (radio, TV, automobile, washing machine, or simply put, the bourgeois way of life associated with it).

It is all the more noticeable when industrial societies reach what Walt Rostow, in his influential The Stages of Economic Growth: A Non-Communist Manifesto (1965:ch.2), called "the age of high mass consumption" -- after evolving from four such previous stages as "the traditional society", "the preconditions for take-off", "the take-off" (the Industrial Revolution), and "the
Chapter 2. The Consumeristic & Technophilic Lifeform, & Its Price drive to maturity*. It is with good reason, therefore, for the world-renowned British economist, John Keynes (1919), to marvel over the enormous material output made possible under the capitalist industrial machine absolutely beyond the imagination nor reach of the most wealthy and powerful monarchs in all human histories hitherto existing and thus suggest that "the economic problem may be solved" and that "the economic problem is not the permanent problem of the human race" -- the Great Depression notwithstanding. (E.B.1994a:283)

The age of high mass consumption, characterized by the national pursuit of external power and influence and the expansion of the welfare state (W.Rostow 1965:73) as it is, also increases consumption beyond subsistence level --, as much for better food, shelter, and clothing as for the whole range of mass consumption of durable consumers’ goods and services. (W. Rostow 1965:74) The United States, Rostow claimed, was the first industrial society to reach the age of high mass consumption, dated as it was by the early 1920’s (though with the Great Depression some years later as "a perfectly normal cyclical downturn"). (W. Rostow 1965:78) With a time span of less than 40 years, other nations followed suit --, Canada, Britain, Australia, Sweden, France, Germany, Japan, and Russia. (W. Rostow 1965:Chart) And by the late 1950’s, American society was already "affluent" by modern standards. (W. Rostow 1965:81) But Rostow’s work did not fail stirring some controversies: were the empirical data he used accurate, for instance? (D. Landes 1993:138-9) How about the dates assigned to individual countries in respect to the stages each had passed through? Or could some countries bypass some stages instead?

Yet the very phenomenon of affluence in advanced industrial societies is important to the history of the Western ideal of the modern self. The early moderns often dreamt of a new era when the freedom from want, from poverty, or from brutal natural forces could be realized. Francis Bacon, for instance, had in his desiderata for the coming utopia such wishes as the prolongation of life, the curing of incurable diseases, the mitigation of pain, the discovery of new sources of food, and the enhancement of the pleasures of the senses. (K. Thomas
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And Marx (1915:v.3,954-5) argued in Capital that "the realm of freedom does not commence until the point is passed where labour under the compulsion of necessity and external utility is required." And "beyond it begins that development of human power, which is its own end, the true realm of freedom."

Modern affluent societies, in their general allowance for consumption and leisure, fulfil more than what Bacon had hoped for in the list and so close to Marx's realm of freedom. Yet a mass-consumption economy is inherently highly problematic -- something neither Bacon nor Marx had lived to experience. But why?
The lifestyle as inherent in a mass-consumption economy is consumeristic, in commercializing whatsoever that be in the market -- labour, ideas, art, soul, or else -- for greater attachment to materialist possessions, as the term 'consumeristic' implies. A consumeristic lifestyle is therefore consumption-driven -- a lifeworld of "conspicuous consumption" (Thorstein Velben), of "petits et vulgaires plaisirs" (Alexis de Tocqueville), of "pitiable comfort" (Friedrich Nietzsche), of "mass culture" (Theodore Adorno, Max Horkheimer, Erich Fromm, Herbert Marcuse), of "fetishism of commodity" (Karl Marx), or of "sensate culture" (Pitirim Sorokin). (Taylor 1992 4; M. Calinescu 1987:226-41; T. Lears 1982:28)

The consumeristic culture accepts no political boundary, though its intensity is certainly much higher in a capitalist context. "The Western purchasing agent", Allan Toffler (1984:34) argues, "who pockets an illegal commision is not so different from the Soviet editor who takes kickbacks from authors in return for approving their works for publication, or the plumber who demands a bottle of vodka to do what he is paid to do." This consumeristic spirit is intensified all the more in a capitalist-driven industrial society, which does no constraint to the spread of a consequent consumerism which shapes the thoughts, values, and actions of its members. (A. Toffler 1980:269-71) The higher the industrial process is in its progression, the more institutionalized a sense of what Daniel Bell (1976:23) calls "unrestricted appetite" comes into existence.

An obsession with money, with compulsive buying ("More is Better"), or
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with what Thorstein Veblen understood as "pecuniary consumption" ("Keeping Up with the Joneses") helps to create a lifestyle which is comfortable, by modern standards -- or amazingly comfortable, by ancient ones. (J.Tomlinson 1991:22,62-3)

Never before in human history can a household afford to consume such a stunning amount of goods and services as in modern affluent societies, which, after all, with roughly 12.7% of the human species (Project-2025 1991:7) consume more than three quarters of the global use of resources and products per annum. (M.Todaro 1981) In one estimate by London Sunday Times (Aug. 20,1978), one American baby consumes 50-plus times more of the world's resources than an Indian counterpart (P.Bauer 1981:82), or as Matthew Connelly and Paul Kennedy (1994:79) recently put it, "the average American or European baby will consume in its lifetime hundreds of times as many resources as the average Chadian or Haitian baby."

On the one hand, such Marxist writers as Rosa Luxembour (1968), Vladimir Lenin (1939) and Nikolai Bukharin (1966) and such dependency theorists as Immanuel Wallerstein (1974) and Andre Frank (1972) tend to blame MNC's for their exploitative operations in the non-West which helps to sustain mostly the level of affluence in advanced industrial states (J.Tomlinson 1991:115) at the natives' own expense -- cheap labour, raw materials, the enforceability of favourable terms of trade, job opportunities, and new lands suitable for exploitation or settlement. (H.Daadler 1968:102) "The soup you are eating was made possible by the blood and sweat of those women and children working at $0.50 per pour in the Third World", so the story goes. (G.Viksnins 1987)

On the other hand, such culture industry thinkers as Herbert Marcuse (1964), Theodore Adorno (1950), Erich Fromm (1961), and Max Horkheimer (1947) focus instead on the media as the crux of modern material culture: that advertisement seduction helps creating demand for gluts which by themselves could not be get rid of otherwise -- a kind of partial vindication, so it seems, of the much rejected Say's Law (W.Barber 1967;J.Bell 1967) that supply creates its own demand (remember the Great Depression?).

But this politics of blaming helps no human cause. After all, is it rather
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dadinalistic to assume that consumers do not know what is good for them? Or are there internal socio-cultural obstacles in the Others which make modernization processes so much harder to achieve? The persistent institution of caste politics, especially for those "born in chains", has long retarded Indian economic growth. (H.McDonald 1994:24-28; H.McDonald 1994a:32) And in "Africa as elsewhere in the Third World", Paul Bauer (1981:70) reminds us, "the most prosperous areas are those with most commercial contacts with the West": "The cash-crop producing areas and entrepot ports of South-East Asia, West Africa and Latin America; the mineral-producing areas of Africa and the Middle East; and cities and ports throughout Asia, Africa, the Caribbean and Latin America."

In any event, this dominant positioning of an indust-reality along the consumeristic line cannot be ignored within a modern social order of collective existence. This comfortable lifestyle constitutes a shift from otherworldliness to thisworldliness, from a concern with salvation in the suprasensible realm to a devotion to life betterment in the phenomenal one, from a faith in magical power to one in scientific/technological emancipation, and from a collectivist-moral solidarity to an more individual-oriented minimal self. The translation of Nietzsche’s "God Is Dead" in the level of practical life, of the daily life of the masses can best be understood in terms of this consumeristic mindset devoid of any ideal of otherworldliness.

What then is the problematic of this consumeristic mindset within a technophilic context? It celebrates (1)a consumeristic culture which is though comfortable, yet banal, and (2)a technophilic culture which is though affluent, yet costly. But why? Section 2.2 is to address the issue in (1) --, while Section 2.3, the issue in (2).

2.2 Comfort in Consumeristic Culture, & the Problematic of Banality

Life comfort is a seduction many find it hard to resist. Yet to suggest
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that it is banal certainly invites incomprehension among many.

To be sure, the consumeristic lifeform, as exemplified in affluent, advanced industrial societies, does not just free the moderns (if not with a qualification in regard to the homeless and the abject poor) from the shackles of poverty and subsistence as in the life harshness of the ancients/medievals -- but more, liberate their cognitive and appreciative capacities (E.Shils 1961:3), from what Karl Marx called "the idiocy of rural life." (E.B.1994a:285) An openness to new experience, an efflorescence of new sensation and sensibility, a sensitivity to new possibilities of things -- in brief, a freedom of choice within a universe of commodity and service diversity allows the moderns to think and experience (J.Tomlinson 1991:151;P.Berger 1994) in a way irreversibly breaking with whatever the dominance of the past still remains. The individualist self triumphs in a consumeristic culture which accepts no legitimacy of what has been as what should of right be -- not less critical towards the past than John Locke during the Enlightenment was. Yet with what price?

The expansion of individual cognitive and appreciative capacities, though with a price, is most marked in five ways.

1) Highly Tolerant Yet Equally Inane. Firstly, the consumeristic culture is highly tolerant, yet equally inane in taste.

The increasing complexity of professional specialization in advanced industrial societies helps to construct what many social theorists call a social-differentiated structure which is most skewed towards the institutionalization of individual diversity -- unlike the oppressive dominance of a collective identity in what Emile Durkheim called the mechanic solidarity of the ancients/medievals. (A.Giddens 1985:72-81) And the capitalist orientation towards a competitive, practical self pushes that tolerance of individuality into an extremity.

The variety of choices facing a modern consumer is a luxurious privilege so much often taken for granted. (S.Hyman 1961:131) Never before in human history has a freedom of choice been so extensive. As Jean Lyotard nicely puts it, "One
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listens to reggae, watches a western, eats McDonald's food for lunch and local
cuisine for dinner, wears Paris perfume in Tokyo and 'retro' clothes in Hong
Kong."(1986:76) And Herbert Gans (1974:76-105), for another, provides a
classificatory scheme of high, upper-middle, lower-middle, low, quasi-folk, and
other cultures, which include, for instance, avant-garde products for the art
elite, professional/academic nonfiction for the upper-middle social group,
dramatic fiction for the lower-middle stratum, tabloid dailies and weeklies for
the lower class, graffiti/trash literature for the poor folks, and others for
various subcultures (ethnic, religious, regional, and youth).

Surely, this depiction is not unsimplistic, nor are the categories mutually
exclusive. Neither is it the only classificatory scheme there is, if one is aware
of alternative ones as suggested by Edward Shils (refined, mediocre, and brutal
cultures), by Van Wyck Brook (highbrow, middlebrow, and lowbrow cultures), by
N. Glazer (serious work, vulgarized serious work, mediocre work, and bad stuff),
by Dana Polan (simple and complex cultures), and by Ian Angus and Sut Jhally
(high, popular, and mass cultures).(E. Shils 1961:5; P. Lazarsfeld
thus merely illustrative.

By contrast, in the pre-modern epoch, it was not uncommon for the
aristocrats and the ecclesiastics to have their "high culture" flourished at the
expense of the majority of the masses in ignorance and indignity. Gans's blunt
portrayal of brutal cultural poverty of the masses in pre-modern times is worth
repeating: "a romantic picture of a happy peasantry creating and enjoying folk
culture...underemphasize[s] that many peasants lived under subhuman conditions,
exploited by feudal landlords and merchants and enduring hunger, pestilence, and
random violence as an everyday occurrence...Bearbaiting, visits to the lunatic
asylum to taunt the mentally ill, attendance at public executions and widespread
drunkenness were staple items in the folk culture." Leo Rosten (1961:82)
therefore confessed, "I, for one, do not lament" the passing of that era of the
past. So did Gilbert Seldes concur, "I should rather have Charlie Chaplin than
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Marcel Proust" (N.Jacobs 1961:179) Why not, dear Gilbert? "Chaplin has contributed more to the happiness of the world than a neurotic, terribly concerned with himself, reporting on a society which I hope to God will pass."

The tolerant nature of consumeristic culture makes it possible even for, say, an artist, however marginal and irrelevant, to find some market of his niche, without being maltreated and almost never starved (H.Hughes 1961:146-7) still without the religious tracts and paternalistic pedagogical trash of the pre-modern days. (L.Lowenthal 1961:33)

Yet this toleration is not without its darker side. Since the market is so vast (numbered in the millions) -- all the peculiarities of tastes and attitudes belonging to different social strata must be simultaneously minimized to reach an abstract least common denominator, something which mass media have done best to achieve (O.Handlin 1961:68) in their standardizing imagery. Millions hear the same news, read the same short stories, watch the same advertisements, speak the same "standard" language (English, French, Chinese, or else), and live in different parts of the country with the same gas stations, billboards, houses, or else. (A.Toffler 1980:41)

The result is a consumeristic culture which is, though highly tolerant, yet equally inane in taste. The leveling-down effect of equality on politics in modern times extends as well to culture, as Alexis de Tocqueville keenly observed the century before, as it is "made most manifest in the legitimacy of mass choice and the supremacy of mass taste." (J.Combs 1988:60) It succumbs to a mass nature of this abstract least common denominator: an invitation to inane taste, the taste of what critical theorists called "the mass culture industry." (A.Schlesinger 1961:149) For instance, an exhibition of painting or sculpture, James Sweeney (1961:94) argued, in a language familiar to the public and by an artist well known to it will draw more crowds than otherwise -- irrespective of its quality. And the Levitt brothers, back in the 1949, bought a 1,000-acre potato farm, named it Levittown, and built more than 6,000 lookalike homes (at a rate of 150 per week): "When Levitt put up a for sale sign, the crowd got so big that police had
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to keep them in line." (Time 1994:23)

(2) Highly Entertaining Yet Equally Trivial. Secondly, the consumeristic
culture is highly entertaining, yet equally trivial.

The need for escapism -- romance, sex, sports, violence, melodrama -- in
an otherwise imperfect world spoilt by certain toil and stress is best met by a
media industry which specializes, and uses up-to-date technological advance, in
sound track and special effect totally outside the imagination of the ancients.
Movies like Jurassic Park and Total Recall are excellent cases of what special
effect and sound track could do to entertain: creating a techno-fantasia in which
virtual reality competes with actual one (computer graphic simulation, also with
artificial life-size construction, of extinct species and techno-travel of other
selves) and where sound and material synchronize, sound clues reduce the need of
contemplation, and sound advance facilitates the recognition of key characters
before the appearance of emcee --, just as much as the minimal discursive
presence encourages a dependable and continuous level of imagery
attention. (R. Altman 1986:42-50) Besides sound track and special effect in techno-
reality, highly organized social rituals and relaxing occasions are used to
release or, better, to replace libidinal and aggressive energy -- as in sports
(racing, speeding, boxing, baseball, basketball, or else) and in other recreating
media (hard rock music, sexually exploited movies, and sexual virtual reality on

Yet, the narcotic effect of techno-fantasia and instinctual replacement --
in relaxing the tired mind, tranquilizing the anxious and gratifying the
instinctual -- helps "to blunt the discriminating powers of the mind"
(L. Lowenthal 1961:34) and keeps taste within the boundary of sensual playfulness
as opposed to that of serious cultivation. The 'trivial' so understood should not
be conflated with the 'inane' as discussed before, though the two can often go
together. A trash fiction may be trivial, but need not be inane insofar as it
clings to a small cultural subgroup, as much with its distinct slogans as with
its parochical concerns, as much with its secret codes as with its peculiar signs
Chapter 2. The Consumeristic & Technophilic Lifeform, & Its Price --, as in some graffiti by gang members. Conversely, an inane work (as in some kitschified mass-reproduction of Picasso's masterpieces) need not be trivial insofar as it requires serious contemplative effort for appreciation. (Chapter 4)

That qualified --, the heroes of the day in a consumeristic culture fall into such categories as detectives, criminals, gangsters, "double crossers", hypocrites, prostitutes, mistresses, the insane, clowns, street urchins, adventurers, "glamour girls", paupers, "cave men", superman, terminator, and all the rest. (P. Sorokin 1956: 63-5) And the narcotic addiction becomes more intense -- to the point of what Fredric Jameson calls "the waning of affect", that is, its dependency on a cultural overdose of intense emotions (as in cops-and-robbers TV series, catastrophe films, and the growing trend towards the extremitization of events with a high degree of emotionality), which not only undermines the discriminating power of the mind but equally its emotional empathy. (C. Olalquiaga 1992: 23)

"All amusement suffers from this incurable malady", Theodore Adorno and Max Horkheimer explained in The Dialectics of Enlightenment (M. Horkheimer 1947: 137), "because, if it is to remain pleasure, it must not demand any effort." "No independent thinking must be expected from the audience," Jennifer Todd (1989: 105) thus rejoins, "Will power and the ability to concentrate are not their strong point; what they prefer is sensual pleasures." Or in Lewis Mumford's parlance, they "eat, drink, marry, bear children and go to their graves in a state that is at best hilarious anesthesia, and at its worst is anxiety, fear, and envy," "because of their lack of experience that life has any other meanings or values or possibilities." (C. Lasch 1991: 80)

Larry Sabato, University of Virginia professor in media studies, cannot be more blunt in saying, in reaction to the much publicized trial of O.J. Simpson, that "[g]iving so much attention to O.J. was not the news executives' choice, the public demanded it. Given a choice between junk food and a well-balanced meal, a sizable portion of the public will choose junk food all the time." (P. Canellos
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This junk-food metaphor applies as well to the celebrity attention to the dramas of, say, Woody Allen’s custody battle and Michael Jackson’s molestation charge. And Robert Haiman, president of the Poynter Institute, a journalism think tank, has this to add: "It is difficult to make an argument for trivialization. This country is facing enormously difficult and complicated problems. It will be impossible to resolve them if all everyone wants to talk about is what they saw on Oprah. There’s a certain dumbing down that makes it difficult to deal with serious problems." (P. Canellos 1995:10)

But who is speaking on behalf of whom here? Maybe the sad truth on the fate of the majority of humans is, in Leo Rosten’s parlance (1961:72), "that relatively few people in any society, not excluding Periclean Athens, have reasonably good taste or care deeply about ideas. Fewer still seem equipped -- by temperament and capacity, rather than education -- to handle ideas with both skill and pleasure." So did Cicero likewise speak of the Romans of his times: "In the common people there is no wisdom, no penetration, no power of judgement." (A. Lupia 1995:2) Or as Noam Chomsky puts it, only 20% of humans really

13. Frederic M. Biddle, Globe television critic, took the trouble of classifying five different types of "trash" TV programs, in the order of increasing tastelessness (with names in parenthesis as talk shows hosts), as shown below (The Boston Globe 1995a:39):

(1) the relatively trivial.
   Typical topics: expert post-acquittal of O. J. coverage (Oprah Winfrey), divorced celebrity couple desperately seeking a talk identity (George and Alana), and a black family being passed for white (Oprah Winfrey).

(2) the titilatingly tasteless.
   Typical topics: "Girlfriend, you’re a hag in drag" (Charles Perez), "My sister’s after my man!" (Gordon Elliott), breast augmentation with live and graphic footage (Gabrielle), shirtless Halloween hunks bobbing for apples and secret admirers (Tempestt), and "I love a man in uniform" (Rolonda).

(3) the sadistic and sociopathic.
   Typical topics: "I’m a drag queen" (Carnie), "Leatherman loves triangle" (Jerry Springer), "Let me televise an execution" (Donahue).

(4) the hair-raising, if not head-spinning.
   Typical topics: "Mom, if you like my ex so much, you can have him" (Mark Walberg), female con artists (Montel Williams), wife-beaters and victims (Maury Povich).

(5) the worst of all (which makes one curse the invention of TV).
   Typical topics: Beautiful lesbian singing lullaby to win back her lover who jilted her for male reprobate neighbor (Sally Jessy Raphael), battered teen hooker fleeing pimp (Geraldo), infidelity-inspired catfights completed with sound effects (Richard Bey), and "My ex is a porn star" (Jenny Jones).
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think, and the rest just follow --, likewise did Arnold Toynbee distinguish between two levels of humankind, the "creative minority" and the "uncreative majority," one to create and lead, the other to accept and follow, in their profound mutual interactions in shaping human history. (R. Seidenberg 1951:201) And David Hume could not agree more, "A great proportion of the human race has hardly any intellectual qualities." (E. Regis 1990:264) It is no wonder, consequently, that refined, sophisticated culture never enjoys a large number of consumers, as Edward Shils (1961:9) thus reminded us, "in premodern societies, it was even smaller." Should this be true, the taste of the modern mass public would be no worse than what it was in pre-modern times. (L. Rosten 1961:78)

Yet this is not to deny the problematic of the trivial as so delineated.

(3) Highly Imaginative Yet Equally Psychotic. Thirdly, the consumeristic culture is highly imaginative, yet equally psychotic.

The 'entertaining' feature as discussed before should not be confused with the 'imaginative.' A comic show may be most entertaining and yet not stimulate aesthetic imagery as exemplified in abstract art. Yet many entertaining shows appeal to what James Combs (1988:63-7) call the play of "simulation": the exploration of fantasy to relate self and world, as in mass culture, to the point that "fantasy supersedes reality because we prefer fantasy." The advertisement industry, similarly, tries hard to blur essential and illusory differences in seducing the masses into believing that differences, say, in packaging indicate differences in substance and thereby glamorizing style over the real content (B. Gendron 1986:21) -- or, for that matter, through other means. Modern urban culture becomes what Emile Durkheim spoke of as "the uncontested homes of progress" for "ideas, fashions, customs, new needs" (E. B. 1994a:285) spreading over the rest of a country.

Yet the problem of this all is a pseudorealism which oversimplifies, exaggerates, and retreats into imaginative addiction detrimental to the ability
Chapter 2. The Consumeristic & Technophilic Lifeform, & Its Price to cope with reality. (H. Gans 1974:31,146) A child\footnote{This happened when the movie "Superman" was shown in the states.} who wants to imitate the superhuman feat of flying in the sky after watching a superman movie by jumping from the top of a building and thereby kills himself is not less tragic than a man\footnote{From a Jerry Springer's Show broadcasted in the week of November 14th, 1994 on Channel 29.} who indulges himself in pornographic movies and therefore has difficulty to develop a genuine relation with the woman he loves (as both did happen in America) -- or not less problematic than many Trekkies (the fans of the popular science fiction TV series Star Trek) who acquire over time what is now known as the Trekkie's Symptoms (dreaming about characters, arguing about plots, spending large sums of money on memorabilia, and getting cranky when cut off of the TV shows).\footnote{From Headline News on Channel 14 in the states (Thursday, 12/21/95).} A consumeristic culture thus produces what Jean Baudrillard calls the order of simulacra: the dissolution of life into fantasy, and of fantasy into life. (B. Smart 1992:123-7)

This transformation of reality into imagery, into fantasy -- and vice versa, was made possible by the emergence of what Fredric Jameson (1983:114,372-3) calls the phenomenon of pastiche (blank parody) which contributes to the blurring of the boundary between what is authentic and what is in fact imaginary in an immensely fragmented and privatized modern literature -- that is, into the realm of the psychotic, into a fragmentary consciousness where discordant pieces of information and stimuli are imaginatively brought together, without however adding up to anything, other than their being torn apart from their original distinct spatial-historical contexts into something new, often mixed with both fictional and real entities, as in the movie Forrest Gump (C. Strauss 1995:6-7), thereby exemplifying a most potent exploitation of what is known in media studies as the Kuleshov effect (that is, the distortion of original contexts for mass media purposes). (H. Jenkins 1995)

Late capitalism thus helps to produce a psychic result known by Jameson as
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"postmodern schizo-fragmentation," a kind of false consciousness in late capitalism: "If the ideas of a ruling class were once the dominant (or hegemonic) ideology of bourgeois society, the advanced capitalist countries today are now a field of stylistic and discursive heterogeneity without a norm." (F. Jameson 1984:65) This psychic result becomes an addiction itself, when the need for mere stimulation becomes more and more intense, to the point that, as in a didactic story told by Waldo Frank in The Rediscovery of America (C. Lasch 1991:520-1) about a child's appetite for new toys, "toys become more frequent, value is gradually transferred from the toy to the toy's novelty....The arrival of the toy, not the toy itself, becomes the event."

(4) Highly Educational Yet Equally Misinformational. Fourthly, the consumeristic culture is highly educational, yet equally misinformational.

News broadcasting, documentary reviews, geographic exploration, education programs, and ceremonial rituals (J. Combs 1988:65) serve an informative function -- of dissemination of knowledge concerning peoples, cultures, and events in different places and times (F. Stanton 1961:89) -- to the human majority which was denied to them in the pre-modern past. It is extraordinary to have a 24-hours news channel like CNN which offers to the public so much information of local and world events, in such detail, for so little, as never before possible in human history. (L. Rosten 1961:75) Thus, the improvement in communications in a consumeristic culture has the beneficial effect of breaking down "local isolation" and disseminating "sophisticated opinion." (K. Thomas 1971:651) "One of the benefits of the greater quantity and speed of information transfers made possible by new communication technologies," Claudia Strauss (1995:46) rightly observes, "is that it is becoming easier for average citizens to gain access to official information and to disseminate alternative points of view."

Yet they are also the source of misinformation: an obsession with consumerism, a perpetuating stereotyping of the others in subordinate terms (women, minorities, the poor, and foreigners), a reification of capitalist expansion as natural and morally justifiable, and a confirmation of indust-
Chapter 2. The Consumeristic & Technophilic Lifeform, & Its Price reality as progressive. (J. Tomlinson 1991:22,62-3) Take the case of public opinion about oil issue. How is information about the oil companies to be presented by mass media while oil representatives sit on the boards of all the powerful news media in America? (S. Jhally 1989:69) Or, how will the SDI debate be structured on NBC, which is owned and operated, through the ownership of RCA, by General Electric, a major defense contractor for the U.S. government? Do people still remember President Eisenhower's warning of the dominance of the military-industrial complex?

The misinformational effect are often produced through three major means. Firstly, it can be achieved through direct monitoring. From Washington to Moscow, Han Haacke (1984:65) reminds us, "it is recognized in both capitals that not only the mass media deserve monitoring, but also those activities which are normally relegated to special sections at the back of newspapers." Why? Because the consciousness industry always has social and political consequences in whatever they produce. In Nazi Germany, for instance, "the radio becomes the universal mouthpiece of the Fuhrer; his voice rises from street loud-speakers to resemble the howling of sirens announcing panic -- from which modern propaganda can scarcely be distinguished anyway." (M. Horkheimer 1947:159) In both Soviet Russia and Red China, the same manipulation of mass media for ideological indoctrination is equally systematic. "Obedience to the Law is Freedom", so the totalitarian slogan goes. And the advance of virtual-real technology in our time points to "a boundless capacity for deception," Alvin Toffler warns us, not solely by governments or corporations, but by hostile individuals acting on each other. (C. Dreifus 1995:48)

Secondly, it can be achieved through self-censorship. (Section 4.3) "It's not an inherent, insidious, hidden form of censorship", Philippe de Montebello, the director of the Metropolitan Museum, once confessed, "we're censoring ourselves." (H. Haacke 1984:71) Or it can be done through normative internalization. After all, one need not be a conspiracy theorist (as in the debate concerning the role of the Triangular Commission in colluding business,
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political, and military interests) to reflect on Herbert Gans’s point: that "in
conceptualizing, researching, and analyzing the events they describe, journalists
cannot help but do so from the perspectives of their society, or at least of
their profession, class, and age-group, among others, and from the values and
interests associated with these." (H.Gans 1974:38) Noam Chomsky’s idea of the
manufacturing of consent is not completely without foundation, in that mass media
in liberal democracy, innocent though they may appear, yet shut out alternative
voices to the margins of existence through an often systematic filtering process
clinging to the presence of dominant interest groups (corporate, political/military, white-male, or else).

(5) Highly Liberating Yet Equally Decadent. Lastly, the consumeristic
culture is highly liberating, yet equally decadent.

Camille Paglia (1994) makes an interesting neo-feminist point of view: that
popular culture as the new paganism (after the Renaissance and Romanticism) is
more truful to human instinctual nature in celebrating violence, sex, and
unfettered freedom, as opposed to the once dominant Christian ideologue which
used to be as suppressive as unprogressive (as in cultivating women to be
obedient, silent, and passive, just as much as prohibiting instinctual
expressions). The sensual expressiveness of the pop music icon Madonna best
exemplifies this freedom from patriarchal repression of the old. (Camille Paglia
1994a:128-35) Hard rock ‘n’ roll, mass art, rap music, pornography, junk art and
punk literature, in this regard, celebrate opposition to whatever it be -- and
liberate the mind from all prohibitions. This is liberating to be sure.

Yet this liberating individuality often indulges into recognizing no
responsibility to community, to religion, to class or else -- into what
Christopher Lasch referred to as a culture of narcissism. (C.Lasch 1978; N.Birnbaum
1986:26) It can be as apocalyptic as anarchic (as in doomsday literature,
Trashola, Sleazoid Express, and the theme of "The whole system sucks" in Scream
(C.Farley 1995:58), the first single in Michael Jackson’s recent HIStory, Past,
Present & Future -- Book I) -- and easily degenerate into an ego destruction of

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the drug cult ("to get high"). (N.Birnbaum 1986:10; T.Modleski 1986:162) Punk subculture, for instance, produces its own dress code (ragged black clothes, exposed fashions), hairstyle (provocative coloring and shape), music (loud and dissonant, often accompanied with melancholic and outrageous lyrics), and graphic (violent) language that becomes a politics of apathetic resistance to the establishment. (C. Olalquiaga 1992:88) Its members feed off junk food, live without a permanent home, believe in no institution, and care neither the past nor the future.

To a lesser extent, pop culture (as in Madonna’s and Michael Jackson’s music videos) can be most individual-liberating in spirit and yet equally indecent (Madonna grasping her genital part, and Jackson his, time and again). Some rap music is full of lyrics celebrating rape and torture of women, as by the rapper Tupac Shakur, or alternatively, simply toxic lyrics of sex and violence as by rappers like Ice-T. (R. Lacayo 1995:25, 28) "Evil 'E' was out coolin' with a freak one night/Fucked the bitch with a flashlight/Pulled it out and left the batteries in/So he could get a charge when he begin" (T. Teachout 1994:148) -- lyrics like these are not uncommon among many male rappers. And the songs of Trent Reznor and of Nine Inch Nails evoke paranoia, murder and suicide. (R. Zoglin 1995:39) Richard Lacayo’s observation (1995:27) is worth repeating,

the rise of capitalism over the past two centuries has meant that all the resources of technology and free enterprise could at last be placed at the disposal of the enduring human fascination with grunt and groan. By the early decades of the present century, there had emerged in the U.S. an entertainment industry that would eventually prove to be all-pervasive and ever more given to decking out our base impulses with sweaty and imaginative detail....The result was a pop culture more pointed and grown up, but also more shameless and adolescent.

Horace Mann’s didactics long ago lost can therefore be renewed here, in that a

17. As broadcasted on Headline News (05/19/95) in the states.
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culture which celebrates "full liberty and wide compass" of most depraved impulses, unless counterchecked by "internal and moral restraints," will only render "the people, instead of being conquerors and sovereigns over their passions," now "their victims and their slaves." (C.Lasch 1991:60)

Our modern age -- in celebrating money, instrumental reasoning (SAT scores for cognitive intelligence)\(^{18}\) and instinctual liberation (now that God is dead) -- finds itself no longer congenial to a bygone world of the pre-moderns, a world "in which people did not presume intimacy, a culture in which emotions were expressed with a degree of reticence, a society in which people...minded their manners." (E.Thomas 1996:61) This bygone world of civility the moderns now view, though rightly, with intense suspicion -- against its hypocrisy, its oppression, its unfreedom (so much characteristic of the aristocratic/monastery era). Yet the price to pay for this rightful sense of suspicion is a modern un-civility (as will be elaborated in Section 3.2), in under-developing what Daniel Goleman (1995:43-4,240-1) calls emotional intelligence -- that cultivation for self-reflection, poise, a peace of mind, self-content, self-discipline, empathy, and altruism.

In brief, the dark side of consumeristic culture, in the end, is banal, meaning having no goal for its future nor any veneration of the past. It just lives off the present -- that is, neither for its own sake nor for anything else, but just keeping on working and consuming in this worldliness. Is this the price

\(^{18}\) Howard Gardner in Multiple Intelligences (1993:part I) and Daniel Goleman in Emotional Intelligence (1995:parts I & II) much criticize the modern obsession with cognitive intelligence (verbal and mathematical-logical abilities) for its inherent limits in understanding the varieties of human intelligence.

In addition to (i)verbal aptitude and (ii)mathematical-logical talent, the spectrum of human intelligence also include (iii)spatial capacity (of an architect like I.M.Pei), (iv)kinesthetic brillance (of a dancer like Martha Gragam or of an athlete like Magic Johnson), (v)musical sensibility (of a composer like Mozart), (vi)interpersonal aptness (of a therapist like Carl Rogers or of a charismatic leader like Martin Luther King), and (vii)intrapersonal capacity (of a psychoanalyst like Sigmend Freud).

The modern age, however, in its elevation of the scientific/technological enterprise into the highest domain of social esteem, too often stresses verbal and mathematical-logical intelligences at the neglect of the others, as Gardner (1993:8-9,35) rightly puts it: "In our society, we have put linguistic and logical-mathematical intelligences...on a pedestal...If you do well in language and logic, you may well get into a prestigious college, but whether you do well once you leave is probably going to depend as much on the extent to which you possess and use the other intelligences, and it is to those that I want to give equal attention...Placing logic and language on a pedestal reflects the values of our Western culture and the great premium placed on the familiar tests of intelligence."
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that the moderns have to pay for their freedom from poverty and subsistence, from brutal natural forces -- something so much denied to the medievals and the ancients? The price to pay for this freedom is also costly within a technophilic context. Why?

2.3 Affluence in Technophilic Culture, & the Problematic of Costliness

Technological transformative power has made it possible for the type of affluence achieved in a mass-consumption economy (Section 2.1). But this affluence is costly to maintain.

The modern age is in a sense technophilic (B.Smart 1992:63) -- an obsession with technology, an optimist view of what technology can do to solve human problems. The very idea of "technology", Leo Marx (1994:14) argues, is more of a contemporary coinage -- something only comparatively known to the philosophes in the Enlightenment as the "mechanic" ("practical", "industrial", or "useful") arts, as opposed to the fine arts. Since the term "mechanic arts" often associates images of "men with soiled hands tinkering with machines at a workbench", it is replaced by a more positive (or at least more neutral) term "technology" -- conjuring images of cleaner, more well-educated technicians "gazing at dials, instrument panels, or computer monitors", and equally erasing some of the negative legacy of the English Industrial Revolution of which Marx was most critical of. (L.Marx 1994:15)

The optimism with technological emancipatory power reflects one important element in the Western ideal of the modern self: the search for freedom from poverty and subservience to nature (Section 1.2). Rene Descartes, after all, in his dualistic division of the world into the thinking mind and the inert matter, helped to propagate a modern idea that "the mind could better control matter through knowledge of physical principles, or mechanical laws, of the material
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world. Natural science and technology are the expressions of this world view." (T. Umehara 1992:10) And Francis Bacon’s desiderata best illustrate this euphoric
tone of a coming utopia made possible by scientific and technological advances
which are instrumental to constructing a juster, more peaceful, more equalitarian
republican society, in the name of "the kingdom of man" (I. Wallerstein 1991:218):
"Not power over man, but power over Nature, and that power is the fruit of
knowledge. Nature to be commanded must be obeyed; not by the anticipation of
Nature in some magic dream, but by the study and interpretation of Nature will
there rise the kingdom of man" -- though the Baconian desiderata constitutes only
a necessary, not sufficient condition for other Enlightenment thinkers as Turgot,
Condorcet, Paine, Priestly, Franklin and Jefferson. (L. Marx 1994:19-20)

This technological optimism and its importance (G. Vattimo 1988:97) were
equally manifested by various modernist avant-gardes in such genres as Futurism,
Op Art, Dadaism, Constructivism, and Productivism. (B. Buchoch 1984 &
1994; I. Golomstock 1990:114) The Futurist Marinetti, for instance, sympathetic as
he was to fascism, celebrated war for its exemplification of human dominion over
machinery into a higher aesthetics: "War is beautiful because it establishes
man’s dominion over the subjugated machinery by means of gas masks, terrifying
megaphones, flame throwers, and small tanks. War is beautiful because it
initiates the dreamt-of-metallization of the human body. War is beautiful because
it enriches a flowering meadow with the fiery orchids of machine guns. War is
beautiful because it creates new architecture, like that of the big tanks, the
geometrical formation flights, the smoke spirals from burning villages, and many
others." (W. Benjamin 1992:306) Not surprisingly, comparable themes of
technological modernization and millenarian futurism were current in National
Socialist ideology as well. (A. Ross 1991:112)

In modern architecture, the dependency on the machine metaphor and the
production paradigm (the factory as the primary model of architectural designs)
led to an euphoric fervor as exemplified in the Crystal Palace of 1851 (intended
as it was to show off England’s industrial prowess), in the Eiffel Tower of 1889
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(express as it did a work of pure engineering (O. Hardison 1989:87, 90, 93) void of historical symbolism which thus constituted the first great icon of the technological aesthetic), and in the building programs at the Bauhaus School in Weimar, especially of Mies Van der Rohe, Walter Gropius and Le Corbusier. (A. Huyssen 1986:258; L. Marx 1994:20; E. Lucie-Smith 1992:295-306; E. B. 1994c:119) The Bauhausian legacy is most evident in those steel-and-glass high-rise buildings whose clear and clean lines dominate modern urban landscapes. As Gropius well summarized the spirit of the new aesthetic, "Accurately cast forms, bare of ornamentation, having clear contrasts and consistency of form and color, become commensurate with energy and economy of modern life." (O. Hardison 1989:95)

The Bauhausian dominance was further assured with its export to America, in the name of the International Style, named by Henry-Russell Hitchcock and Philip Johnson for an exhibition back in 1932 at the Museum of Modern Art in New York paying tribute to the Bauhaus, as it celebrated the new aesthetic of technology, stressing the universalizable concepts of simplicity, practicality, and cost effectiveness in an industrial context and thus transcending different historical circumstances of diverse regions and countries --, as best illustrated by Gordon Bunshaft's Lever House, Mies van der Rohe's Seagram Building, and the U.N. Secretariat building. (O. Hardison 1989:100-2) And in the 1920's, the media breakthroughs in photography and film were received with much optimism for social change by Vertov, Tretyakov, Brecht, Heartfield and Benjamin --, just as much as those in television, video and the computer experienced likewise euphoria by McLuhan ("cybernetic and technocratic media eschatology") and Hassan ("the computer as substitute consciousness" and "boundless dispersal by media") in the 1960's. (A. Huyssen 1986:265)

But the age of this innocence is now gone -- a major blow to that part of the Western ideal of the modern self which concerns technological emancipatory power. Albert Einstein, a strong supporter of science and technology as he was by vocation, yet was not without his own scruples with any technocratic argument:
"people living in different countries kill each other at irregular time intervals, so that also for this reason anyone who thinks about the future must live in fear and terror." (A.Ross 1991:130) And Charles Jencks, one of the most well-known chroniclers of the agony of the modern movement, dates the symbolic demise of this technological euphoria at 3:32 p.m., in July 15, 1972 -- when several slab blocks of St. Louis' Pruitt-Igoe Housing (built by Minoru Yamasaki in the 1950's) were dynamited, as the whole ambitious program turned out to be unlivable. (A.Huyssen 1986:259)

The innocence of this euphoric fervor for technology is two-fold.

(1) Most Productive Yet Equally Destructive. Firstly, technological emancipatory power is most productive, yet equally destructive.

The productive power of technology few could deny. Even Marx, Engels, and their disciples, critical as they were to the capitalist mode of production, yet gave due credit to the transformative power that technology released since the Industrial Revolution and even regarded its creation of unprecedented wealth (human, social, finanical, and physical capital) and power (mechanical, chemical, electrical, nuclear, informational, organizational, or whatever else we now know it) as the material basis for the realization of human freedom. Neither did Einstein fail to hail the emancipatory power of technology, his scruples notwithstanding: "Our time is rich in inventive minds, the inventions of which could facilitate our lives considerably. We are crossing the seas by power and utilize power also in order to relieve humanity from all tiring muscular work. We have learned to fly and we are able to send messages and news without any difficulty over the entire world through electric waves." (A.Ross 1991:130)

For this reason, the redemptive wonders and liberatory power of technology were much celebrated in the heyday of science fiction, as in the formative naive post-WWI period of Hugo Gernsback's popular Amazing Stories, which, as first appeared in 1926, claimed their stories having strong scientific basis, as opposed to the earlier European "space opera" by H.G.Wells, Jules Verne, Aldous Huxley, and Karel Capek. (A.Ross 1991:103-4,106,108) And John Campbell's
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*Astounding Stories* in the forties and fifties intended to outdo Gernsback's by focusing on the psychological, socio-political aspects of the technological future as well.

The Soviet launch of Sputnik in 1957 only intensified all the more the cult of science and technology. (A. Ross 1991:137-9) By the time of the second New York World’s Fair in 1964, the technocratic faith in macro-planning and macro-engineering remained strong, to the point that the Ford, Chrysler, and General Motors sections at the Fair paid their tribute to this utopian future, as "visitors were given the chance to ride across 'remote' landscapes, hitherto uncolonized by industry, and to see the 'machines of tomorrow' shaping the surface of the moon, the ocean floor, the Antarctic, the jungle, and the desert with the impress of technological development."

And Buckminster Fuller, the originator of the concept "spaceship earth" speeding through the cosmos at 125,000 miles per hour, once euphoriously predicted that, since the percentage of the world’s population benefiting from the interacting wealth of technologies had increased (from 1% in 1900 through 6% in 1914 and 20% in 1940 to 44% by 1960), humans of the whole world will eventually share the full fruits of industrialization. (W. Kuhns 1971:228-9) Even the skyrocketing growth of the Internet (in the last quarter of this 20th century of ours) promises new frontiers in communication and creates the so-called information superhighway with its revolutionized impacts on various fields ranging from telemedicine through digital journalism to online marketing and virtual teaching. (M. Lord 1995)

But at what price?

Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring* (1962) fired a first most powerful warning shot at what technology can do in damaging the environment. And others followed

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19. This optimistic American vision of a liberating technological society was already much celebrated in an earlier epoch, as was so during 1893-1915, when the U.S. held its World's Fairs on several occasions to show off the American achievements in science and technology, in world leadership and imperial manifest destiny. (M. Lija 1995) Modernity was then tied with progress, with power, to the point that a technological society was taken as the dream worth realizing.
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In one estimate, each American has over 25 times the impact on the environment -- as a consumer and polluter -- as an Indian. (P. Bauer 1981:81) And Western Europe, in another estimate, produces 65 tons of waste per second. 20

Green politics thus constructed in a timely fashion its appealing slogans, "Think Global, Act Local," or Arne Naess’s "simple in means, rich in ends," or Barry Commoner’s four laws of ecology: "Everything is connected to everything else," "There’s no such thing as a free lunch," "Everything has to go somewhere," and "Nature knows best." (A. Ross 1991:194)


The urge to master nature in the search for the promised land of freedom from poverty and from subservience to harsh natural forces now makes us confront the other side of the same issue: nuclear fallout, acid rain, chemical waste, global warming, automation-induced unemployment (R. Pippin 1994:94), the depletion of natural resources, "piracy, loss of privacy, misuse of information" (V. Keegan 1995:8), pollution (noise, air, water, land), machine alienation, inhumane experiments with animals (J. Goodall 1995), high-tech junk, urban ugliness, computer virus attack, cyberspace rubbish ("90% of what is available [in the Internet] is rubbish" -- The Economist 1995a), cyberspace alienation (J. Quittner 1995:56), "electronic mail bombings" via the use of E-mail (P. Elmer-Dewitt 1994:73), and "dehumanized" technological environment (R. Pippin 1994:95), such as voice-mail machines instead of people, reduction to a number instead of an

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Surely, this is not to suggest that no improvement has ever been made in solving technological problems. Quite on the contrary --, old technologies in the heyday of English industrialization, for instance, were much less environment-friendly than the one of the new in our times. Between 1980 and 1995, lead as air pollutant in the U.S., as an example, decreased by 89%, together with ambient SO2 levels down by 27% and cities failing to meet Air Quality Standard down by 50%. (R. White 1995) And in Europe since 1950, there are 30% more forested area --, thanks to environmental protection measures. Oh yes, there is a brighter side of technological development as well.

But the thing to remember, and this is the important point, is that as these old problems (as in the soot and ugliness of 19th-century factory towns) are no longer serious as is the new condition in post-industrial societies, new problems (e.g., radioactive fallout in Chernobyl accident, cyberspace alienation, and costly welfare and health-care burdens for aging populations in countries with successful birth-control measures) appear on the scene instead. Yet as these new problems are likely to be overcome in a future society, still newer problems will accompany those newer technologies. So is this cycle to continue, in that as old technological problems disappear, new ones emerge. The most fundamental challenge, then, is how to ascertain that the benefits in technological development far outweigh the costs associated with it. Edward Wilson (1993:27), for one, argues that "a large part of humanity will suffer no matter what is done."

The naivety of the early moderns in the Enlightenment consisted of its assumption that a genuine goal and standard would emerge in the process of technological application. But it is precisely this ethics of human flourishing
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in guiding technological development which has never been institutionalized. A little curiosity here and a little humanism there, or a little need here and a little fear there, or a little vanity here and a little rivalry there -- have easily led to a development trend of technology with a more substantial moral, spiritual question unasked, or with little political debate, few mass protest, and no agreed-upon medical ethics. (L.Kass 1994) After all, in the heyday of early capitalism, intellectuals (Adam Smith and David Hume most especially) often argued that, though envy, greed, pride, and ambition made humans wanted more than what they really needed, yet these "private vices" constituted "public virtues" by stimulating industry, invention, and economic growth, while thrift and heroic asceticism easily degenerated into economic stagnation. (C.Lasch 1991:53)

As Hume said, the "pleasures of luxury and the profit of commerce roused men from their indolence" and led to "further improvements in every branch of domestic as well as foreign trade." So concurred Smith: that "uniform, constant, and uninterrupted effort of every man to better his condition" was the "principle from which public and national, as well as private opulence is originally derived." Yet in the name of the free market and thus in the absence of a clear framework of what a public ethics is to be, the game of mastering nature, Leo Kass argues, has degenerated into substituting arbitrary rules of the human will (due to fear, need, greed, or vanity) for rules of nature. As Edward Wilson (1993:26-7) forcefully points out the danger facing us moderns,

we have reduced animal life in lakes, rivers and now, increasingly, the open ocean. And everywhere we pollute the air and water, lower water tables and extinguish species....With people everywhere seeking a better quality of life, the search for resources is expanding even faster than the population....It is accelerated further by a parallel rise in environment-devouring technology. Because Earth is finite in many resources that determine the quality of life -- including arable soil, nutrients, fresh water and space for natural ecosystems -- doubling of consumption at constant time intervals can bring disaster with shocking suddenness.
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How to use technology wisely becomes a major challenge to the moderns -- and for that matter, their postmodern successors.

Do means necessarily justify ends? If the ends are "deformed, amoral, and irrational", Leo Marx asks (1994:23), then the disjunction becomes particularly risky and costly to maintain. Or if the ends are too costly to achieve, is the game worth playing? Such tragedies in recent times, to put them in terms of a code word, as Hiroshima, Nuclear Arms Race, Chernobyl (C.Norman 1986:1141-43; E.Marshall 1986:1375-76), Bhopal, the Exxon Oil Spill (L.Marx 1994:11), Agent Orange (as during the Vietnam War), and Three Mile Island (The President’s Commission 1980:7-25) really force the moderns to think again of the very question concerning technology. Technology becomes a most serious modern problematic indeed: the problematic of "technological infatuation" (T.Roszak), of "cultural fetishisation of technology" (D.Noble), of "technical fixes" (K.Robins & F.Webster), and of "means of increasing disease, not of fighting it" (B.Smart 1992:206)

Continuous gains in real productivity that have sustained economic growth to maintain the level of affluence in advanced industrial societies turn out to be highly costly. The Olympia game of "more, higher, faster, and better" (B.Smart 1992:97), is this the right way to be free from poverty, from life harshness, from brutal natural forces for the moderns? Is the race towards rapid economic growth by any means necessary shortsighted and unsustainable in the long run, in the way it has been carried out? This is no accident, however, since the belief in progress (a future getting better all the times with unlimited growth), Christopher Lasch (1991:40-1) claims, waxes in modern times, just as the belief in providence wanes: that is, this "secular millennium" -- "illusion if you prefer -- is man's compensation for the loss of the latter." That is, lest the moderns confront the end of history in the decline of the Sacred (as in the loss of the Judeo-Christian vision of history), a belief of progress now takes its place in and by itself. (G.Vattimo (1988:101) A progressive ideology was therefore
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naively assumed by the philosophes, as what Hans Blumenberg called "the legitimacy of the modern age," that is, the exemplary secularization thesis that the production of scientific knowledge and technology is irreversible and progressive. (C. Lasch 1991:44)

The technological euphoria towards an utopian future did not last long, however, and eventually confronted a sober reality of no haven of inevitable progress to be had. The talk of dystopia therefore became fashionable since the sixties. (A. Ross 1991:141-3) Dr. Strangelove, with its scenario of elites planning a post-nuclear afterlife at the bottom of mineshafts, exemplified this shift of public consciousness, their awakening mistrust of technocratic, utopian themes, or in the physicist Edward Teller's way of speaking, from then "How wonderful" to now "How horrible." And the threat of nuclear annihilation during the turbulent Cold War era, coupled with the Club of Rome's exaggerative, gloomy 1972 global report (Limits to Growth) and the Global 2000 Report commissioned by President Carter (A. Ross 1991:185-6), exacerbated this dystopian mood. The Global 2000 Report, for instance, predicted, by the year 2000, "the starvation of over 1 billion people, the disappearance of half of the world's forests and one third of its arable land, a 20 per cent increase in soil erosion and desertification, the possible extinction of up to 20 per cent of all plant and animal species, a 35 per cent decline in water supply, and a chronic increase in salination of land and water." The appearance, in the early sixties, of the New Wave genre in science fiction was precisely to be more self-critical towards the utopian naivety of the old days. To be sure, the coterminous counter-cultural movements on the part of women, minorities, environmentalists, homosexuals, and radicals further challenged any totalizing imagination of inevitable technological progress.

Thus emerged such dark scenarios as in the Mad Max Trilogy, Blade Runner, The Running Man, The Terminator, Robocop, and Aliens. (A. Ross 1991:144-6) The "no future" generation in punk culture with its anti-utopian themes, and the hip-hop aesthetic in decaying inner-city environment (a kind of Darwinian mean street)
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populated mostly by blacks, sought for other alternative consciousness. By the
eighties, the cyberpunk culture, or what Istvan Csicsery-Ronay describes as "the
vanguard white male art of the age," indulged, as a consoling escape, in urban
fantasies of white male folklore ("boosterware, biochip wetware, cyberoptics,
bioplastic circuitry, designer drugs, nerve amplifiers, prosthetic limbs and
organs, memoryware, neural interace plugs"), detached as they are from the issues
of the marginalized (feminism, ecology, peace, sexual liberation, civil

This negationist diversity of imagining the future leads to Fredric
Jameson's lamentation of the postmodern loss of the ability to imagine the future
without any anti-utopian, consolation-seeking, technology-skeptical visions.(A.Ross 1991:143) Does the future seem to be one without future, in an
existentialist pessimist mood?

(2) Most Creative Yet Equally Destabilizing. Secondly, technological
advance is most creative of new practical possibilities, yet equally
destabilizing to the human psyche.

It is exceedingly easy to underestimate how much technological advance has
expanded the cognitive and appreciative capacities of the moderns and equally
enriched their perceptual, emotional sensibilities (as discussed before in
Section 2.2 and thus not to be repeated here) --, so much used as they are to an
exposure of amazingly intense, diverse sensations and stimuli (or what G.Simmel
calls "stimulus overload") in modern urban life.(G.Ritzer 1986:473)

But at what expense? The problematic of simulacra, of techno-reality
(Section 2.2), as exemplified in mass culture industry, concerns a fragmentation
of the modern self in blurring the distinction, firstly, between the symbolic and
the imaginary, and, secondly, between the organic and the mechanical -- the
cybernetic consciousness -- with the latter gaining ground.(C.Olalquiaga
1992:1)

Firstly --, time in a technological age becomes shorter; the turnover of
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products is intensely high: "You Are Living in Real Time -- Seiko Time". (C.Olalquiaga 1992:5) Few things can last for long. Today’s fashion quickly becomes tomorrow’s trash. Affluence allows abandonment, as opposed to use, as a new norm unaffordable to the pre-moderns. (C.Olalquiaga 1992:67) Equipments are to be replaced regularly, even when they are still in good condition. New commodities are introduced, even when the old ones still satisfy our needs. As Guy Debord put it in Society of the Spectacle (1977:§51), "the satisfaction of primary human needs is replaced by an uninterrupted fabrication of pseudo-needs which are reduced in the single pseudo-need of maintaining the reign of the autonomous economy."

This makes the old notion of reality problematic. Objects and events lose out of sight shortly after they are introduced. The whole ball-game of what constitutes reality has been changed -- from what used to be symbolic, referential, indexical to what is now imaginary, simulative, and playful. (J.Baudriallard 1986:19) What is valued is not what has been but what is not yet. "I send theory", Jean Baudrillard (1986:19) remarks, "as well into the hyperspace of simulation." The shift is so profound that it is not always easy to have a clear delineation of what is real as opposed to imagery, or what is representational rather than verisimilar.

Tyrants love the hyperspace of simulation not less than capitalists do. In Communist regimes, as political climate changes, the losers are eliminated in official photographs, and introduced back in when they become rehabilitated -- as was the case in the Soviet Union and Red China. And in capitalist regimes, tabloid dailies and weeklies are equally busy in simulating sensational stories and rumours which it is difficult to distinguish from what is referential as opposed to what is merely techno-real. And this fragmentation of the modern self is further intensified in fantasia of pornographic pleasures (soft and hard alike -- "Nothing Says Romance Like A K-I-S-S. Call 1-900-369-Kiss") --, as is now available on the Internet as well (such as <alt.binaries.great.ass.paulina> on Usenet and <http://www.tsdi.com> on the Web).
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And painful sexual fantasia (masochistic or sadistic) are not in short supply either, as in Fox Studio's TV reenactment of Jennifer Levin's rape and murder in Central Park. (C. Olalquiaga 1992:1,8-9) In spite of Fox Studio's recreation of Jennifer's relationship with Chambers (her murderer), their backgrounds, and especially the night of the crime (with the station's own script) -- the program ended up receiving an immense rating success. "Jennifer Levin's murder was made into an entertainment of the most perverse degree." Even the recent nationally televised trial of O.J. Simpson produces the same effect, owe more as it does to the vapid obsession with the lives of the rich and the famous than to real issues, as Larry Sabato, in his book Feeding Frenzy, rightly puts it, "The tabloidization of the media is consumer-driven," and this is "one of the saddest features of American society." (P. Canellos 1995:10)

And such technological dominance in modern everyday life as the powerful presence of TV, films, and the computer likewise helps to shape human perception in a video format, farther away from the stable, simple psychic life of the ancients, to the point of the emergence of what Michael Heim (1993:80-1) calls the metaphysics of virtual reality in our technological age. As Kenneth Gergen in The Saturated Self: Dilemmas of Identity in Contemporary Life explains (C. Strauss 1995:43),

The technological achievements of the past century have produced a radical shift in our exposure to each other. As a result of advances in radio, telephone, transportation, television, satellite transmission, computers, and more, we are exposed to an enormous barrage of social stimulation...Beliefs in the true...depend on a reliable and homogeneous group of supporters, who define what is reliably "there," plain and simple. With social saturation, the coherent circles of accord are demolished, and all beliefs thrown into question by one's exposure to multiple points of view.

Needless to repeat, the turnover of these beliefs is all the more higher in late capitalism. Alvin and Heidi Toffler are in a sense right, in that information technology in a post-industrial (or "Third-Wave") society has a darker side, that
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is, in breeding a population that believes nothing --, thousand thanks to the
boundless capacity for deception in virtual-real technology: "The consequence of
that is the end of truth....There are no facts. Everything is open to
interpretation." (C.Dreifus 1995:48,50)

Secondly --, not only the boundary between the imaginary and the
referential becomes problematic -- so is that between the organic and the
mechanical. The conventional conception of humanness as organic, as opposed to
the mechanical, becomes obsolete as well, with the passing of each decade. With
the advance in modern technology, humans contain cybernetic elements as well:
organ transplants21 (heart, kidney, pig's eyes) and artificial parts (for the
limbs, kidney, eyes, eye-lashes, heart, and fingernails; and as in insulin pump,
electrically stimulated muscle nerves, cochlear inner-ear devices, iron-wired
bones, false teeth --, or in grafted-skinned ears, lips, cheeks, toe, and nipple)
becomes a system whose parts are perfectible and replaceable -- into a half-
technological body. (C.Olalquiaga 1992:12-3) The fictional cyborg as in Blade
Runner is of course a long way to go from here --; yet continuous advance in
cybernetics (study of communication and control systems concerning the brain and
the nervous system), information technology (supersmart computers), and genetic
engineering keep the hope alive (as will be elaborated in Chapter 7 entitled "A
Final Thought").

One resulting consequence is the technological creation of a continuous
state of self-doubt, hesitation, fragmentation, and confusion. Each piece of
metal and plastic transplanted to the body, for instance, can erode human
identity, facilitate personality fragmentation, contribute to a breakdown of
empathy -- or, in brief, result in "cyberpsychosis" of future humans. (A.Ross
1991:160) And in the more developed stage, "accidents like incorrect data entries

21. The recent successful experiment at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and the
University of Massachusetts in which a live mouse is made with a human ear growing out of its
back demonstrates further that the continuous progress in tissue engineering will one day make
it easier and easier to replace human body parts lost to disease, accident, or else by new,
healthier ones. (A.Toufexis 1995:60)
Chapter 2. The Consumeristic & Technophilic Lifeform, & Its Price and malfunctions, Celeste Olalquiaga warns, "can alter reality and produce nonexistent identities or switch existing ones, even deleting people from the annals of living and resurrecting the dead." (C. Olalquiaga 1992:15) Technology can dehumanize as much as liberalize.

Donna Haraway is a little more optimistic, however, in that the cyborg as a metaphor for a new, hybrid social order can be socially useful for neo-feminism, in breaking the phallocentric conventional categories and standards. Instead of the "naturalist" feminist opposition to the technologically colonized (cyborg) body, there is a need for resistance, for transgression, for appropriation to confront head-on with the border war between humans and machines. (A. Ross 1991:161-2)

But at the bottom line, modern humans have become god -- a god which recreates itself and reality to its own imagery. As Heidegger philosophized this in a 1938 lecture in Freiburg im Breisgau, "The fundamental event of the modern age is the conquest of the world as picture. The word 'picture' [Bild] now means the structured image [Gebild] that is the creature of man's producing which represents and sets before. In such producing, man contends for the position in which he can be that particular being who gives the measure and draws up the guidelines for everything that is." (C. Owens 1983:66) Where does this image, or this guideline, come from, though? From this new god itself -- that is, from nowhere. This nowhere-ness constitutes the most nihilistic spirit made possible by science and technology in modern (and now postmodern as well) times, as never before possible in the human past, to the point of the coming dawn of a posthuman consciousness after postmodernity (as will be addressed in the last chapter entitled "A Final Thought"). So is it time for hope or for despair? Neither --, or so it seems.

2.4 The Post-Modern Wishful Dream of an Environment-friendly, Psyche-Satisfying Lifeform
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The problematics of banality in consumeristic culture of the moderns and of costliness in technophilic culture have rendered that euphorious aspect of the Western ideal of the modern self which concerns the quest for freedom from poverty, from life harshness, or from subservience to nature as much naive as ignorant. Are banality and costliness the price that the moderns have to pay for this consumeristic, technophilic lifeform which, free as it is from life harshness and from subservience to brutal natural forces, yet is characterized as consumption-obsessed and technology-fetished?

A soul-searching has been underway to come up with an alternative lifeform which is to be free from consumption obsession and technological fetishism as embodied in modern, urban lifeworld. If the moderns are post-medieval in that there is a break of what world and self are to be understood, is there also an equivalent break in what is now known as the post-moderns who are, presumably, post-modern, in questioning, at this juncture, what a healthlier, more sustainable lifeform is to be and therefore, as implied by the word 'post', meaning beyond the modern boundary? Yes, there is --, if only in a relative sense (Sections 4.4 & 6.1), though, of a search for a more environment-friendly, psyche-satisfying lifestyle, or what Ronald Inglehart (1977:42) calls a "post-materialist" culture (as in the aesthetic stand for cleaner urban and natural environments) replacing the modern, consumeristic one.

My concern is that this ideal of a post-consumeristic lifeform of the post-moderns may well be as romantic and naive as the one (that is, the ideal of the consumeristic one of the moderns) which it is to supercede. Why?

(1) Consider first the question concerning technology (and later, that concerning mass culture).

If there is a lesson to be learnt from the modern experience, it is the disillusion with the faith in technology as understood in the euphorious tone of the early moderns: that we cannot but feel sorry for the naive expectations as embodied in Francis Bacon's optimism of a coming technological utopia, and for that matter in some modernist avant-gardes's (Futurism, Productivism, and Op
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Art). (Chapter 4) Instead --, nowadays, there are those who want to transcend the modern boundary into what is now known as the post-modern. The post-modern mood recognizes the costly, destabilizing aspects of technological development and yet confront four major possible ways in relation to this problematic.

(a) Melancholic Technological Pessimism. At one extreme, it is possible for them to accept the technological momentum as inevitable, though equally recognizing its problematic of costliness. They thereby fall into a kind of melancholic fatalism, or what Leo Marx (1994:20-4) calls the "postmodern pessimism" on the question concerning technology.

The case of Jacques Ellul is instructive, in light of his critique of Lewis Mumford's thesis (in Technics and Civilization) that, by analogue of a cultural pseudomorph (like a rock which retains its identity even with its substance changed), however much technologies change humans, the latter remain in their deeper nature unchanged. Ellul could not disagree more, since, in his extension of Siegfried Giedion's vision (in Mechanization Takes Command) that mechanization as occurred in the 19th century had an inhumane side, that is, as much controlling as altering human environment and reshaping their needs, his (Ellul's) more radical view in The Technological Order, however, is that the technological environment has an autonomous force and mandate to transform all facets of human existence (social, economic, political, administrative, scientific, psychological) to its own imagery, a kind of Dr. Frankenstein's nightmare. (W.Kuhns 1971:80,82-3,88).

This technological determinism takes five major forms: that is, automatic (that the choices among methods and procedures become more and more constricting within the values of discipline, logic, consistency, efficiency, and organization, at the expense of wider human freedom), self-augmenting ("progressing without decisive intervention by man"), monistic (following its own lines of evolution into an ever increasing expansion-interdependence fashion), universal (recognizing no cultural boundaries), and most chillingly of all, autonomous (that the technological order "has taken over the whole of
Chapter 2. The Consumeristic & Technophilic Lifeform, & Its Price civilization". (W. Kuhns 1971:91-3, 101) When Josef Goebbels once said, "You are at liberty to seek your salvation as you understand it, provided you do nothing to change the social order" -- Ellul added, This is the "great law" of the technological order. (W. Kuhns 1971:101) This technological determinism has no final goal nor end: "Like nature it [technique] is a closed organization which permits it to be self-determinative independently of all human invention." (W. Kuhns 1971:106)

It is exceedingly hard, however, for anyone, Ellul included, to defend the logic of historical inevitability, be it about technology or else. Previous thinkers on the notion of historical necessity (as in the works of Karl Marx, Herbert Spencer, Auguste Comte, and Friedrich Hegel) suffered rebuttals, for instance, by Lewis Morgan and Robert Nisbet who argued instead that historical change is "neither necessary nor inevitable." (R. Nisbet 1969:178-79, 294; P. Hirst 1976:34) And Immanuel Wallerstein's point (1991:226) is not less sharp: "There is no clearcut case for a technological road to one system or the other. At the very least, we must say that we cannot be sure whether technology will ever have irrefutable implications for this social choice." In Ellul's case, his major fault, William Kuhns (1971:107) points out, is precisely his sociology which "is built upon a premise, underlying all his major works, that 'there is a collective sociological reality, which is independent of the individual'" -- which, however, remains unquestioned.

(b) Resolute Technological Optimism. Or they can affirm, in spite of all, a technological utopianism of what technology could do to solve social ills. But this in-spite-of-all stubbornness begs the very question concerning the problematics of technology: that is, why should an utopian tone be justified in the presence of high technological costliness (Section 2.3)?

Take the case of the die-hard defenders of the military-industrial complex, with their smart look in the form of futurology: that is, a social science of systems analysis to facilitate military and industrial planning and management for acquiring strategic military and corporate advantage. (A. Ross 1991:171-5) RAND
Chapter 2. The Consumeristic & Technophilic Lifeform, & Its Price (Research AND Development) is an exemplary institute for futures research on the techniques of military and political warfare, where the technocratic elites favor an automatic command structure aimed at executing planned objectives with maximum efficiency, with little room for participatory democracy. Its methods of information analysis, as in weapons forecasting, have been adopted by many government agencies and corporations in the business of designing the future of whole social systems --, as is pervasive in the age of Fordism (rationalized mass-production and consumption, scientific management of time, and forecast analysis). With the use of systems analysis, computer databases, and modeling --, predicting emerging trends (short-/long-term) for controlling the future is often attempted.

The problematic here, Andrew Ross argues, is its perpetuation of a rather obsolete elitist technocratic mentality (peculiar to the old military-industrial complex) which no longer fits in a post-Fordist, late capitalist economy with its flexibility (in labour processes, marketing, and technological development), with its uncertainty (of options to choose from), and with its more pluralistic socio-political needs (women, minorities, environmentalists, the poor, or else). (A.Ross 1991:176-7,180) And none of these late capitalist features is conducive to macro-engineering, to intelligent management and control of the unpredictable, and to consensual preference (whose preferences are being served here?) as was in the older days of system analysis.

Even Buckminster Fuller's dream of a comprehensive design science on a global scale (that is, to design a world society with comprehensive planning), heroic as his effort was without doubt to build a better human future, will only give us instead what William Kuhns (1971:228-244) critically labels as "a very dictatorial utopia" in a controlled environment (comparable to the behavioral control as espoused by B.F.Skinner and Thomas Watson in psychology), among other ills.

(c)Nostalgic Arcadianism. At the other extreme, it is equally conceivable for some who are as much so disillusioned of the technological problematics as
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so nostalgic of a merried pre-industrial past that the only solution must therefore be a return to nature, to a pre-industrialist life, something the Luddites, an Emerson, or a Thoreau would be so inclined towards.

The term 'Luddite' can be traced back to the early days of Industrial Revolution, when a group of English radicals, named for their legendary leader, Ned Ludd, fight hard as they did against the new textile factories that threatened their weaving livelihood, then stormed the factories and smashed the great machines, as was later used to signify their distrust of technological progress as empty, vainglorious, and dangerous. (D.Wright 1995:12) And the Unabomber in our time repeats the same old message, when the former writes in a public manifesto: "[I] attribute the social and psychological problems of modern society to the fact that society requires people to live under conditions radically different from those under which the humans race evolved." (R.Wright 1995:50) This pastoral sensibility is best expressed in the sentiment which Herman Melville so much shared (C.Lasch 1991:96),

In a primitive state of society, the enjoyments of life, though few and simple, are spread over a great extent, and are unalloyed: but Civilization, for every advantage she imparts, holds a hundred evils in service; -- the heart-burnings, the jealousies, the social rivalries, the family dissensions, and the thousand self-inflicted discomforts of refined life, which make up in units the swelling aggregate of human misery, are unknown among these unsophisticated people.

Or in Thoreau's parlance, "None can be an impartial or wise observer of human life but from the vantage ground of what we should call voluntary poverty," "All that a man has to say or do that can possibly concern mankind, is in some shape or other to tell the story of his love --, to sing I love the wild no less that the good," "Shall I not have intelligence with the earth? Am I not partly leaves and vegetable mould myself?", "My purpose in going to Walden Pond was not to live cheaply nor to live dearly there, but to transact some private business with the fewest obstacles," "I love to be alone; I never found the companion that was so
Chapter 2. The Consumeristic & Technophilic Lifeform, & Its Price companionable as solitude," or "In wilderness is the preservation of the world."

But the question to them is how could this return, or what Arnold Toynbee disapprovingly called "archaism" ("an attempt to take a flying leap out of the mundane Present backwards into an already vanished Past") be even remotely possible? (R.Seidenberg 1951:210) After all, this "merried" pre-industrial past never existed, and the danger here is to nostalgically romanticize the "good" old days which never were -- amidst a discontent with the status quo. "The work of social historians and demographers", Christian Larner reminds us something of the pre-modern world often forgotten, "has highlighted the overwhelming presence of disease, pain and death in the open countryside as well as the noxious towns." (A.Toffler 1980:110) Official medicine was no joke -- bloodletting and surgery without anesthesia.

Daniel Kevlves writes of how coarse the "preindustrial past" looks, once "stripped of the gauzy romanticism of myth --, the Unabomber's rhetoric notwithstanding: the unsettling threat of mano-a-mano violence, the periodic starvation, incurable disease and the danger of being eaten by a beast. (R.Wright 1995:52) And a criminal system was so barbaric as to be unimaginable to the moderns, as Michael Foucault (1977:3) detailedly described the scene of how Damiens who was convicted of regicide had to pay for his crime:

taken and conveyed in a cart, wearing nothing but a shirt, holding a torch of burning wax weighing two pounds, in the said cart, to the Place de Greve, where, on a scaffold that will be erected there, the flesh will be torn from his breasts, arms, thighs and calves with red-hot pincers, his right hand, holding the knife with which he committed the said parricide, burnt with sulphur, and, on those places where the flesh will be torn away, poured molten lead, boiling oil, burning resin, wax and sulphur melted together and then his body drawn and quartered by four horses and his limbs and body consumed by fire, reduced to ashes and his ashes thrown to the winds.

A return to a pre-industrialist past does not lead to a better world of a modern society without modern technology but the ancien regime in its totality -- as
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much its brutal life harshness as its oppressive mechanical solidarity of the
Durkheimian type.

Some Arcadians comparable to Theodore Roszak, call for as they do a "de-
urbanization of the world" (1972:416) into autonomous small towns with their
well-developed rural and village life (1972:418): "voluntary primitivism; organic
homesteading; extended families; free schools; free clinics; handicraft
cooperatives; community development coops; Gandhian ashrams; neighborhood rap
centers" (1972:423) --, thus promise us that "life would have become saner, the
air cleaner, the streets safer, the world quieter."(1972:420-1) Utopian and
blissful as this sounds for sure, yet any Arcadian fantasies of this type, Andrew
Ross (1991:21,71) warns us, "is to turn a blind eye to the enormous human costs
involved..., especially in the world’s developing countries" (as will be
revisited in Section 6.4) --, the temptation of Transcendentalism, Spiritualism,
and Self-help movements since the dawn of modern times notwithstanding, though
constitute it does a long history of radically individualist traditions in the
modern West (the nostalgic appeal of Ralph Waldo Emerson and Henry David Thoreau
to the Arcadians especially).

But neo-Luddites die hard indeed --, as equally exemplified by those men
and women (Earth First! members and Unabomber) ravaged by atomic testing, Agent
Orange, Gulf War Syndrome, the new world order of GATT and NAFTA,
biotechnological research, or else.(D.Wright 1995:12) Gerald Holton, Harvard
physicist and historian of science, therefore writes, "They live in a world of
extremes...Like their predecessors, they believe one has to make a choice between
intuition and rationality. But you need both...We have a very fragile planet,
and scientists must be ready to intervene."

(d)Ecology-Conscious Late Capitalism. But many are situated outside the
range of these rather radical choices and look instead for a more ecology-
friendly, psyche-satisfying strategy of economic development. Alvin Toffler, the
hi-tech science fiction guru and new House Speaker Newt Gingrich’s intellectual
mentor, for instance, proposes a solution: the search for a range of "appropriate
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technologies" intended to avoid pollution and to spare the environment in fields
as diverse as fish farming, food processing, energy production, waste recycling,
cheap construction, and simple transport.(A.Toffler 1980:141)

This for sure is not new; after all, green politics and activism of the New
Age in the previous score of years is well known for its opposition to large-
scale, environmentally destructive technologies.(A.Ross 1991:69) Yet precisely
how far this is to resolve the problematic remains a most challenging task facing
the post-moderns.

The challenge is two-fold.

Firstly, as long as the mass consumption economy under the helmsmanship of
capitalism, within the context of a consumeristic lifeform, remains dominant --,
the search for "appropriate technologies" may at best relieve some pressure from
the ecological problematic but do not solve it. If the Law of Entrophy is hard
to be violated on a major scale (at least not within our current technological
level) --, then energy, once being transformed from a concentrated form into a
lower one (as in the process of industrial consumption), is less available for
further use.(M.Spencer 1985:545) "In an age of optimism and fulfillment," thus
wrote Roderick Seidenberg (1951:149), "when man had sought to escape the tragic
undertones of life, he discovered the measure of this ever increasing deficit.
It is therefore hardly surprising that he should have struggled against the
implications of the second law of thermodynamics; against the threat of ultimate
extinction in a dying universe."

So did Norbert Wiener (1967:57-8) say, "life belongs to a limited stretch
of time;...the time may well come when the earth is again a lifeless, burnt-out,
or frozen planet....In a real sense we are shipwrecked passengers on a doomed
planet....Yet we live in an age not over-receptive to tragedy." And the
problematic is intensified by a mass consumption culture which has no end in
sight and, instead, will be even more intense (Chapters 3 & 4). After all, post-
modernism (Section 4.4) is carrying the logic of modernism to its farthest
reaches: the celebration of the instinctual (F.Jameson 1991:213), of the
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unconstrained sensibility, of the idea of boundless experiment, of unfettered freedom (D.Bell 1976:51).

The coming 21st century culture, Camille Paglia (1994) predicts in an affirming neo-feminist tone, will be "pro-porn, pro-sex, pro-violent" -- something for us to reflect upon. (R.Coriellis 1994:90) Late capitalism is no less consumeristic and instrumental (mastering of nature) than earlier capitalist forms and will likely facilitate the eventual transformation of urban life into what the Greek architect and city planner Constantinos Doxiadis labels the "Ecumenopolis" (the world-city), a gigantic web of interconnected megalopolises throughout the world, closely linked by rapid transport and electronic communication into a single functional unit (E.B.1994a:287-90) --, such as "Boswash" (the chain of cities and surroundings from Boston to Washington, D.C.), the San Francisco-San Diego region, the London-Midland cities, and the Tokyo-Osaka-Kyoto complex. Crowding, pollution, and other environmental negative externalities are no end in sight; and quiet, privacy, and space will become increasingly scarce and "treasured" commodities.

Social Ecologists, after all, often balk at any naive conception of technological change for sustainable development, insofar as the very capitalist system remains intact. As Murray Bookchin argues, "capitalism can no more be 'persuaded' to limit growth than a human being can be 'persuaded' to stop breathing." (A.Ross 1991:188) Deep Ecologists are therefore not without good rationale for their anxiety: that Buckminster Fuller’s imagery of "Spaceship Earth" has a darker side, the abandoning of the earth as an expendable resource once it is exhausted. (A.Ross 1991:70) The enemy of ecologists, of whichever version, is none other than the Western humanist culture, devoted to unrestrained development and social growth as it has been, to the point that Christopher Lasch stands it no longer and calls for a return to the values of lower-middle-class culture which is known for its respect for "limits" in all things and are morally inclined towards the family, the church, and the local community. (A.Ross 1991:5-6)
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This conservative moralism notwithstanding, Lasch’s critique magnifies the problematic facing Toffler, who becomes what his critics call a "bourgeois" futurologist, since his calls for appropriate technologies (and for that matter for humanized, flexible planning in anticipatory democracy), in retrospect, serves as an explanatory rhetoric for the new economic and cultural environment in a postindustrial economy, known as it now is as post-Fordist for flexible accumulation in late capitalism. (A. Ross 1991:180) Even the visionary utopia imagined by Paul Hawken (1995) for a coming new industrial system, or what he calls "the cyclical industrial system", which is to eliminate so much waste in existing production processes through a systematic industrial redesign conducive to a recycling of materials used, does not avoid the similar critique: that is, in the words of his critic, Forest Reinhardt, it only "reflects the new business mindset" increasingly emerging in corporate America, Japan, Germany, and elsewhere, though much more remains to be desired in other sectors as the household and the government as well for waste reduction.

And in the 21st century, even this post-Fordist, flexible production will become obsolete, leading to a more advanced form of capitalist production known as mass customization, which, as Otis Port (1994:158) describes it, "Not only clothes, but a huge variety of goods, from autos to computers, will be manufactured to match each customer’s taste, specifications, and budget" so as to further reduce inefficiency rate to under 0.0005% (as measured by products reworked due to poor quality), as opposed to 0.02% or less under flexible production (1971 to 2000), and 25% or more under mass production (1900 to 1970). “Will optimism about 21st century capitalism ultimately prove misguided?”, Frank Comes (1994:13) and Christopher Power thus ask and yet concludes, "But capitalism will probably surprise us with its inventiveness." Already, capitalism adapts to different historical contexts by adopting different forms, ranging from consumer capitalism (U.S., Britain, Canada, Australia) through producer capitalism (Germany, France, Japan, Mexico) and family capitalism (Taiwan, Malaysia, Thailand, Indonesia) to frontier capitalism (China, Russia). (C. Farrell 1994:19)
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The lesson to be learnt here is, The will to master/dominat nature is no end in sight in capitalism of whatever form (the coming 21st century version included). Even such a more politically correct line of thought as in the call for "life-sensitive" technologies within a "decentralized," "participatory democracy" --, is often advanced as a cover for what Leo Marx called the "machine in the garden," that is, for ever greater commercial exploitation of physical resources and labour power. (A.Ross 1991:134) William Burroughs must be much saddened by this current planetary problematic when he thus told Larry McCaffery (1992:50) in an interview: "Maybe our best hope is to get away from this planet, with its abyssal cycles of overpopulation, depletion of resources, pollution, and escalating conflicts." And Edward Wilson must be even more saddened, when he (1993:26) wrote, "The human species is, in a word, an environmental abnormality. It is possible that intelligence in the wrong kind of species was foreordained to be a fatal combination for the biosphere. Perhaps a law of evolution is that intelligence usually extinguishes itself."

Secondly, the search for "appropriate technologies" still does not respond to a more fundamental issue concerning what constitutes a new ethics of human flourishing which is to guide technological development. And this unquestioned presupposition was precisely the naivety of the early moderns in the Enlightenment which counted on the emergent process of a genuine goal and standard in technological application. What, for instance, is not deformed, amoral, irrational, ugly, or else? If the postmoderns want to address the question of whether means ("appropriate technologies") justify ends ("a more ecology-friendly environment"), they already assume the possibility of moral universality in a new ethics. My claim (Chapter 5) is that the search for a new ethics of human flourishing is not possible in a pluralistic, post-industrial society. The philosophy of social ecology is relevant here: that a vision of a free society coexisting with the natural world without, however, dominating it is desperately needed. (A.Ross 1991:70)

But the point is, Whose interest is being served here? Much sound and fury
have already been made among the participants in the fight for an alternative future: the punks, the cyberpunks, the neo-feminists, the hip-hoppers, the deep ecologists, the social ecologists, the New Wave advocates, the military-industrial complex, the postindustrial states, the Third World, the minorities, the lower class, the radicals --, and the single-issue politics of healthcare rights, of reproductive rights, of biotechnological ethics, of penal reform, of work safety, of diet and nutrition, of narcotraffic, and of police surveillance. (A. Ross 1991:8, 191) If there is something to be learnt from postmodern politics, it is dissensus which thrives in myriad mini-narratives. (Chapter 5-6)

As Luke Cole (1995), General Counsel of the Center on Race, Poverty, and the Environment, learnt it the hard way, any environmental justice in this conflicting world is often fought out in the public sphere with those groups enjoying more political/economic clout (power) as victorious, be it corporate pressure group, concerned public citizenry, governmental agency, or else. "The truth will set you free" or "The government is on your side" --, nothing is farther from the truth than these popular myths which, Cole continues, help no human cause in its failure to confront the brutal reality of power politics, where the less powerful (the poor and minorities) suffer most from environmentally hazardous dumpings. (J. Hoyte 1995) And Edward Wilson (1993:27) likewise depicts the bleak future of the biosphere, with the poor Third World suffering the most: "the awful truth remains that a large part of humanity will suffer no matter what is done."

Yet environmental consciousness so understood since the death of technological euphoria decades before is not without its redemptive value: that it has penetrated into the planning and decision-making at the highest levels of the new global politics, as in the visionary politics of "planetary management" much talked by the World Bank, the International Development Association, and transnational corporate cartels. (A. Ross 1991:188) But what substantial difference could they make to further the good of humanity (which, for the postmoderns,
Chapter 2. The Consumeristic & Technophilic Lifeform, & Its Price constitutes still another futile, deceiving attempt to construct a new metanarrative not possible any more) remains to be seen.

(2) Besides the problematic of costliness in technophilic culture --, that of banality in consumeristic culture is an equally important issue. The proliferation of new religions in the West in recent years constitutes a major attempt to search for a post-consumeristic lifeform which is less banal, more substantial in spiritual, psychic satisfaction. My claim (Chapter 3) is that the banality process will be even more intense in a so-called "post"-consumeristic culture -- the proliferation of cults and sects notwithstanding. An increasingly scientophilic age has no heart for a return to a post-secular order, in whatever sense it may be understood. The idea of a post-secular society is a postmodern myth.

In the end, there is an intense irony here: that the very faith in technological emancipatory power (which is closely interacted with scientific advancement) is undermined in the very name of the critical spirit of science. And this irony will be shown time and again in all other domains of modern life (Chapter 3-6): that the critical spirit of science, in its further maturity, comes to deconstruct whatsoever beliefs and values (both modern and now postmodern as well) there be, not less including its own belief in scientific objectivity (next chapter).

2.5 The Glory of Being Rich in the Other

But are the problematics of banality and costliness unique only to the modern Same (the Western world)? Quite on the contrary --, they have been spreading to the Others as well. The case of post-Mao south China is a telling story which reflects in a larger sense the hegemonic diffusion of Western categories to the Others qua the non-West since the dawn of modern times.

Life harshness, after all, is not unique to the European pre-moderns, nor
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does the modern Western affluence always hold true in its history. As recently
as in the 16th and 17th centuries, northern Europe, for instance, was backward,
technically and culturally -- as compared with this other world whose inhabitants
enjoyed a higher standard of living. (E.B. 1994a:281; D. Landes 1994) "By the 17th
and 18th centuries", Paul Harrison (1979:36) wrote, "many of the preconditions
for industrialization existed: automatic water-driven machines, large
concentrations of capital in the hands of merchants, banks with branches all over
China, even some big factories concentrating large numbers of employees." Yet
this Other did not industrialize, and the Industrial Revolution in Europe has
changed the balance of power.

By modern standards, this Other has long suffered the problematic of life
harshness since the dawn of its history -- the fabulous account of Marco Polo's
adventure in early 14th century East Asia notwithstanding. Disease, morbidity,
and mortality in imperial China, Ivan Polunin's study showed, were incredibly
high. (E. Jones 1987:6-7) Even during the Sung Dynasty, "faeces discharged into
water made China the world reservoir of lung, liver and intestinal flukes and the
Oriental schistosome, all serious causes of chronic illness." By the turn of this
century, Han Suyin observed, there were 90% worm infestation among Chinese
children; and a 1948 source ascribed 25% of deaths to faecal-borne infections.
The research done by Greog Borgstorm further indicated that even in 1960, 90% of
the rural populace (80% of the total) were infected with tapeworms, and the
"aggregate weight of liver parasites in Chinese bodies is estimated as equivalent
to the combined weight of two million human beings."

Combined ill health, heat and malnutrition in many parts of the continent
took a heavy toll of its labour productivity. Liang Heng and Judith Shapiro in
Son of the Revolution (1984) shock us enough of their depiction, though this
constituted not the thesis of their project, of abject poverty even after the
1949 Communist victory. Life harshness then was equally reflected in a Communist
culture industry which was most spartan, moral-earnest, and propagandistic.
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"There were few entertainments then", Le Zheng, a historian in Guangzhou, thus remarked in an interview, "Mass media were always about morals, wars, revolutions, etc., always in accordance to the socialist ideologue", and as recently as in the early eighties daily life remained as spartan as monotonous:

For instance, you might wake up at 6:00 a.m., take breakfast at 6:30 a.m., take children to school at 7:00 a.m., go to work at 7:30 a.m., return from work at 5:30 p.m., buy food and prepare dinner until 6:30 p.m., finish dinner and other houseworks by 8:30 p.m., go over children's homework until 9:30 p.m., and do something else until 10:30 p.m. -- when you went to bed. Even now, in many cities (like Beijing), shops close at 6:30 p.m. or 7:30 p.m. and no buses operate by 8:30 p.m. There were simply no night life, and people went to sleep quite early -- so it is [as of 1993] still the case in many parts of China.

But why should they keep up with a spartan life like this? "In the absence of knowing what happened in other countries," answered he, "we had very low expectations and thought that our lifestyle was fine. After all, the spirit at the time was to make contribution to the revolutionary cause."

But things have much changed since Mao's times, and a most anti-materialist lifeform on earth cannot resist in the end the seductiveness of its consumeristic

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1. From interviews with individuals in south China during 1993-94.

Individual names are roughly transliterated into Western alphabets, unless indicated otherwise. Quotations are from original conversations in Chinese (mixture of Cantonese and Mandarin) -- except some revision due to the need of edition and translation. Interviews were conducted wherever was convenient to the interviewees: most of the time in their houses or offices, but sometimes in my hotel room, in a restaurant, in a museum, or else. Interviewees were not paid for the interviews, and their contributions were entirely voluntary. On the basis of curiosity (wanting to talk to a foreigner from afar), exchange of information of each other's experiences and viewpoints, and friendship (which was developed during my trips over a 10-months period).

Interview duration ranged from one hour to seven or eight hours (split into several sessions) -- depending on the time schedule and interest of the interviewees. The interviews, though open, yet were structured with pre-arranged questions, often in terms of a story or of some experience the interviewees happened to be talking about. The questions could be asked in any order -- depending on the context of the conversations.

I used no tape recorder, nor note-taking during the interviews -- lest the interviewees were concerned with what might happen to them should it be confiscated. Instead, the content of the interviews was based entirely on my memory (and I have an excellent one). I used to go home immediately after a given interview and wrote down the content as soon as possible.

I received no help from any official organization for my fieldwork (except a U.S. Fulbright grant from IIE as administered by The United States Information Agency in the American Consulate based in Hong Kong) -- and depended on my personal initiative to contact people and on my adventure into all kinds of places that I could get in. I came to know these individuals by talking to people wherever I went, befriending them, and asking them to introduce me to relevant people whenever possible. There were of course quite a number of rejections as well -- but my persistence, ingenuity, and initiative paid off in the end.

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Chapter 2. The Consumeristic & Technophilic Lifeform, & Its Price rival --, and this constitutes the triumph of the hegemonic Western economic and cultural diffusion to this Other. It is hard to imagine how much a contemporary south Chinese lifeform has changed in such a short time span of less than two decades; perhaps nothing can express it better than the slogan of the day, "To be rich is glorious" (driven as it has been by market reforms). How much more consumeristic could a new culture be which values money-making as glorious -- and nothing more glorious than money making? This is reflected in a new lifeworld totally inconceivable in the days of the old. The emerging consumption mass culture is as much (1) banal as (2) costly -- as the price for freedom from life harshness, from poverty, and from subservience to brutal natural forces.

(1) Its banality, analogous to the Western experience qua its inventor, is manifested in five ways.

(a) Firstly, the emergent consumeristic culture in this Other is as tolerant as inane in taste. Tabloid and trash literature (violence, action, sensuality), dramatic fiction (love, mystery, folkoric), do-it-yourself bestsellers (house-fixing, bike-repairing, romance-seeking) can easily be found as much in local newstands as in bookstores (those on campus included). Neither are underground media (homosexuality, pornography) lacking, since Guangdong police, in an anti-prostitution raids, uncovered a large quantity of pornographic videos and magazines in circulation. (SCMP 1993:8) Imported or smuggled from such nearby neighbors as Hong Kong (a classic symbol of Western hegemonic triumph with a Chinese face) and the modern West, they flourish in a money-driven, hedonistic environment and exist side-by-side with more serious avant-garde art products, official paternalistic propagandistic works and technical professional/academic journals.

How I Married A Foreign Girl --, no, comrades, this is not the Maoist little red book on how to make revolution but a trash nonfiction on how to make love and then migrate to America (still a dream for many). As Le Zheng continues, "Unlike the past, there are more choices of what to entertain now: night clubs, massage parlors, tourist tours, karaoke bars, dancing halls, gambling places,
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song contests, popular movies (action, sensual, comedy). The more money you have, the more diverse you can choose from a variety of entertainments."

Yet this toleration is constrained within a standardization process penetrating into all facets of the society. The mass media, as exemplified by the government-controlled CCTV, broadcasts nationwide programs and commercials for the masses numbered in the hundreds of millions. The urban landscapes, often modelled on Western designs as they are, from Shenzhen to Guangzhou are becoming so much alike of each other -- highrise buildings, highways, shopping malls, restaurants, movie theatres, mass markets, public transports, pay phones, dress fashions, small businesses, advertisement billboards, sports, pop music, newspapers. A Guangzhou-ese thus feels no less at home in Shenzhen than a Shenzhen-ese in Guangzhou, situated as both cities are from each other within 2-3 hrs by train. Even in a small village like Nanjie, the standardization process for housing, for instance, penetrates down into such details as "the porcelain tea sets, bentwood knick-knack shelves, flounce curtains and throw pillars..., embroidered kittens, calendars of Mao’s calligraphy and votive rotogravure portrait of Nanjie party secretary Wang." (L.Kaye 1994:32-36) Just visiting a couple of houses in the village already makes the rest a deja vu.

(b) Secondly, this consumeristic culture is as much entertaining as trivial. Never before in this Other’s history has urban life offered so much sensual stimuli as it does now. Western-style rock music (Chinese version of Michael Jackson’s songs and his dancing styles) spreads themes of love, sensual instincts, individual freedom, and joy. Western-style sports programs of various types (swimming, tennis, boxing, soccer, car racing) are regularly available, within the context of a state-sponsored drive to make this proud Other into the sports superpower. Action movies (James Bond, superwoman, gangsters, the terminator, as often imported at wholesale from the West and Hong Kong) become hot entertainment choices among many.

Food stores, supermarkets, and restaurants rise from the ground at a miraculous rate. Varieties of food are plenty in display. So does general diet
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improve -- more balanced, more to consume, with durable goods much in demand (color TV’s, VCR’s, CD players, telephones, motorcycles, washing machines, refrigerators). And the market for mini-cars (tiny but affordable to the masses) is in the making. The nouveau riches qua the successful business stratum already display their new status in prettier dresses, better cars, nicer houses, fancier cellular phones, classier hairstyles, more urbane manners, and more sophisticated business talks. "Time is money and is not to be wasted for empty talks."

So do western-style dancing halls and kareoke bars mushroom everywhere. Young and old, men and women, intellectuals and workers --, there is no requirement for entry. Money talks loudly here --, the more, the better, comrades. Songs and videos as shown on the screen are pop-songs for sure, not without, however, sexy beautiful girls (highly exposed, Bikini-dressed as well) dancing around. In downtown Shengzhen, some dance clubs, competitively spirited as they come to be, invite beautiful Western female dancers on the show (often wearing next to nothing, by local standards). If the local dances in this part of the world are less sexually explicit (not yet overly chest-exposed) and even too old-fashioned (among the old and middle-aged most especially), dance partners are expected, new comers as they are, to not be too physically close, just as dance styles are still few in number (often slow-paced, seldom energetic and fast as often seen in the capitalist West). Music does not lack its Western taste -- not yet too hard-rock but soft, so is lighting dark but primitive in design and decoration. Furniture and drinks are simple -- not yet extravagant as in affluent societies.

Yet the narcotic effect of urban sensual attraction -- in relaxing the tired mind, tranquilizing the anxious and gratifying the instinctual -- is detrimental to the serious cultivation of a more refined culture. Everyone is so hooked up in making a buck and making daily life more comfortable -- that the higher ideals of life (aesthetic pursuit, religious quest, moral ideal, active citizenry, intellectual excellence) are something nonexistent for many. Money, food, love, and entertainment -- these are topics in almost every single
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conversation among the locals (if not with the Western experience as the comparative yardstick), and this thus vindicates an insight Max Weber (1951:242) once had of this Other decades before.

(c)Thirdly, this Other’s consumeristic culture is as much imaginative as psychotic. Long, elaborated commercials, a new player of the game though this Other is, already detailedly describe what new supermarkets and new stores (or related businesses) have just been opened, what they sell, how much they sell for what, why they are useful, or how nice and convenient the shopping malls are --, not without highly imaginative settings as seductively constructed. If the interest concerns restaurants and hotels, local commercials lack no ingenuity to reveal what meals to offer, what kind of rooms there are, what kareoke bars to be installed (with what up-to-date hi-tech equipments), or what unique services not to be missed. Disadvantaged within a context of underdevelopment though these local entrepreneurs are, their imaginative seduction seems endless in constructing a potent commercial fantasia, thousand thanks, as this should not be ignored either, to more than 50 foreign advertising giants participating here through joint ventures and flooding the market with Western brand names and latest advertising gimmicks. (J.Karp 1994:101)

Late comers so they are in living a modern lifeform, yet their yearning for the new often become addicted with a new consumerism which treats whatever new as better, more classy, more authentic -- their real quality notwithstanding. What is in fashion today (often read as the currents in advanced countries as the new yardsticks)? Or what is the brand tomorrow? It is hard to distinguish the fanciful from the real in an obsessive mentality so had. Movies and periodicals from other lands (Hong Kong and the West most particularly) constitute potent ideational sources of fantasy to be transformed into life: kissing, hugging, blond hair, mercedes-displaying. Scenes like this, totally forbidden as they were in its once triumphant civilization which were as much most unsensual as most unromantic, yet are increasingly in vogue in more sophisticated urbanities (Shenzhen and Guangzhou).
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If the hair is black, why not just dye it into blonde or brown-red? "Let's go blonde or brown-red." If you want a mercedes, why not just steal some from Hong Kong, as corrupt officials and locals build up their notorious reputation of getting involved in the smuggling business, in close connection with organized crime (The Triad in Hong Kong)? (A.Walder 1993) Nor are other fantasies rare in public parks: kissing, hugging, and sometimes even French-kissing. It is not an isolated incident for a father who, a fussy man as he certainly was not, yet complained to me of something troubling about his daughter: the imitation, upon watching enough Western movies, of what she saw, that is, the acts of kissing daddy's cheek to say good night, hugging him in merry moments, using English phrases ("Daddy", "Goodbye", "Hye") in social interaction, and dressing as much like Western girls as possible. Social theorists lack no technical label for this, known as this is as "demonstration effect," the hegemonic diffusion of the Same's consumption patterns and lifestyles to the Others, regardless to local needs and circumstances. (F.Cardoso 1979:11-2) Diverse pieces of information and stimuli are incorporated, without however adding up to anything coherent, other than being torn from their spatial-historical contexts into something fashionable of the day.

(d)Fourthly, this consumeristic culture is as much educational as misinformational.

The power of mass media most successfully broking local isolation and provincial ignorance -- this is not to be denied. Nor is the virtue of being able to mentally adventure into other places and times to be ignored, now that diverse programs as on foreign languages (English for sure), nature, Western classical music, world literature (Western especially), and science are well received. To the amazement of all, many of the masses, illiterate as their fate were in feudal times, can now take advantage of learning TV school lessons, in a country where college education is still reserved to a tiny few of the most successful and privileged. Entertainment programs from other lands and commercials are therefore most educational as much in knowing more of other civilized worlds, which this
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Other in its Sinocentric self-indulgence had long been so ignorant of, as in learning new ideas and things.

Yet, under a still rigid political atmosphere, mass media suffer the misfortune of being bullied under the state’s propagandistic manipulation. The intense celebration of Mao’s 100th birth anniversary in 1993-94 is a classic, most recent personality cult revived, if only temporarily, just as a Deng’s version is in the making for an oriental semigod currently on his deathbed. Honesty and fairness as social virtues equally lose their charm and obligation in a new era where money talks the loudest. Business salesmanship -- as among the peddlers and small businesses -- is most skillful to the point where the boundary between criminal offense (for business malpractice) and shrewd entrepreneurship is hard to delineate (something Thornstein Veblen said likewise of the Same).

In an everyone-is-out-for-a-buck social ethos, an appeal as much to your five senses as to your understanding and a manipulation as much of your naivety as of your ignorance become a business normalcy, though without the shrewd awareness of trying to stay out of legal responsibility as well.²³ A pack of new batteries is sold at a bargain price to Mr.Naive, and he discover at home in no time that they are filled with water. Exotic fruits are advertised as fresh, delicious to Ms.Ignorant -- and no sooner does she cut them up at home will she notice their spolit, sickening content. Mr.Shrewd introduces himself with a business card stating his impressive credentials to Employer Innocent, who, upon checking for its verisimilitude, is shocked of its outrageous fabrication. A taxi driver is too eager to take Mr.Foreign whenever he wants -- but seldom fail to unnecessarily drive him around the town for some extra miles.

(e)Lastly, this consumeristic culture is as much liberating as decadent.

Liberating it is hard to deny in outcome. The liberation of sensual instincts as in pop music, avant-garde arts, and action movies -- either modelling after those of the Western world plus the East Asian capitalist

²³. The experiences hereafter illustrated were either encountered by me or told by the locals I talked to.
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neighbours or importing from them at wholesale -- allows the expression of
violence, action, and sexuality to a point of being scandalous in the older
imperial or Maoist orthodox days. In this more open urbanity as Guangzhou, some
windows in housing complex are full of postures of beautiful, exposed, sexy
Western girls -- as are the same in some advertisements on TV and in periodicals.
Or in a magazine ad, a picture shows a girl with her eyes starring widely, her
mouth opening in a circular shape, and her hand slightly touching the chin
(anyone remembers the Marilyn Monroe's classic style here?). And in a TV ad, a
man and a woman (in bikini-type swimming suits) play in a beach, with the former
holding the latter up from the water (up to her thighs, with her chest straight
up and her face towards the blue sky) -- model as this does after a deja vu scene
in the Same. Sensual, sexy manners of this type are unimaginable in the older
past, as much imperial as Maoist.

Yet this liberation is equally inseparable from its decadent orientation.
Call girls, prostitutes, and entertainment women are not hard to notice in most
downtown hot spots. "Do you want to come in with me, honey?" -- standard
questions like this asked by nice make-up young girls are a familiar scene to
eligible males (myself included) walking by near Guangzhou's downtown theatres.
More than 30,000 prostitutes were "rescued" and more than 6,600 were repatriated
to their home towns by Guangdong police in the single month of October,
1993. (SCMP 1993:8) And more than 2,683 game centres, massage parlours and hair
salons were busted for running underground prostitution businesses. In an anti-
prostitution raids, a large quantity of pornographic videos and magazines were
found in circulation. Adultery and crimes are on the rise as well. (F. Jiang 1993)

Hard rock and rap music (Chinese version) can be found in coastal cities
as in Shengzhen. A hard rock music band, receive as they did a warm reception
recently in Japan, best captured a degenerating spirit as consequent of rampant
consumerism: that the band leader, in an interview, revealed their disbelief

34. From Headline News broadcasted on Channel 14 in the states (early November, 1994).
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of any value that be, other than living in the present while enjoying it. The
official socialist ideologue has no buyer.

In a culture treating mercenary gains as glorious, as in the commercial
ethos of "Money is everything" (F.Jiang 1993; S.Strasser 1993:17) --, civility and
good mannerism are neglected enough. And it is all the more so when the masses
are largely uncultured: little or no order in purchasing tickets in public
spaces; yelling, harassing, and throwing garbage at animals in public zoos, say.
Or a car accident brought two individuals into conflict. Mr. Physically
Stronger wasted no time of using his physical comparative advantage to land a
knock-out punch to the other’s eyes (resulting in a bleeding and swollen blue-
black condition). Or consider the consequence of a biker accidentally hit a poor
grape seller in a mass market, with a large portion of the grapes falling on
dirty ground. As much sound and fury as insult and shouting had been exchanged
to no avail, and Mr.Biker, a physically impressive person as he was, did what he
did best: intimidating the seller to the point of submitting to a 5-yuan
compensation (which, in this Other of our time, can buy almost nothing), not
without sorrow as expressed in the poor seller’s facial change.

He Zhaofa, a Communist Party member yet with an amazingly candid, liberal
worldview, found it hard to resist thus commenting in an interview: "Market
reforms help creating a ‘by all means necessary’ mentality to better oneself:
cheating, lying, boosting and fabricating information." Daily news are bombarded
enough by criminal offenses of various types: stealing, robbing, drug trafficking
(S.Ogden 1991:7), misinformation, and not the least, widespread corruption among
civil servants and officials, the trustees of public welfare and social order as
they ironically are. Even Beijing’s party boss was recently ousted, as a drastic
show of force in the anti-corruption campaign by the top leaders. Faked
commodities, as a familiar scene, become so serious as an illegal activity that
local news programs have to almost daily educate the public about the danger, to

25. The two incidents herein recounted I personally witnessed.

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The effect that public security unit has to enforce the law by giving a warning sign to those stores which sell them (hanging a yellow sign read "Warning: Faked Goods" on the shelves, or if more serious, a black sign). Only when under a most serious situation is the stores' license to do business revoked. Yet the spectre of faked commodities haunts this Other with no end in sight.

By contrast to the old revolutionary days when people had a strong sense of community and everyone was taught to serve the people, "but now, no one cares anymore", Chen Lijun a female philosophy instructor in Guangzhou thus confided to me. There is a sort of spiritual crisis in this Other of our times, or in what some locals here calls the "nonsense culture" (A.Jones 1995), which, in the absence of an alternative panacea, turns to the hegemonic ideals and values of the Same for an escape route whose price is high to pay. Never before in the history of this Other has Westernphilia been so intense as it is these days. (F.Jiang 1993) The consumeristic lifeform as emerging here reflects a most triumphant Western cultural penetration, where things from advanced lands are looked up as classy, better, authentic, while things indigenous as passe, inferior, backward: Pizza Hut, Kentucky Fried Chicken, McDonald’s, Cadbury’s chocolate, biscuits from United Biscuits, Maxwell House coffee, Knorr bouillon cubes, Marlboro (Salem or Lucky Strike) cigarettes, Pepsi-Cola’s soft drinks, black Cadillac, beer from Australia’s Fosters and Denmark’s Calsberg, Estee Lauder cosmetics, shoes from London’s Gieves & Hawkes, Louis Vuitton handbags, and all the rest. (The Economist 1994a:75) Even in the Tiananmen Square demonstrations, many appealed to Western symbols (V for victory signs and a version of the stature of liberty). (J.C.Watson 1992:80) One thing is for sure: that the Manchu emperor Ch’ien-lung, would he still be alive, would not sleep well in this Other, just as he showed no inclination of granting the request of trade by George Macartney in 1793.

Very hard indeed for Westerners here not to have as it is a sense of superiority over (and condescension towards) the natives in this Other, who, while reinforcing it by being obsessed with their superior guests, yet privately
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resent their privileged status: arrogant, paternalistic, and demanding for preferential treatment. A British in Guangzhou, to my amazement, refused to wait on line in a food store and asked to be served first, and a white American insisted on checking for sanitary standards in a hotel before checking in -- to the dismay of the locals. And condescending remarks about the locals ("gook", "sick", "stupid", "disgusting") are not uncommon in conversations among Western sojourners here.

Surely this evokes the images as often found in the old colonial days when not just the masses, but "practically every leader of a newly independent state could recall some experience such as being turned out of a club or manhandled on the street by whites, often of low status. The natives were made to feel ashamed of their colour and of their culture."(P.Harrison 1979:50-1) "I begin to suffer from not being a white man," the Martiniquan political philosopher Frantz Fanon wrote, "to the degree that the white man imposes discrimination on me, makes me a colonized native, robs me of all worth, all individuality." A recent news coverage in Philippines, for instance, shows that 67% of the female populace prefer Caucasian white skin, and a lotion brand called Block & White for skin whitening is most in demand. By the same analogue, most ads on cosmetic products in this post-Mao Other (and for that matter, in most of East Asia) feature beautiful Western women as the exemplar of highest female beauty there is --, something unimaginable for the Same to single out oriental women in their ads (no, of course not, these oriental others are even looked down upon, as a matter of fact). The Western expats in this post-Mao Other (and Hong Kong, for that matter) still constitute a privileged social stratum of the superior type over the natives -- if only as a reminder of how much the logic of modernity is hegemonic, in the image of the European-Atlantic powers (something I have stressed time and again).

(2)And this Other is also facing the serious problematic of costliness in

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its emergent technophilic culture, in both (a) environmental and (b) psychical terms -- something already familiar to the hegemonic Same. (Section 2.3).

(a) To say, as it is here, that this Other suffers from an intense environmental pollution (noise, air, water, and spatial) does no justice to its awesome extremity.

Some highly unpleasant scenes are sufficient to raise one’s eyes into shock: chaotic, unorderly traffic; horn-blowing everywhere and sometimes needlessly; many traffic lights either too fast or not working at all or receiving inadequate respect among some drivers; uncontrollable noise and crowdedness (in many living spaces and public transports); intolerable traffic jam; massive smoke filling the air (from car exhaust, coal consumption, cigarette-smoking, and leaves-burning); dusty, dirty buildings (those newly built as well); dark lakes and unsanitary public parks; public toilets most unhealthy and inadequate (spartan to the extreme, water not running, no toilet door, stingy smell); spitting and urinating in public (among children); garbages thrown in the streets. Underdevelopment a foreign observer is tempted to attribute this to, but a "by any means necessary" policy of all-out economic growth to feed a demographic billionaire produces extremely high environmental costs.

Kari Huus’s study (1994:52-53) shows that, in light of this Other’s coal consumption reaching 1.522 billion tonnes by year 2000 and unless some significant changes in pollution-control technology are made, the result will not fail being devastating: massive sulphur dioxide emissions (of 10 million tonnes per annum) and serious acid rain, not yet to account for the nitrogen dioxide, dust, ash, and methane gas escaping into the atmosphere. After all, coal’s supplying 75% of the country’s energy needs, "the burning of coal has cast a pall of pollution over major Chinese cities and helped make pulmonary disease the nation’s leading cause of death." (S. Burton 1994:62-3) A foreign resident living in an urbanity of this Other most easily becomes a good candidate of developing a coughing problem in no time.

In 1991 alone, 11 trillion cubic meters of waste gases and 16 million
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metric tons of soot were emitted as polluters to the atmosphere. (N.Kristof
1993:64-5) By 2010, this Other will be the world’s largest source of acid rain,
and by 2025 will produce 3 times as much carbon dioxide as the U.S., if the
current rate continues.

(b) And secondly, so are its negative externalities on perceptual stability
in progress.

The distinction between the real and the imaginary experiences an
increasingly blurring effect in a rapidly growing commercial culture of simulacra
-- the advertising and entertaining industries as the most usual suspects (as
already discussed in Section 2.5.1). But this imaginary transformation
intensifies all the more with the passing of time. Why? This Other, as this need
not be overstressed, has yet to enter into what Walt Rostow understood as the
"mass-consumption" stage of economic growth (and will not do so until decades
later into the 21st century). If industrialization takes place when, Edward
Wrigley argues, "real incomes per head begin to rise steadily and without
apparent limit" or when, Rostow suggests, all major economic indicators
(investment, output, growth rate) take sudden, sharp, almost vertical upward
turns (E.B. 1994a:283) --, the south Chinese have their economy "taken off" only
since the early 1980’s (a national real growth-rate average of 8-10% per annum,
though with a two-digit growth history in the more developed southern region).

Yet the didactics here consists of the very fact of a sensual, hedonistic
culture, which, so mushroomly developed in a leapfrogging brief lifespan as it
is, is by itself a strong sign of its development as an on-going process --
meaning the further blurring of the dichotomy between the simulacra and the
verisimular in due time. As their technological development becomes more advanced
-- as already seen in experimental cases of heart and kidney transplants and
gradual automatization of some production processes (as in automobile and
aerospace manufacturing), their very conceptual dichotomy between the organic and
the mechanical -- the cybernetic consciousness -- will be bound towards a stage
of further maturity in a developing technophilic culture. Before long, a sense
Chapter 2. The Consumeristic & Technophilic Lifeform, & Its Price of self-doubt, hesitation, fragmentation and confusion (Section 2.3) will haunt them as well, just as it slowly starts affecting the Western moderns.

To the question, So what is the future of the costliness of this Other's technophilic lifeform?, the problematic of technology as familiar in the Same (Section 2.4) is not less relevant (if not more intensely) to this oriental Other, since its leadership is so absolutely committed to rapid industrialization to catch up with advanced economies for national wealth and power (the humiliating sufferings at the hands of the Europeans and the Japanese in the past centenary they never forget) that a call for a more environment-friendly, psyche-satisfied economic development has fallen on deaf ears.

Their excuse is not without good reason, however, if a benefit of the doubt is given as due, that this concerns only affluent, advanced countries but not for a vast continent which has for centuries been struggling to raise its populace out of the Malthusian vicious cycle of poverty and therefore could not afford doing otherwise. Coupled with this is a common resentment among the Others qua the Third World that the global environmental crisis is a historical legacy of irresponsible past European-Atlantic industrialization and its subsequent enormous consumption of global resources far beyond its relative demographic share. (B.Buzan 1991:450) In one estimate by Newsweek (Oct.23,1972), each American has 25 times the impact on the environment -- as a consumer and polluter -- as an Indian.(P.Bauer 1981:81)

As Alison Butler (1995:504) keenly observes, "the industrialized countries, in general, are greater polluters than less industrialized countries and thus tend to put a relatively greater demand on worldwide assimilative capacity. One concern heard in developing countries is that industrial economies, rather than reducing their own demand for assimilative services, could impose their environmental standards on developing countries without any assistance in paying for them, thereby reducing the opportunity for less-industrialized countries to grow...." Therefore, so the excuse goes, industrialization from above is to be done by any means necessary.
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Yet at what price? Ecological neglect (in construction of gigantic dams), desertification, deforestation, extreme pollution (air, noise, water, and spatial), the loss of topsoil and salinization, the loss and contamination of water supplies, the spreading of water scarcity, the heavy loss in grainland (devoured by factories, roads and parking lots) the exhaustion of wells, the plugging of irrigation systems and reservoirs with eroded silt, and crowdedness (1.54 billion people by 2025) especially in urbanities are no joke. (R.Kaplan 1994:60; L.Brown 1995:46-9) "So thick is the smog over Benxi, a city of one million in northeastern China," John Rossant (1994:140) and John Pearson report, "that the city doesn't appear on satellite maps. In Tianjin, wells are draining groundwater so fast that the city is sinking 2.5 meters per year" -- with millions to be relocated in many coastal regions. This post-Mao Other already notoriously outshines many others as "the second largest producer of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases" (S.Burton 1994:63) leading to global warming (and is fastly approaching being the world's largest). The construction of the Three Gorges Dam (regardless to its heroic effort to prevent periodic flooding and to produce clean hydroelectric power) is a classic illustration -- flooding 28,000 acres of farmland and 20 towns, driving millions of people from their homes, devastating wildlife, and altering landscape forever. (S.Burton 1994:62) And the new nuclear plants in operation in Guangdong and Shenyang (and 20 more to come by the year 2020) already raise deep concerns (among foreign experts) on this Other's failure to adopt international nuclear-safety standards. (S.Burton 1994:64) Pray for God's mercy they should, so it seems, if no further accidents (other than the several minor ones as had already occurred in their first few months of operation) are to be forthcoming, comparable to a Three Mile Island or Chernobyl type.

Surely, a high price it will continue paying in the decades to come (for freedom from life harshness, from subservience to brutal natural forces). A green movement and an environmental consciousness have yet to emerge in this part of the world -- late as they come to the game of industrialization by two hundred
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years or more (as compared with the 18th-century English experience). When this
day arrives, a search for "appropriate technologies" (as part of their on-going
soul-searching modernity and, in due time, postmodernity as well) will equally
run into the problematics aforesaid (Section 2.4 and Chapter 5). Already
this is happening in the newly industrialized country next door, that is, Taiwan,
with its rising multi-class movement (during the last decade or so) involving
consumers, farmers, influential intellectuals, residents of polluted areas, and
workers" taking on ecological destruction. (R. Broad 1995:436)

As well will this continental giant confront the problematic of a more
psyche-satisfied lifeworld in the search for a "post"-consumeristic lifestyle
(Chapter 3), once they reach Rostow's stage of mass consumption economy --,
though from here of the now to there of the future is still a long way to go,
well, a distance between the ending second millennium and the coming 21st century
future (if not the 22nd).

And this yearning for a more psyche-satisfied lifeworld, be it in the Same
or the Others, reflects, in a deeper level, a most spiritual crisis of modern
times, now that God was dead. Why? Let me confront this issue in Chapter 3 -- to
which I now turn.
Chapter 3. No Objectivity, Nor God, And the Critical Spirit of Science

[What we regard as reality is conditioned by the theory to which we subscribe....Beyond that, it makes no sense to ask if it corresponds to reality, because we do not know what reality is independent of a theory.

-- Stephen Hawking (1993:42-4)

Facts are not hidden answers 'out there' waiting to be found, but concepts that are invented, shaped, and fitted together into conjectural models and maps. 'Objectivity' is a troublesome notion.

-- William Lowrance (1985:42)

God is dead.

-- Friedrich Nietzsche (1974:$125)

The way you use the word 'God' does not show whom you mean -- but, rather, what you mean.

-- Ludwig Wittgenstein (1967:717;1980:52,82,85)

[O]ne sees a trend in...political and legal cultures towards treating religious beliefs as arbitrary and unimportant....More and more....culture seems to take the position that believing deeply in the tenets of one's faith represents a kind of mystical irrationality, something that thoughtful, public-spirited...citizens would do better to avoid.

-- Stephen Carter (1993:6-7)

The primordial elements that provide men with common identification and affective reciprocity -- family, synagogue and church, community -- have become attenuated, and people have lost the capacity to maintain sustained relations with each other in both time and
space. To say, then, that 'God is dead' is, in effect, to say that the social bonds have snapped and that society is dead.

-- Daniel Bell (1976:155)

[I] attribute the social and psychological problems of modern society to the fact that society requires people to live under conditions radically different from those under which the humans race evolved.

-- The Unabomber (R.Wright 1995:50)

This chapter looks at the second element of the bitter struggle within free-spirited modernity, traceable back, once more, to the succession war between the Enlightenment thinkers and the Romantics. The key problems concern the True (about what it is to know) and the Holy (about what it is to be and to belong), and how they have been spreading to the Others through hegemonic modernity. My argument, after an introduction to the rise of the godless world in Section 3.1, is two-fold, (1)the first in relation to the True, and (2)the second in relation to the Holy.

(1)In relation to the True, I argue, in Section 3.2a, that the modern search for scientific objectivity is untenable, for two reasons. (a)What constitutes factual is contentious in nature, by reasons of (i)conceptual/theoretical presuppositions, (ii)heuristic/extra-theoretical considerations, and (iii)historicist delimitations. And (b)it is also untenable, because such a search presupposes a naive substance metaphysics (behind the correspondence theory of truth) which is problematic in its core.

But this should not be conflated as endorsing the idealist, realist, and historicist views of reality. I reject them as well --, though not failing to learn something from each. The idealist view, as exemplified by positivism, is rejected, since (a)it is self-refuting, (b)it is not compatible with the lay and scientific view that there are material objects (not just as sense-data or, in a different form, as observable things) in the real world, and (c)the positivist heuristic concern for prediction and simplicity is not as feasible as is often
assumed. Neither is the realist view accepted, since, though the realist's idea of reality can be used solely as a critical term, its view that the success of science must be accounted for in terms of the test of truth (as correspondence to reality) or of approximate truth (as approximate correspondence to reality) is problematic, since we cannot know reality independent of theory. Nor should this be taken as endorsing the historicist alternative either, since it has never been able to adequately account for the tremendous scientific and technological achievements in modern times.

And the postmodern solution? Even the postmodern alternative in terms of a performative criterion of knowledge to this naive modern search for scientific objectivity should not be taken at face value either, I further argue in Section 3.3b, because of its instrumental tendency which, when carried to its extremity, can be easily translated into terror (besides the problematic of historicism as aforeindicated).

What is left, so I propose, is to maintain the critical spirit of science (solely as a critical mindset), together with the imaginary seeing of its enemies, and yet without the naivety nor dreams of either side and likewise without endorsing realism, idealism (as in positivism) and historicism (the performative turn of the postmoderns included), while still learning something from each of them.

(2) In relation to the Holy --, the spread of formal rationality in the socio-economic realm contributes instead, I argue in Section 3.2b, to a spiritual discontent in terms of (a) the loss of being (in relation to a suprasensual realm) and (b) belonging (in relation to a communal realm). One major result is socially dysfunctional, as reflected in high rates of mental illness, suicide, violence, and family breakdown in modern (and now postmodern) times.

And the postmoderns fail, I further argue in Section 3.3a, to offer any promising solution to this modern malaise, since their call for a revival of religion and for the proliferation of new religions (as opposed to the orthodox
conception of the Holy in the old days, for instance) are unable to solve the spiritual and intellectual crisis of modern (and now postmodern) times, in terms of knowing, being and belonging.

My argument is five-fold, in terms of the trend of this religious revival to become (a) commoditized into the logic of late capitalism, (b) psychopathological in character, (c) subcultural in formation, (d) contextualized within a politics of resentment, and (e) marginalized in an increasingly instrumental world.

And this bitter struggle within free-spirited modernity in relation to the True and the Holy has been spreading, I further argue in Section 3.5, to the Others as well through hegemonic modernity (as is the case of the contemporary Sinitic Other).

Contrary to what the postmoderns would like us to believe, the secularization process has yet to slow down in our postmodern times. Instead the spiritual discontent becomes more intense. The idea of a post-secular society is a postmodern myth, just as the vision of a liberating secular society was a modern myth.

3.1 The Consumeristic, Technophilic Lifeform, & The Godless World

The consumeristic, technophilic lifeform in modern times (Chapter 2) is no purely contingent historical development, reflect as it does in the practical level an escapism into life affluence and comfort in the aftermath of a world where God is dead. But this escapism is most unsatisfactory in spiritual terms - - besides the cognitive-appreciative, environmental and psychical costs (Sections 2.2 & 2.3) it also incurs.

"God is dead" -- perhaps no other summation index illustrates better the spiritual crisis of modern times than this shout of a madman in Nietzsche's Gay Science (1974:§125). (F.Nietzsche 1966) The death of God deposes the supra-
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sensible world qua the True, the Beautiful, the Good, the Just, the Holy (M. Heidegger 1977:54,61) -- in short, the realm of all highest human ideals hitherto existing, to the point of culminating into meaninglessness of whatever that be, in the name of the critical spirit of science. An intense irony here is that this critical spirit of science is not content with deposing the throne of God but equally inclined to undermining all other idiocies of human ideals ranging from the destruction of the faith in technological emancipatory power (closely interacted as it is with scientific advance) in the very name of the critical spirit of science (Chapter 2) through the dismissal of the ideal of aesthetic autonomy (Chapter 4) and of moral universality for a just society (Chapter 5) to its own belief in scientific objectivity (this chapter). Nihilism, that most rebellious spirit in repudiating all highest beliefs and values, thus stands at the door of modernity. (F. Nietzsche 1968:9-13) How then has this come about?

If the supersensible world is gone with the wind, then what is left is only this sensible one. In the ancient days, the sensible world was known in average everydayness since the dawn of human time as the lifeworld of "joy and sensuality", of beauty and love, of seduction and excitement, just as of violence and action, of "war and resistance", of cruelty and horror (F. Nietzsche 1956:11; F. Nietzsche 1968:90-91,112) -- far from the holy world of piety, abstinence, simplicity, and meditation as in Christendom for some centenaries (of which Nietzsche was most scornful, in its life-weary decadence). In our modern days, the sensible world, emerged as it has from the Christian centenaries, shifts its ethos into a consumeristic lifeform from a concern with salvation in the suprasensible realm to a devotion to life betterment in the phenomenal one, from a faith in magical power to one in technological emancipation, and from a collectivist-moral solidarity to an more individual-oriented minimal self. The translation of Nietzsche's "God Is Dead" in the level of practical life, of the daily life of the masses can best be understood in terms of this consumeristic,
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technophilic mindset largely devoid of any ideal of otherworldliness.

The most potent driving force behind all this is the institutionalized scientific/technologial dominance -- closely associated as it was with the capitalist Industrial Revolution. The fiercely individualistic, pragmatic and materialistic outlook (Section 1.3) in the capitalist self made the capitalists most adaptive to the pressure of technological invention and innovation in 18th-century English economic conditions, and thus made a good marriage of English capitalist development and the first Industrial Revolution in history. (G.Viksnins 1987; J.Schumpeter 1947:131-45; D.Gross 1992:29) The linkage between technological change and capitalist development (whose subject I repeat here from Section 1.3 as a fresh reminder) could not be closer, since sustained economic growth (absolutely crucial for a consumeristic, technophilic lifeform), especially driven by fierce competition among rivals in the search for wider markets and cheaper inputs, was not possible without advance in real productivity (the technological residual), that is, could not be sustained without technological advance. (D.Landes 1993:159)

In this sense, the expansion in trade and industry had the virtue of accelerating technological development which twisted the direction of scientific research towards utilitarian importance -- something not always true in the pre-modern period. This bridging of the gap between scientific research and technological application had fundamental consequences to the emerging scientific dominance in modern times -- as opposed to earlier times when even the revolutionary discoveries of Gilbert, Harvey, Galileo, and Kepler, for instance, had no immediate practical importance. (A.Musson 1969:12) And the capitalist industrial revolution had changed all that: everything was to be evaluated on the basis of its pragmatic, utilitarian, and materialist importance.

The closing of the gap between scientific and technological development (without whose continuous gains in real productivity modern consumeristic lifeform could not be so far sustained) means the penetration of the critical
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spirit of science into the consciousness of average everydayness, to an extent unimaginable before in pre-modern epochs. "Science does not affect our everyday life", Peter Berger (1994) once said, "but technology does." Nothing is farther from the truth than an innocent statement of this sort. Our modern age is most scientific-oriented, not just technophilic. Perhaps nothing expresses this better than the modern consciousness of the critical spirit of science, not just (1) in intellectual exploration but equally (2) in the business and social worlds. The critical spirit of science here means the paradigmatic spirit of the Enlightenment: "clear thinking of reason, rigorous thought, cautious judgment, logical conclusions" (A. Megill 1985:66) -- within the constraint of the testimony of observations and sensual experience.

(1) In the Intellectual Realm. Let me first examine the critical spirit in the intellectual realm (and later the socio-business counterpart as well).

The way in which the moderns, even among the masses, think and behave takes a different form from that of the medievals and the ancients. In the pre-modern days when the spirit of the sacred as in magic, myth, and mysticism remained dominant, it symbolized what Emile Durhkeim called the collective idea which rendered social unity and cultural personality possible, in giving its members a sense of continuity between past and future, just as much as in posing as an external, moral force constraining human thought and action (to the point of inhibiting the development of individual personality, in light of little tolerance of deviance from established socio-moral codes). (E. Durhkeim 1915:475; A. Giddens 1985:75) But things had changed since the Scientific Revolution.

Marcus Tullius Cicero, a brilliant Roman orator, statesman, and philosopher as he was, once thus spoke: "What was incapable of happening never happened, and what was capable of happening is not a miracle... Consequently, there are no miracles." (N. Gibbs 1995:66-7) By the 17th century, the new natural sciences (whose subject I repeat here from Section 1.2 as a fresh reminder) came to
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question the intellectual foundation of astrology, chiromancy, alchemy, physiognomy, and astral magic -- as shown in the works of Marin Mersenne and Pierre Gassendi against magical animism, of Robert Boyle against alchemy, and of William Harvey against witchcraft. (K. Thomas 1971:643-5) The notion that the universe was in fact subject to immutable natural laws, for instance, rendered the very concept of miracles problematic, weakened the belief in the physical efficacy of prayer, and challenged the faith in direct divine inspiration -- not without, sometimes, causing negative reaction from the Church (the case of Galileo as a good exemplar). Bernard Meland (1966:64) was therefore right: that "scientific principles of causation ruled out the religious teaching concerning miracles, or the supernatural work of grace."

Even the formulation of probability theories (by such brilliant mathematicians as Cardan, Fermat, Huygens, Pascal, the Bernouillis and de Moivre) helped to show how chancel events and human misfortunes can be understood and predicted through the use of statistical laws. (K. Thomas 1971:655) As Bacon put it, Fortune was a non-existent entity upon empirical scrutiny. And in such areas as health, Bryan Wilson (1985:13) recalls, "the dispositions of the supernatural were no longer regarded as adequate explanation for man’s experience. Sanitation, diet, and experimental pharmacology displaced prayer, supplication, and resignation as the appropriate responses to disease and death."

By the end of 17th century, the new social sciences further contributed to a higher awareness that social events can equally be subject to general laws. "No government", James Harrington declared at the time, "is of so accidental or arbitrary an institution as people are wont to imagine; there being in societies natural causes producing their necessary effects as well as in the earth or the air." Human misfortunes, instead of being explained away as the work of witchcraft, fate, divine providence, or else, could now be understood through the structure of social institutions and the victim’s family history, for instance. And social contract theorists like Thomas Hobbes and Samuel Pufendorf
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regarded the social contract which converted the state of nature (where life was nasty, brutish and short) into a civil state as a new beginning, a starting-all-over which constituted progress over the past.(J.Schneewind 1989;T.Hobbes 1909;D.Gross 1992:27)

The critical spirit of science rejects, therefore, any revealed suprasensory truth as unreliable, as outside the faculty of reason and sense experience (P.Sorokin 1956:91) -- in three important senses.

(a) Firstly, the moderns do not require any claim to truth (D.Crosby 1988:201-2) to be consistent with the two paramount medieval sources of authority (the holy Bible and the ecclesiastic tradition). And precisely this reliance on accepted authority the critical spirit of science as propounded in the 17th- and 18th-century Europe opposed, in favor of a more autonomous method of enquiry, free of the exegical-hermeneutic dogmatism of the religious source.

After all, the fundamental problem here is that what was certain to the medievals no longer appeals to the moderns (D.Crosby 1988:154-5), and the questions the former raised and the answers they gave were conditioned by the cultures and times in which they lived -- just as the same logic applies to the latter. This is not surprising, since "many alleged revelations or authoritative scriptures are found among the religions of the world. The Christian Bible is only one of these. These books are the products of ancient cultures and are written in ancient languages, which scholars living today have to interpret in order to try to understand or translate."(D.Crosby 1988:161) And the languages are "often highly symbolical, metaphorical, practical, or allusive -- not prosaically exact and literal as in theoretical treatise." The grounds for believing the teachings of religion, Sigmund Freud argued, often depend on the alleged proofs handed down to posterity from primal ancestors who superstitiously believed them out of primitive ignorance, and "these proofs they have left us are set down in writings which themselves bear every mark of untrustworthiness."(S.Freud 1961:27)
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Going even deeper into the root of the problematic, other thinkers like Wittgenstein and Nietzsche spoke of the grammatical basis of theological enquiry, as Wittgenstein put it, "The way you use the word 'God' does not show whom you mean -- but, rather, what you mean." (L.Wittgenstein 1980:50,82,85 & 1967:717;G.Martin 1989:332) "Grammar tells us what kind of object anything is. (Theology as grammar.)." (L.Wittgenstein 1958:373;G.Martin 1989:314) The point here is that theological questions are not factual questions but involve the understanding of the grammar of the word 'God.' And therefore it is pointless to ask whether or not religious language "refers" in the ordinary way, since language-game is neither reasonable nor unreasonable and is based on trust: "It is there -- like our life." (H.Putnam 1992:168,174,177)

(b) Secondly, this search for an autonomous method of enquiry allows the moderns to focus on issues which are regarded as properly mundane, as legitimately thisworldly, such as those concerning the workings of efficient causes, the discovery of general laws (to describe, explain, predict, and postdict the functions of physical entities and the patterns of their causal interactions in an exact and systematic manner), and to shun such valuative issues as the chief ends of human existence, life-meaningfulness, Creation, God, immortality -- on which the medievals concentrated. (D.Crosby 1988:202) It is not the business of science, Max Weber in Science as A Vocation (1946) told us, to answer questions like this.

(c) Finally, in focusing on valuative issues, the medievals shied away from vigourous mathematical analysis or reasoning as espoused by the moderns and took for granted the theo-metaphysical dual notions not only that the universe was value-embedded in accordance to the designs of a supernatural being, but also that it was "a hierarchically ordered, pluralistic domain, consisting of fundamentally different levels or grades of being." (D.Crosby 1988:202-3) By contrast, the moderns appeal to quantitative-mathematical analyses, in reducing all complexity and variety in nature "to a small set of mathematically
formulated, universally applicable principles and laws."

But this more critical, scientific orientation of the moderns should be given credit (as discussed in Chapter 1 and thus not to be repeated here) to the emerging autonomy of philosophy from religion at the dawn of modernity (as during the Renaissance, the development of rationalism and empiricism, and the Enlightenment) and to the scientific revolution and the capitalist-industrial transformation. This secular trend was already clearly marked, as Randall Collins (1994) suggests, with the German university reform at the time of Fichte and Hegel. In other words, science is by no means, as this needs to be stressed, the only cause of secularization in the modern West. The important point, therefore, is that all of these factors aforementioned reinforced the triumphant emergence of the critical spirit of science in modern times.

(2) In the Socio-Economic Realm. And in practical average everyday life, the human world therefore becomes what Max Weber (1958:182) called "disenchanted", in that, with the decline of magic, myth and mysticism, the fundamental ideals and values which constitute the end of human life and action (as in religious and moral ones) are now deemphasized in favouring a secular world which concerns primarily with the practical task of how to realize specific goals with the most efficient means, in accordance to the modern passions for material acquisitions as in a consumeristic, technophilic lifeform, which are as much purely mundane as characteristic of a new sport. It is with good reason, therefore, that Francis Bacon gave the natural sciences the motto "Knowledge is power", as Auguste Comte late did the same to social sciences with "Prevoir pour pouvoir" (Foreknowledge is power). (B. Smart 1992:100)

In the business and social worlds, the critical spirit of science is reflected in what Talcott Parsons, following in the footsteps of Ferdinand Toennies (M. Blute 1979:47; F. Toennies 1957), understood as the pattern-variables from an expressive (gemeinschaft) to an instrumental (gesellschaft) rational action schema (R. Wallace 1986:23) in a modern setting: namely, (a) from
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diffusiveness to specificity, (b) from affectivity to neutrality, (c) from particularism to universalism, and (d) from ascription to achievement. (G. Theodorson 1953: 477-483)

(a) In the old days, production used to be centered around a small communal setting where families and neighbours knew each other well. But with the emergence of factory and office organizations, the communal structure is broken down, in that a normal worker devotes most of his waking hours in a workplace away from home and the community, and he spends less time with his neighbours and extended family, while the reverse holds true for his immediate (nuclear) family and colleagues. Social interactions become more specific, less diffuse.

(b) A person therefore comes to think and act with others on a more neutral (less affective) basis, and the emotional bondage he has with the relatively unfamiliar neighbors and other workers is much less intense. Many working in the same place never meet, and owners and workers often do not encounter each other. Even when superiors interact with their workers, the interest is more in those aspects of the individual which are relevant to work issues. After all, mass society is often numbered in the thousand millions who produce a huge quantity of goods which must be sold to a large number of people. It would be impossible to know them all thoroughly and affectively.

(c) The normal worker, when being specific in relationship with his colleagues, bases it on a universal (impersonal) basis, in that what he comes to think and act is now decided with that which concerns merits, skills, personalities, and leadership of his fellow workers. Promotion and demotion are done on this basis -- on the basis of universal criteria which regard any appeal to particularistic relationships (coming from the same town, being a girlfriend of someone, going to the same school together) irrelevant (corrupt).

(d) And the same applies to the traditional practice of ascription (family nepotism). Simply because one is the son or uncle of another should not be the basis on which work performance and recruitment, just as much as marketing
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decision, are to be made. The judgement of the day is on achievement, not on ascription.

As a matter of course, this highly abstract schema are merely ideal types to be sure, and even for a meritocratic society like the United States which Parsons so often takes as the exemplary case is by no means perfect, as Seymour Martin Lipset (1992:57) rightly reminds us,

In many cases, of course, the United States has never been a perfect meritocracy. In the job market and other fields, people tend to favour relatives, friends, and members of their own ethnic, religious, communal, or cultural groups. And universities, though meritocratic and universalistic in their explicit values, have always favored the children of alumni and faculty, not to mention athletes, in their admissions policies. They also award special scholarships and fellowships limited to applicants from particular regional, gender, ethnic, or religious backgrounds -- though some of these practices are now outlawed.

That qualified --, this highly abstract schema helps cultivating a thinking and behavioral orientation which is highly abstracted from the traditional kin and communal ethos (which are by its nature diffuse, emotional, particularistic, and ascriptive) and now becomes as much more critical as more instrumental. One cannot be most efficient in production in competing with one's rivals if the ability to think and behave critically enough to abandon unfeasible old-fashioned ways of doing things is lacking: "The Japanese attempt to integrate the new industrial system with the old familial organization" already shows unmistakable signs of conflict. (G. Theodorson 1953:482) One is tempted, however, to assume the applicability of this critical thinking and behavioral orientation only within a factory system; yet Lee Kuan Yew's point (NPQ: 1992:9) is well taken,

What happens, though, when these people who have learned self-government and critical thinking pass through the factory gates and go home? As thinking, rational people, they ask, "What are they doing to me in this town where I live? Why is the traffic flowing
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this way and not that way? Why are the leaders acting that way, instead of this way?" Quite naturally the thought occurs that the same processes they brought to bear in the factory to beneficial results could be carried outside, to cope with municipal and other domestic problems.

And nothing exemplifies the spirit behind the new action schema better than the critical spirit of science -- how to achieve certain goals within certain means in the best possible way, especially when the gap between scientific advance and technological development is narrowed in modern capitalist-industrial days. The critical spirit of science is tainted with an instrumental ethos in modern times.

Yet, in the process, this critical spirit of science turns out to be most deconstructive of whatsoever idiocies of human ideals there be. We have already seen an intense irony in the deconstruction (Chapter 2) of the very faith in technological emancipatory power (which is closely interacted with scientific advance) in the very name of the critical spirit of science. And this irony shows itself once more in deconstructing the faith in scientific objectivity and its great expectations -- and later in the ideals of artistic autonomy (Chapter 4), and moral universality for a just society (Chapter 5) as well. Why?

Consider first the problematic of the quest for scientific objectivity qua the freedom from scholastic dogmatism and from traditional bondage in a disenchanted world.

3.2 Knowing, Being, and Belonging in the Godless World

The godless world, in its early days, was held with great expectations of boundless opportunities in the search for scientific objectivity for freedom from scholastic dogmatism and from traditional bondage. Auguste Comte in Cours de Philosophie Positive (The Positive Philosophy of Auguste Comte), for instance, regarded the history of human thought as a progression culminating in the scientific ethos (explaining events in a scientific and practical manner),
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starting as it did from a human mind which was first theological by its primitive nature (in reference to supernatural beings) and evolved later towards a metaphysical orientation (invoking more abstract unseen forces). (C.J.A. 1993:516; M.Blute 1979:47) Yet this freedom in a godless world gives the moderns neither (1) scientific objectivity nor (2) spiritual/social contentment within the sensible world -- quite on the contrary. Consider first the issue of scientific objectivity in Section 3.2a and that of spiritual/social discontent in Section 3.2b.

3.2a The Problematic of Scientific Objectivity

The early moderns suffered from a childish naivety of exaggerating the enlightened power of the critical spirit of science in the search for scientific objectivity, trapped in what Flyod Matson called "scientism." (P.Schelde 1993:125) The conception of a scientific method which is "impersonal and objective, free of human biases or preconceptions", "uninfluenced by human purposes and values" (D.Crosby 1988:192) no longer appeals to the postmoderns as it did to the philosophes during the Enlightenment. My claim is that what is left in this historical epoch of ours is to maintain the critical spirit of science while rejecting both the idealist (the positivist), the realist, and the historicist views of science without, however, failing to learn something from each of them.

Consider first (1) the contentious nature of fact and then (2) the naivety of the substance metaphysics (behind the correspondence theory of truth).

(1) The Contentious Nature of What Fact Is. The ideal of scientific objectivity is rooted in the empiricist prejudice of treating observational terms (a) as epistemologically privileged, in that they can be known with far greater certainty than, say, theoretical ones, and (b) as being epistemologically independent of theoretical statements, in that the verification and falsification of observation statements can be done without reference to theoretical ones. (C.Hempel 1966:chs.1-2; R.Keat 1975:ch.1; E.McMullin 1984:8-36) Both of these
close interrelated views, that is, (a) and (b), have come under attack.

(a) On the Epistemological Privilege. It is not just that the identification of what constitutes factual already involves, thanks to the contribution of modern cognitive psychology, some processes of perceptual discrimination (E. Nagel 1968:98) and distortion but also that there is, as Thomas Kuhn argued in The Structure of Scientific Revolution (1962), no theory-neutrality of observation in scientific research activities. The same distortion is shown by F.P. Kilpatrick, in his "transactional" school of psychology, and by Adelbert Ames, with his use of visually distorted figures such as slanted rooms, in that human perceptual experience is not as innocent as is conventionally assumed, but involves distortion by virtue of various mindsets which the sense, as William Ittleson and gestalt psychologists likewise suggest, draws upon to interpret and structure what is perceived. (W. Kuhs 1971:125-6) Previous learning of an individual, as James Gibson further confirms in Perception of the Visual World, plays an enormous role in visual perception.

What counts as fact is therefore contentious in its nature. "Facts are not hidden answers 'out there' waiting to be found," William Lowrance (1985:42) critically remarks, "but concepts that are invented, shaped, and fitted together into conjectural models and maps. 'Objectivity' is a troublesome notion" -- to which E. Weil adds, "Facts become relevant only through values." (D. Crosby 1988:196) And Edward Hall continues, "There is a growing accumulation of evidence to indicate that man has no direct contact with experience per se but that there is an intervening set of patterns which channel his senses and his thoughts, causing him to react one way when someone else with different underlying patterns will react as his experience dictates." (W. Kuhs 1971:126) Perhaps G. Harry Stine (1985:159,212) says it better,

all available data seem to indicate that the "real world" that we sense is the same to everyone, but that everyone perceives or interprets it differently. This perception of the real world is distorted by genetic inheritance, cultural factors, education and
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Scientists, as a result, often view the world (D. Myers 1983:26) through the spectacles of their preconceptions (conceptual and theoretical), though this is not to deny Willard Quine’s point (1990:119) that observation statements are epistemologically privileged only in the sense of being keyed directly to sensory stimulation and thus linking theory with outer reality.

This is not to suggest, needless to say, that anything goes. Nothing is more absurd than a view of this sort. The didactic here is that observational terms are not epistemologically privileged as this was traditionally assumed but are contextualized within the delimitations of conceptual/theoretical presuppositions. In this sense, the realist view that a scientific term is not theory-dependent or can be what Hilary Putnam (1975:198) calls "trans-theoretical," becomes highly problematic. This is not to say that we can now talk about things without referring to their causal connection with the real world (as the positivists would say) but that we cannot understand reality independent of certain conceptual/theoretical presuppositions within a historical setting: that is, that we cannot know reality itself.

The reason that the realist’s idea of external reality is to be kept while refusing to concede to the realists the view that the success of science must be accounted for in terms of the test of truth (as correspondence to reality) or of approximate truth (as approximate correspondence to reality) is that we cannot know reality itself (as will be further elaborated in Subsection 2 on the naivety of the substance metaphysics). In other words, we can still keep the idea of an external reality (solely as a critical term), without endorsing any theory of truth as correspondence to reality. What we can say, to appropriate an argument from Putnam (1987:33) for my purpose here, is that there are external things, but it cannot be said that facts are independent of conceptual/theoretical choices.
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within a historicist setting.

(b) On the Epistemological Independence. And this becomes clearer when the process of how understanding reality is distorted both (b1) by heuristic/extra-theoretical considerations and (b2) by historicist delimitations is illuminated.

(b1) Consider first heuristic/extra-theoretical considerations. The assessment of evidence and the making of inferences (as required in the process of certifying observation statements) depend largely on one's preestablished conceptual/theoretical schemes and extra-theoretical factors. And when rival conceptual and theoretical frameworks are present, the search for an objective basis for evaluation and settlement among them becomes problematic, since, insofar as they are framework-dependent, they can be "incommensurable," as Thomas Kuhn's work (1962) has shown --, or in Merleau-Ponty's existentialist language of individualist experience. (D. Porush 1985:80)

Any relevant standard of assessment is thus not adequate without the appeal to some "extra-theoretical" factors (in which case it is at least partially non-rational). The call for attention to extra-theoretical factors (historical, sociological, and psychological --, as concerning personal worship, idiosyncrasies of individual biography, personality conflict, nationality/ethnic bias, reputational influence, elegance and beauty) in psychology of research is precisely to fundamentally question the rather naive conception of rationality embedded within the modern scientific method. (T. Kuhn 1962:32)

Or in Michael Mulkay's charge, quite provocative though it is, the modern scientific method tells us only one side of the story, in ignoring the role of "scientific politics" (highly selective, manipulative presentation of evidence; deliberate misrepresentation of opposing arguments; personal attacks on opposing party's scientific integrity). (M. Mulkay 1979:89,91) John Bowers (1992:121-2), modeling after the work of Bruno Latour on postmodern science, reminds us of the
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imaginative, narrative side of science: not as argumentative, proof-seeking, but as constructive, manipulative in the use of chronicles and narration elements otherwise absent and, perhaps, chaotic in order to win allies, to struggle against all manner of adversities in the war of ideas.

Surely, this argument of extra-theoretical considerations cannot be pushed too far, since science also has its heuristic/aesthetic side: that is, it is also done in the more instrumental spirit of being useful for prediction and simple in formulation. After all, the amazing scientific/technological achievement in modern times is by no means merely accidental, or just a kind of random occurrence, since the testable predictions in scientific practice should be given credit as due. The positivists are thus with good reason to endorse an idealist view that scientific theories and concepts are to be as simple as possible and treated as instruments for prediction. (H. Putnam 1975:197-8, 208) Stephen Hawking (1993:42-4), a physicist at Cambridge University, who calls himself "a positivist of some sort," says this well in the case of physics,

The people who actually make the advances in theoretical physics don’t think in the categories that the philosophers and historians of science subsequently invent for them.... In theoretical physics, the search for logical self-consistency has always been more important in making advances than experimental results. Otherwise elegant and

The paradigmatic shift in postmodern 'science studies,' for Bruno Latour (1995), can be summarized in seven aspects as follows,

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Modern 'Science Studies'</th>
<th>Postmodern 'Science Studies'</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>-certain</td>
<td>-controversial, risky</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-objective</td>
<td>-subobjective</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-limited to facts, no value judgements</td>
<td>-simultaneous evaluation of values, people and facts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-nature not different from science</td>
<td>-nature different from science</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-no other history other than the rectification of errors</td>
<td>-history of truth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-fact = what is not discussed</td>
<td>-fact = what is being constructed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-transmitted by diffusion</td>
<td>-transmitted only through translation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-no link with society</td>
<td>-many linkages with society</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Objectivity, scientificity, rigor, standardization, and universality are now taken as issues concerning logistics (e.g., practical consequences of the change of scale), not causes --, to be further contextualized within discourses on collectives (humans and non-humans as well, in relation to politics, values, subjectivity, passions, the objectification by science and technology, for instance). This is not to reject science, but to situate science with its many linkages with society broadly defined.
beautiful theories have been rejected because they don’t agree with observation, but
I don’t know of any major theory that has been advanced just on the basis of experiment.
The theory always came first, put forward from the desire to have an elegant and
consistent mathematical model. The theory then makes predictions, which can then be
tested by observation. If the observations agree with the predictions, that doesn’t
prove the theory; but the theory survives to make further predictions, which again are
tested against observation. If the observations don’t agree with the predictions, one
abandons the theory....This...illustrates well the difficulty of being a realist in the
philosophy of science, for what we regard as reality is conditioned by the theory to
which we subscribe....Beyond that, it makes no sense to ask if it corresponds to
reality, because we do not know what reality is independent of a theory.

But this idealist tendency in the positivist stand is not completely
unproblematic either. The scientific enterprise is more complicated than is
allowed in the positivist worldview. The reason is three-fold.

Firstly, positivism, insofar as it treats science as instrumental for
prediction with the context of certain end-goals at hand, is inherently self-
refuting, since it accepts no rational method except the scientific one so
understood, as in the Verifiability Theory of Meaning which states that the
meaning of an "intellectual conception," in Charles Pierce’s words, is identical
with the "sum" of its "practical consequences."(H.Putnam 1975:272) But this
verifiability theory of meaning is itself neither empirically testable nor
mathematically provable.(H.Putnam 1975a:288) Suppose, however, that it is just
a proposal, not a theory, in which case it is neither true nor false and thus
requires no proof (be it empirical or mathematical). But then proposals of this
kind already presuppose ends or values (such as the instrumental value in the
positivist framework) which are not proved, such that the goodness of ultimate
ends and values is entirely subjective, just as Alan Garfinkel once spoke to his
relativist students in their own relativist jargon, "I know where you’re coming
from, but, you know, Relativism isn’t true-for-me." The same can be said to
positivism, as Putnam (1975a: 290) puts it rather wittingly, "I understand your
view, but, you know, positivism isn't rational in my system."

Secondly, the idealist trace in positivism is not compatible with the lay and scientific view that there are material objects (not just as sense-data or, in a different form, as observable things) in the real world and thus fails to explain either that scientific theory can be true or that scientific practice tends to discover truth, other than that it "leads to successful prediction" and "is simple."(H.Putnam 1975:208-9)

Finally, the positivist heuristic concern for prediction and simplicity is not as feasible as is often assumed.(H.Putnam 1975a:299) The reason is that for a falsifying hypothesis which passes the requirements of predictability and simplicity, there can be many other mutually exclusive ones which are compatible with background knowledge. Thus, the positivists have to come up with an informal notion of rationality (on grounds of coherence, postulating unnecessary entities, postulating those which are not sufficiently observable, or else) in order to decide which theories it is rational to test and which it is rational to refuse to even test. Even then, the positivist view is not useful for those scientific theories which are not accepted on the basis of predictability and simplicity at all, that is, those which are historical and therefore not repeatible. A good example is the Darwinian theory of evolution, which is accepted by virtue of the coherence of explanation for the phenomenon of speciation, but not on grounds of testable predictions.(H.Putnam 1975a:300)

(b2)Moreover, both the idealist (as in positivism) and realist worldviews need be further qualified within the very delimitation as imposed by historicism on what reality is to be understood. Surely, this must be taken with care, -- that is, without committing the fallacy of a different kind, namely, the historicist reductionism. My claim, as said before, is to endorse the critical spirit of science without endorsing idealism (as in positivism), realism, and historicism, while also learning something from each of them.

Let me illustrate some of the historicist delimitations in question.
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Science, in postmodern times, becomes another form of discourse, though not without its particularly aggressive claims on objectivity (A. Ross 1991:113) --, as Latour (1993:27,40) recently writes,

the representation of things through the intermediary of the laboratory is forever dissociated from the representation of citizens through the intermediary of the social contract....[The same holds true to the disconnection] between the artificiality of facts and the artificiality of the Body Politic....Today, now that we are no longer entirely modern, these two senses are moving closer together again....I am not claiming that the moderns are unaware of what they do, I am simply saying that what they do...is possible only because they steadfastly hold to the absolute dichotomy between the order of Nature and that of Society....The only thing I add is the relation between those two different sets of practices.

This re-connection of fact and society is to reveal the institutional aspects of science from the historical-cultural perspective. For instance, science now falls into a trend of what Martin Rodbell, the 1994 Nobel laureate in medicine, criticizes as the "commercialization of science" (everyone out to make a buck from his research) in modern capitalist societies. In other words, scientific research is more and more instrumental (goal-oriented), not for knowledge for its own sake which so much drove Rodbell's work in the earlier days: "Underlying all of that is that they are not willing to take a chance on people like myself, exploring the unknown, really looking at things that we never considered." (The New York Times 10/11/94)

Needless to stress --, this is not to suggest that science is nothing but politics and commerce. Nothing is more absurd than a view like this, since the tremendous material-technological achievement in modern times is closely linked to the amazing success of modern science (and technology). (Sections 1.3 & Chapter 2) The important point to remember is that how reality is to be understood

28: In an interview broadcasted on CNN (12/11/94).
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depends, however, on both theoretical, extra-theoretical, and historicist factors, and to understand reality itself is not to be had. Ruth Hubbarb, a Harvard biologist, has a relevant point here: "Our scientific reality, like all reality, is a social construct. And by that I do not mean that there is no real world out there, only that what we see and how we interpret it depends on the larger social context....Scientists do not just hold up a mirror to nature. They use something more like a coarse sieve through which fall all the things they don’t notice or take to be irrelevant. The intellectual labour of scientists consists of constructing a coherent picture of the world from what they sift out as noteworthy and significant." (C.Bustamante 1995:9)

Yet this by no means suggests either that anything goes. Again, nothing is farther from the truth, since, more than any other approach to knowledge, science requires a vigorous process of experimentation that only those scientific theories which withstand the most testing have the best chance to survive in the community of science. But this is not to imply that those which have the good fortune to survive reveals what reality is, in the name of scientific objectivity.

Value-neutrality, disinterestedness, and organized skepticism, for instance -- ideals of this sort embedded within the modern scientific method come under serious attack by sociologists of knowledge, for the untenable presupposition of a form of rational anthropology. The central tenet of rational anthropology (though with a Christian source) is its conception of humans as a rational species (M.Landmann 1974:111,115), in which reason is elevated to the primary position and is to subjugate other forces (instincts, drives, desires, emotions, wills) under its control, if only to maximal-develop that which is uniquely human -- pleasing as it is to false human pride.

It aims to downgrade the values of subjective sensuality, of the subconscious (like Goethe’s conception of the more elemental strata of the soul), of instincts (like Freud’s notion of life and death instincts), of desires (like
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Marx's and Veblen's views of the desire for possessions and for pecuniary consumption, respectively, and of the will (like Schopenhauer's idea of the service of the will) -- and therefore purposively downgrades the non-rational attributes of humans (as recognized in biological anthropology). (M. Landmann 1974:120-1,129,134)

The rational-anthropological tenet of humans as a rational being is also at odds with its cultural counterpart which alternatively suggests that humans as an intellectual being are at once and inseparably socio-cultural, historio-traditional (M. Landmann 1974:218-21,227), and psychological. After all, as a cultural being, the proponents argue, humans depend on the collected wealth of cultural experiences and inventions of the past as the basis of their existence. As a social being, they cannot stand outside a community, in pain of becoming ape-like in behaviors, since the social facilitates cultural transmission -- in order for humans to be acculturated.

As a historical being, they are bound to a particular culture of their time. As a traditional being, they come to acquire knowledge (if not always in terms of conceptual schemes) and skills from the older generation -- through tradition. And as a psychological being, they are governed as much by reason as by desires, instincts, drives, emotions, and wills. In the end, the problem with rational anthropology, or with the positivist conception of rationality in the present context, reflects, from one perspective, the naive conception of rationality in abstraction: the distortion resulting from separating scientific method from scientific activity and socialized nature -- just as Marx criticised the classical economists' fable of individualism à la Robinson Crusoe as individualism in abstraction.

In one of his multi-level criticisms of positivism (and realism, for that matter), Thomas Kuhn forcefully argued (though it is Karl Popper who, though following a different version of positivism known as falsificationism, was the first to point out) against the notion of a logic of discovery in science and
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instead focused on the psychology of research just as much in the structure of scientific revolutions (as in "extraordinary science") as in problem-solving scientific activities (as in "normal science"). Others wait no time to attack the naivety of scientism through other means.

Just to cite two more instances, hermeneutic scholars (of which Hans Gadamer and Paul Ricoeur are among the most representative) have always placed the empirical subject within historio-cultural realities, in whose delimitation any method searching for a value-free, objective, self-transparent standpoint is untenable. (J. Dicenso 1990:93) And language-game thinkers (of which Peter Winch, following in the footsteps of the latter Wittgenstein is a good exemplar) emphasize the role of language-games within which individual understanding and interpretation of social practices and institutions are to occur, though the grounding of these language-games in the end is neither reasonable nor unreasonable and only reflects some forms of life at a particular historical epoch. (R. Bernstein 1976:70-1)

"Without language, thought is a vague uncharted nebula", the structuralist Ferdinand de Saussure wrote, "There are no pre-existing ideas, and nothing is distinct before the appearance of language" which, for Claude Levi-Strauss, in special regard to certain underlying deep cultural structures, shapes human thought and influences human conduct. But historicism as illustrated in this language-centered view of human cognition cannot be pushed too far either (as will be so criticized in Subsection 2 hereafter within the context of an alternative, opposing view of cognition like the one suggested by Paul Churchland). (J. Haldane 1992:190; C. Ember 1988:188; R. Wallace 1986:266-7)

That put aside --, it is no wonder that such critics as Stanley Aronowitz regard science as a new ideology whose power penetrates into every realm of modern life -- not so much as the realization of universal reason as dreamt by the philosophes. (A. Ross 1991:11) This power takes the form of what Jean Lyotard calls the scientific genre of discourse so conspicuous in modern lifeworld whose
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hegemony thrives at the expense of alternative genres, which are forced to the sideline, forgotten, neglected, or repressed. (J. Lyotard 1986:16-8, 46; R. Rorty 1982:203) These "losing" alternative genres are "wronged", since conflicts among genres (incompatible as they often are to each other) cannot be resolved impartially. Whichever is hegemonic tends to impose its own rules on the others.

Or in Foucault’s idea of the spread of normalization in modern life, the scientific ethos come to constrain how daily activities are to be normally carried out, to the extent that other voices, other realities, or other perspectives (be they about external nature, race and gender, crime and sexuality, the physical-psychological life, or the actors themselves) are violently marginalized, forcibly homogenized. (S. White 1991:18-9) The marginalized voices are denied scientific status and thus rational legitimacy, be they in, as Andrew Ross (1991:12, 134) beautifully puts it, "the contagions of rhetoric, the distortions of passion, the subversions of imagination, and the obduracies of ritual, faith, folklore, and convention." And "the lesson that science and technology are ideologies in their own right, intimately tied up with bureaucratic organization of power and with domination over nature, had not yet been fully borne out." This hegemony idealizes the imagery of science from its hidden, vested material and institutional interests, just as much as its power politics. (A. Ross 1991:29)

Donna Haraway’s Simians, Cyborgs & Women (1991) and Primate Visions: Gender, Race, and Nature in the World of Modern Science (1989), for instance, wonderfully have this marginalized voice in science told. The construction of scientific knowledge cannot be separated from the social relations of race, sex, and class, as Haraway puts it, "science grows from and enables concrete ways of life, including particular constructions of love, knowledge and power" (1989:8), and "natural sciences, like human sciences, are inextricably within the processes that give them birth. And so, like the human sciences, the natural sciences are culturally and historically specific, modified, involved...The detached eye of
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objective science is an ideological fiction, and a powerful one. But it is a fiction that hides -- and is designed to hide -- how the powerful discourses of the natural sciences really work. Again, the limits are production, not reduction and invalidating." (1989:12-3) Likewise, Edward Said in Orientalism (1992:136-9) made a devastating critique of the very idea of scientific objectivity in his study of how the Orient has been understood in European experience, since "the Orient is not an inert fact of nature" but "a relation of power, of domination, of varying degrees of a complex hegemony." "They cannot represent themselves; they must be represented," thus spoke Marx of the European hegemonic expansion to the Others. (D.Haraway 1989:10)

But historicism so understood in these passages need be criticized as well, since the tendency to treat scientific practice as nothing but the outcome of institutional/cultural evolution and to regard many philosophical problems (such as the epistemic search for truth as correspondence to reality) as pseudo-philosophical problems becomes rather boring in postmodern times. After all, they all tend to explain the problems away, or to reduce them into some conception of language, power, politics, culture, or else. That said --, this is not to reject historicism without learning something from it, as Putnam (1975a:302) says it well, "if there is anything we have learned from historicism, it is that there is no external place, no Archimedean point." Yet to abandon the quest for an

22. The historicist framework has often been used in the social sciences in different forms --, be they hermeneutic, language-game, stratificationist, institutionalist, conventionalist, or pragmatist, as already indicated in Section 3.2.2.

Surely, one cannot always so neatly delineates different forms of historicism at work. Recent ethnographic studies (G.Marcuse 1995), for instance, incorporates some of these forms (I indicate above) in four different hybrid ways, that is, (a) social constructionism, in that reality is nothing but socially constructed, (b) reflexive ethnography, in that reality is to be treated critically in special relation to its ethical/moral presumptions, (c) world system theory, in that reality is to be understood within the context of world historical macro-processes (e.g., narratives of intersocietal/cultural processes), and (d) resistance discourse, in that reality (in everyday norms and social life) is distorted through dominating/hegemonic processes in a systematic, institutional fashion. Now, (c) and (d), just to illustrate my point, can belong in a hybrid way to the historicist framework of the stratificationist and institutionalist forms --, with the difference, of course, that (c) is more globally oriented, whereas (d) is more locally focused.

As will be clear shortly, none of these historicist frameworks can be taken too far; beyond a certain point, they all tend to explain the problematic of truth away or to become reductionistic of various forms (e.g., power, politics, culture, language, or else). See also footnote #30.
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integrative, totalistic epistemology is not the same thing as giving up the enterprise of philosophy all together, as John Rawls (1971) long ago told us not to. My claim is that we can still keep the critical spirit of science without however endorsing its naive ideal of scientific objectivity as in positivism and realism nor accepting the historicist reductionism, while learning something from each of them.

(2) The Naivety of the Substance Metaphysics. The naive search for scientific objectivity also presupposes certain questionable epistemological assumption in relation to the correspondence theory of truth.

The ideal of objectivity in the modern scientific method -- in aiming for the discovery of general laws and principles (for the purposes of description, explanation, prediction, and posdiction of the workings of physical entities and the patterns of their causal interactions) -- already takes for granted, as in realism, a conception of truth which is representational (as it is later developed into what is now known as the correspondence theory of truth). From the ancients (Aristotle, Plato, the Stoics) through the medievals (St.Augustine, Aquinas) to the moderns (George Moore, Bertrand Russell, the early Wittgenstein, Alfred Tarski, Lord Edward Herbert of Cherbury), such a conception of truth has a long history indeed. (D.Crosby 1988:175-6; J.Haldane 1992:184) To say, for instance, that the proposition, "X exists", is true requires, in accordance to this conception of truth, that there is a person-entity in the world of which the proposition is representational, that is, that the person called X is not fictional and is real in the world. Or in Herbert's parlance, such a conception differentiates a thing as it is from that thing as it appears to us.

In the context of Western intellectual history, such a conception of truth takes for granted a deep-rooted metaphysics, namely, the substance-attribute metaphysics, which, when applied to the idea of matter in the modern era, considers matter as a kind of substance existing in its own right, with its own
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essential property (or -ies), and with types of accidental traits appropriate to it. (D.Crosby 1988:174-5,178) The "essential"-"accidental" ontological dichotomy embedded within the substance-attribute metaphysics already presupposes a phenomenal world as it appears to us and a noumenal world as it is.

The substance-attribute metaphysics is responsible for many untenable dichotomies as developed in the course of Western intellectual history (and culture, for that matter) which many radical thinkers of our modern times (Friedrich Nietzsche, later Ludwig Wittgenstein, Martin Heidegger, Michael Foucault, Gilbert Ryle, Richard Rorty, Jacques Derrida) come to reject: mind versus body, subject versus object, phenomenon versus noumenon, self versus society. In the context of the correspondence conception of truth, the problematic of the metaphysics is that there is no way to distance oneself from the set of representatives from which we can then compare them from their object. (D.Crosby 1988:179) Or in James Dicenso's parlance, the very moment of even asking the question of representation (or correspondence) already presupposes the operation of some prior conceptual frame of reference that is to provide the standard of measure that makes specific judgement possible. (J.Dicenso 1990:14)

This should not be surprising, since within the metaphysics, insofar as each substance exists in and by itself, there is no way to know whether the properties we perceive or conceive are those really attributable to a substance. Richard Rorty, for sure, notoriously blamed the legacy of the Cartesian philosophy of mind in its perpetuation of this bad business of representation, in that an enduring 'I' was treated as a distinct entity known directly to itself, in its interaction with an outside world. (J.Haldane 1992:182) So did Wittgenstein: "I have tried to convince you of just the opposite of Descartes' emphasis on 'I', since insofar as the Cartesian "I" is still "entangled in the net of language," human consciousness can only occur within it, and insofar as this "I" still wants to refer to something beyond language, it is utterly
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unsayable. (G. Martin 1989: 204-5, 345, 351) And Gilbert Ryle in The Concept of Mind derided the Cartesian notion of the mind as a sort of "ghost in the machine" --, with which Daniel Dennett recently concurs in suggesting that the very idea of a self or mind is just a story. (D. Gelman 1992: 71-2) After all, for more than a century, modern brain scientists have hopelessly looked for a self or mind and now conclude that "there is no conceivable place for such a self to be located in the physical brain, and that it simply doesn't exist." (A. Park 1995: 52)

The core problematic of the substance-attribute metaphysics, in the end, is that the very notion of a substance existing in and by itself, and for that matter, of a noumenal world has never been proved and has been deep-rooted in the Western philosophical tradition as to be used as an un-questioned first principle by different thinkers for a variety of purposes. Even Kant conceded in the end, in The Critique of Pure Reason, that it is un-intelligible to us humans. (H. Putnam 1987: 41) "And thus, as in all other cases where we use Words without having clear and distinct Ideas, we talk like Children; who, being questioned, what such a thing is, which they know not, readily give this satisfactory answer, That it is something; which in turn signifies no more, when so used, either by Children or Men, but that they know not what", John Locke wrote, "The idea then we have, to which we give the general name Substance, being nothing." (C. Levin 1988: 55) In this sense, the correspondence theory of truth becomes a victim of the metaphysics.

Some thinkers (Wittgenstein, Nietzsche) suggests that this bad business of substance metaphysics is grammatical in origin, since we hardly step outside of what Nietzsche called the "prisonhouse" of language, and the very idea of a autonomous entity is nothing other than the supreme subject in grammar. (A. Megill 1985: 83, 95) As Heidegger spoke likewise, "language speaks," but without the presence of an author. (A. Megill 1985: 287) So did Wittgenstein (1985: #373) concur, "Essence is expressed by grammar....Grammar tells us what kind of object anything is." And the linguistic breakthrough by Benjamin Lee Whorf, in his study of Hopi
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Indians, suggests a similar line of thought, that the underlying structure of a language, in that "their linguistic backgrounds are similar, or can in some way be calibrated," determines how one is to think about the world. (W. Kuhns 1971:133-4)

But this language-centered conception of human cognition need be qualified, as indicated before. Paul Churchland (1995:320-22), for one, recently argues that the advance in neurobiology questions this language-centered view. The more correct way of saying, consequently, as is the case in his "neurobiological" conception of cognition (if the label is not a little mistaken), is that human cognition is as much shaped by the cultural setting within which humans interact with each other as developed through a long learning process of experience and training. The language factor is now reinterpreted as the medium through which this cultural transmission and the long learning process are to be carried out.

Yet this qualification does not reject the view of reality as largely, though not totally (as this cannot be pushed too far), socially/culturally constructed. But this is not to reject the conception of the real world, since it can still be kept as a critical term to give us a vintage point from which to question things, to refuse to blindly accept social/natural reality as given to us --, while acknowledging that we cannot know reality itself and even that we also cannot know it approximately (whatever this "approximation" may mean and however this may be measured, as some probabilists/reliabilists still dream of doing). That is, the idea of external reality can be kept as a critical term, but the theory of truth as correspondence to reality remains highly problematic.

In any way, the rationale that the objectivity ideal embedded in the modern scientific method is still problematic to its very core. In this regard, though ironically, the modern scientific method still shares the ideal embedded within the medieval mode of inquiry (however much the former wants to reject the latter), in searching for the Thomistic and Aristotelian ideal of a body of knowledge that could be deductive, universal, and objective (D. Crosby 1988:204) -
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- or for what William James in "The Will to Believe" understood as a childish
desire for certainty in science, much nourished as it was in the early modern
days by the Cartesian longing to live in a risk-free world. (C. Lasch 1991:289) But
this should not pose as a barrier to recognize that, in each era of the history
of science, it is often the prevailing scientific ideal of the time (for
instance, "the ascendency of Hellenic civic idealism, the artistic aspiration of
the Renaissance in Bacon, the religious quest of the Reformation in Swammerdam")
that largely determines what constitutes an acceptable piece of scientific work
(R. Eden 1983:156-8), just as the postmoderns in our times think of science in a
more sober, less euphorious light.

The search for foundationalism, or in John Dewey’s words, "the quest for
certainty", is no longer a realistic scientific goal for many. Self-evident
principles as in rationalism (which Quine made a name of himself in attacking
through his devastating critique of analyticity and necessity) and empirical
givenness as in empiricism (which Wilfred Sellars was equally known for his
challenge of, as the "Myth of the given") --, wishful strivings like this are now
taken as, in Foucault’s phrase, the "illusion of autonomous discourse." (J. Haldane
A sensible question to ask then is of course, What is there to replace the naive
positivist scientific method?

Such contemporary positivists as Carl Hempel (1966) and Larry Laudan (1977)
-- and, for that matter, such realists as Ernan McMullen (1984) and Daniel Little
(1993:183-207) -- are more sophisticated than their predecessors and talk more
about the obtainable ideals of, say, confirmation (rather than the ideal goal of
verification and proof) -- and focus on issues more of problem-solving than of
truth-seeking. After all, it is now recognized that no scientific theory can be
proved, since however many times the results of experiments agree with some
theory, Stephen Hawkings (1988:10) reminds us, one can never be sure that future
ones will not contradict it. And those who opt for a weaker form of realism (as
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in reliabilism/probabilism, because of their talk of reliability and probability as opposed to certainty and proof, that is, of approximate truth or probable truth) are still trapped, though to a lesser extent, within the bad business of representation, or within the naive theory of truth as correspondence to reality.

Others, however, opt for different paths along the line of historicism: just to cite some major ones, such hermeneuticists as Paul Ricoeur (1974) and Hans Gadamer (1975) on interpretiveness; such language-games thinkers as the later Wittgenstein (1958) and Peter Winch (1958) on grammar; such stratificationists as Karl Marx (1978), Jurgen Habermas (1971), Theodore Adorno (1982), Max Horkheimer (1993), Herbert Marcuse (1973) and C.Wright Mills (1956) on class bias; such institutionalists as Max Weber (1949), Randall Collins (1974), Ralf Dahrendolf (1959), and Lewis Coser (1956) on conflict analytics; such conventionalists as Thomas Kuhn (1962) and Paul Feyerabend (1975) on psychology of research; and such pragmaticists as John Dewey (1929), Charles Peirce (1957), and William James (1957) on pragmaticalness, especially in relation to the social sciences. (J. Watkins 1970:30; M. Mulkay 1979:48; R. Wallace 1986:77-138)

And yet, if there is one major character which these diverse approaches share in common (in light of their rejection of the once paramount, medieval sources of authority as well, that is, the holy Bible and the ecclesiastic tradition), it will be the critical spirit of science without, however, its ideal of scientific method and objectivity. But since many of them often become successful in various ways either to dissolve the genuinely philosophical

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Surely, the blurring of the distinction cannot be pushed too far. Cultural constructionism as in sociology of knowledge is more concerned with the production, distribution, legitimization, and internalization of any body of knowledge which passes as "reality" in a society, as Thomas Luckmann (1966:1,12-3) and Peter Berger long ago pointed out. In this sense, it plays a role similar to history, psychology, and biology that are relevant to epistemological/methodological issues (such as those concerning prediction, explanation, truth, verification, and proof). Yet it cannot solve within its own proper frame of reference (that is, within the sociological perspective) these problems which, in their deeper nature, are more philosophical than sociological (and for that matter, historical, psychological, and biological) and thus fall more to the jurisdiction of epistemology, the philosophy of social/natural sciences, the philosophy of action, the philosophy of language, and the philosophy of mind than to that of sociology (and for that matter, history, psychology, and biology). See also footnote #29.
problems away or to reduce them into different institutional/cultural versions of historicism --, the smart thing to do is to keep this critical spirit of science without endorsing historicism (and for that matter, positivism and realism) while trying to learn something from each of them (as discussed before).

Surely, it still stands for the paradigmatic spirit of the Enlightenment with its dreams denied, however: "clear thinking of reason, rigorous thought, cautious judgment, logical conclusions" (A.Megill 1985:66), within the constraint of the testimony of observations and sensual experience -- which, for the romantics, the enemy of the Enlightenment, only helps to create a philistine modern culture which is too critical, too skeptical, too rational, as Nietzsche thus complained, or too calculative in thinking, as Heidegger did so likewise. (A.Megill 1985:75-6,178).

Be strange though it may, this critical spirit of science has come to turn against what it is to serve -- that is, in challenging the modern positivist scientific method as naive (and God knows what will happen to other approaches too). After all, scientists are dependent on the ideals of their time and often unaware of the disturbing impact that science at a later time could have upon their ideals. With good sense, consequently, Nietzsche who began with a relentless critique of the modern scientific method only ended up in praising its critical spirit. Or in Descartes' remark, in his attempt to apply the critical spirit in scientific method to philosophy (though for the naive search for foundationalism), "to accept as true only that which cannot be doubted. To reject as false whatever admits of doubt even in the slightest degree" (D.Crosby 1988:207) -- well, not so extreme, but something like that in the end.

The irony here is, of course, that the search for scientific objectivity (as part of the Western ideal of the modern self) succumbs as well to the deconstructive power of the critical spirit of science. Perhaps a good case comes
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from hard-core scientific advance itself\textsuperscript{31}; quantum mechanics and chaos theory. 

In contrast with classical mechanics of Newton, Galileo, and Descartes --, the challenge of quantum mechanics is to deny the possibility, as is in Heisenberg's Uncertainty Principle, that one can know with certainty and precision the position and momentum of a quantum-mechanic entity, be it a neutron, a J-particle, or else, since how the measuring observer conducts the experiment affects the outcome.\textsuperscript{(S.Hawking 1993:76-7; P.van Inwagen 1983:191-4; A.Ross 1991:42)}

In other words, to see where a particle is, one has to shine light on it. But Einstein had shown that light does not come in continuously variable amounts but in packets of a certain size (called quanta) which would then disturb the particle and cause it to move at a speed which cannot be predicted. Later, the American physicist Richard Feynman made further contribution to the theory of quantum mechanics, in that a particle at point A can move on any path that starts at A (as opposed to the mistaken view that it will move on a straight line away from A as in a classical nonquantum theory).\textsuperscript{(S.Hawking 1993:79)} Thus, his concept of a sum over histories suggests that the probability of the particle traveling from A to B is the numbers associated with all the paths from A to B.

The lesson that Heisenberg (and Feynman, for that matter) wanted to show us here is that the state of a system cannot be measured exactly; only the probabilities of different outcomes can be estimated.\textsuperscript{(S.Hawking 1993:77)} And if one makes a slight change to the way a system is by a small amount at one time, it will soon behave in a completely different way that cannot be predicted. Human subjectivity and objectivity are thus emptied-out, as the scientist cannot know reality itself.\textsuperscript{(D.Porush 1985:50-1)} The world as it is known is therefore a human construct, with what Wallace Stevens calls "necessary fictions" (though without

\textsuperscript{31} Richard Lewontin (1995) once remarked that there are three fads on the issue of chaos in 20th-century science, that is, (a) catastrophe theory, like the one which explains social turmoil in terms of mathematical equations by Christopher Zeeman (D.Howlett 1995:2a), (b) chaos theory, like the one which accounts for how order emerges from disorder, disequilibrium, and unexpectancies by Ilya Prigogine (I.Wallerstein 1991:235), and (c) complexity theory, like the one which shows how order can occur out of a prior chaotic state from an original frozen state by Roger Lewin (1995).
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being totally arbitrary either) that the mind plays with the world (O.Hardison 1989:47,49), just as the task of prediction can only be had, up to the limit as set by the Uncertainty Principle. (S.Hawking 1988:166)

And in chaos theory, as in Ilya Prigogine's modern-biological idea that order can now come from chaos, those features as disorder, disequilibrium, diversity, and randomness which were denied a major role in classical mechanics are now taken as co-existing in a natural order of things. (A.Ross 1991:47-8) The birfurcating model, for instance, allows systems to move out of equilibrium states, where emerge innovations, mutations, and unexpectancies as to challenge the prediction of any certain outcome. (I.Wallerstein 1991:235) Thus, any unexpected (random) change to the way a system is will therefore unleash a chain of reactions not exactly predictable. Even when the outcome can sometimes be predicted, since some range of initial conditions may not lead to chaotic behavior (M.McNutt 1995), the randomness of the initial conditions are likely not. (H.Feshbach 1995) And in complexity theory, although increasing interactions of elements in a system can lead to order out of a prior chaotic state, it is a kind of unpredicted order. (R.Lewin 1995)

3.2b The Spiritual/Social Disillusion

And not just scientific objectivity, the godless world does not give the moderns a spiritual contentment within the sensible world as well, the only world there is left. Surely, a godless world does liberate the moderns as much from scholastic dogmatism as from traditional bondage, to the point that "with the death of God, everything is now permitted", thus spoke Ivan Karamazov in Feodor Dosteovsky's Three Brothers Karamazov (1937). Yet the spiritual life of the moderns is not thereby made any easier -- quite on the contrary. Never before in human history has an existential sense of being and belonging been so minimal as it is in modern times. After all, the highly abstract mental/behavioral schema

32. See footnote #65.
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as in Parsonian pattern-variables are at bottom most individualistic, away from the collective bondage of the old eras.

In a social world where mental and behavioral orientation is skewed towards a critical spirit of science in achieving certain goals within the constraint of certain means in the most efficient way, traditional collectivist and paternalistic norms and values are thrown out of the window. The result is a shifting of human life from a collectivist world to a more individualistic micro-lifeworld surrounding the self. And this micro-lifeworld surrounding the self poses a serious problematic to the spiritual realm of human life in what I call, in the absence of better terms, (a) being and (b) belonging -- in its obsession with the material realm of (c) having. I should first explain what their nature is, in that order.

(a) On Being. In the old days, the question of being (meaning here as life meaningfulness in relation to a suprasensible realm) was answered within a metaphysical metanarrative which depicted a Creator of both world and creatures with certain divine designs -- especially, as in Christendom to promulgate ordinances like the Ten Commandments (which express divine reason) for humans to follow in the sensible world, which is not their true home, since what it has to offer is at best meager, imperfect, and unsatisfying, while waiting for a better world to come -- one in which there is neither death nor threat of dying, neither risk or lost opportunities, neither moral evil nor human animosity, neither ignorance nor disease, neither old age nor injustice, neither sorrow nor melancholy. (D. Crosby 1988:163-4)

And this belief in salvation, in paradise, in the purposiveness of history, in divine reason, while there is none, Sigmund Freud suggested in The Future of An Illusion, gives much solace to humans for the cruelty and harshness of daily life, "for the sufferings and privations which a civilized life in common has imposed on them" (S. Freud 1961:16) -- just as much as "the establishment of a moral world-order ensures the fulfillment of the demands of justice." (S. Freud
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1961:30) More to the spiritual realm -- the belief in a suprasensible being, Emile Durkheim argued in *Elementary Forms of Religious Life*, helps to excite the believer's vital energies, strengthen his sensations, and intensify his passions all for the good, the beautiful, and the ideal. (E. Durkheim 1915:468-9)

The moderns, by contrast, reject this medieval conception of a chain of being culminating in a supreme suprasensible being, God, within a theological conception of the unfolding of history as the realization of a divine plan (P. Sorokin 1956:122) -- and treat it instead as nothing but an incessant interplay of cosmic rays, sunspots, climatic and geographical changes, socio-cultural forces, biological instincts, or else. Humans are now understood as a complex of "electrons" and "protons", an animal organism, a reflex mechanism, a variety of stimulus-response relationships, a psychoanalytical "bag" filled with physiological libido (P. Sorokin 1956:93-4) or else --, within a context of more impersonal, instrumental framework of caring only for those immediate to one's lifeworld. (R. Wallace 1986:23)

With the death of God so understood, the feeling of something spiritual is missing in human life and becomes acute for many. The revival of religion since the sixties -- as much due to the decline of traditional institutional religion as due to religious innovations in a pluralistic social structure, most profoundly shows this acute yearning for an answer to the question of being in life so much dismissed in the secular world -- in pain of increased outbreaks of mental illness and suicide. (P. Sorokin 1956:206-8) But this reenchanting effort constitutes, I claim (as will be analyzed in Section 3.3), an on-going, increasingly nihilistic process.

(b) On Belonging. And the question of belonging (meaning here as a sense of community) in life becomes problematic as well. The holy in religion, if Emile Durkheim is right, has always symbolized society qua the collective idea which makes its unity and personality, and thereby poses as an external, moral force constraining human thought and action. (E. Durkheim 1915:475) Individuals cannot
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have a sense of belonging in a community without a collective idea so understood, any more than society can exist apart from individuals.

But with the death of God qua the breakdown of traditional laws and norms which used to hold society together (V.Parrillo 1985:41-59) within a communal and kinship structure (E.B.1994a), the social bondage among individuals is disrupted into what Durkheim called the anomic state where separate domains of minimal selves, with each pursuing its own narrow interest and each interacting with others on a contractual basis of the most individualist kind. Coupled with this is the trend towards high geographical mobility in modern (and, all the more so, postmodern) life; in one recent estimate, each American family moves more than 15 times in their lifetimes --, something quite extraordinary, of course, for a family in the ancient and medieval worlds to do, unless under socially disruptive circumstances (wars, natural calamities, epidemics). Social loneliness, as never before in human history, becomes a most challenging existential problematic in modern life -- in two senses.

Firstly, a person feels lonely in modern social settings. The penetration in the business and social worlds of the Parsonian social patterns (in special regard to achievement as opposed to ascription, neutrality as opposed to affectivity, specificity as opposed to diffusiveness, and universalism as opposed to particularism) sanctions bureaucratic and commercial interpersonal interactions and thus intensifies impersonal social interrelationships on the basis of individual habits of the heart in a modern setting. (Section 3.3) The modern sense of community, especially in a capitalist setting, is most minimal, to the point where even civic virtue as in a Greek polis is now passed over for something more immediately rewarding (watching the World Series, dating someone attractive, working overtime for extra pay) --, in conjunction with, as indicated before, the trend towards high geographical mobility in modern (and now postmodern) life.

Political apathy and low turnouts at elections raise some doubt concerning
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the very ideal of liberal democracy, and the warning of Tocqueville is well taken here: that a society where people end up as the kind of individuals who are "enclosed in their hearts" is one in which few will want to participate actively in the public sphere. (C.Taylor 1992:9) Rousseau's untimely observation centuries before still holds today: "We have physicists, geometers, chemists, astronomers, poets, musicians, painters; we no longer have citizens." (E.Fortin 1994:23)

"By almost every measure, Americans' direct engagement in politics and government," for instance, as Robert Putnam (1995:68) in a recent study shows, "has fallen steadily and sharply over the last generation." This loss of civic virtue and its old republican ideal of citizenship is precisely what Tocqueville wanted to combat against in his emphasis on the importance of religion and family life as a counterweight to rampant, materialist individualism. (C.Lasch 1991:59-60) In their absence --, except within a small circle of friends, immediate family members, and some others, the moderns feel lonely in a crowd, wherever the setting might be.

In each General Social Survey since 1974, the proportion of Americans, for example, who socialize with their neighbors more than once a year has steadily declined over the last two decades, just as the proportion saying that most people can be trusted fell by more than a third from 58% in 1960 to 37% in 1993, now that social interactions become ever more neutral and specific, less affective and diffuse as were in pre-modern times. (R.Putnam 1995:73; F.Fukuyama 1995) As Evan Thomas (1996:61) puts it well, the recent nostalgic reception of screen versions of Jane Austen's Persuasion and Sense and Sensibility (in their stress of decorum, consideration, and restraint in a bygone aristocratic world) reflects how much the modern world has instead been accustomed to a culture that becomes coarser, more flagrant, and more rude, as "[p]eople have become accustomed to vulgarity, as well as other common indignities -- their neighbors threatening to sue them, their colleagues incessantly whinning, their former lovers spilling their secrets, and perfect strangers insulting them or, worse,
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confiding in them."

Even public trust/confidence in social institutions, as Robert Samuelson in The Good Life and Its Discontents claims, shows dramatic decline in the last quarter century or so --, be it towards Congress (from 42% in 1966 to 8% in 1994), the Executive Branch (from 41% to 12%), major companies (from 55% to 19%), the press (from 29% to 13%), colleges and universities (from 61% to 25%), or the medical institution (from 73% to 23%). (M.Prowse 1996:18) It is no wonder that depression rates have been doubling in some industrial countries roughly every 10 years. (R.Wright 1995:52)

And the breakdown of the family likewise deteriorates. As of 1995, one-fourth of American households, for instance, consist of a single person, up from only 8% in 1940. (R.Wright 1995:53) In another estimate, the figure is no better, from only 13% in 1980 to 30.8% in 1994.34 Worse, the breakdown is spreading to the whole globe, as Judith Bruce recently puts it, "The reality is that trends like unwed motherhood, rising divorce rates, smaller households and the feminization of poverty are not unique to America, but are occurring worldwide", since the universalistic, as opposed to particularistic, mental dispositions of modern times is most contributive, in addition, to the decline of the traditional patriarchal ethos, as Douglas Besharov at the American Enterprise Institute correctly observes, "We are dealing here with the liberation of women...when the earning power of men and women becomes quite equal, that creates a very different relationship between men and women and makes it easier for women to leave unhappy relationships." (T.Lewin 1995:a5)

Yet the downside of this all cannot be better expressed than what Daniel Bell (1976:155) wrote yestertime: "The primordial elements that provide men with

33. Technology has also contributed to the building of an isolating living condition of this type. From the automobile and the telephone through the TV and the VCR/cable to ready-made microwavable meals and the Internet, technology has eroded the bonds of traditional neighborly interdependence. (R.Wright 1995:54,56)

34. From Headline News, broadcasted on Channel 14 in the States (10/16/95).
common identification and affective reciprocity -- family, synagogue and church, community -- have become attenuated, and people have lost the capacity to maintain sustained relations with each other in both time and space. To say, then, that 'God is dead' is, in effect, to say that the social bonds have snapped and that society is dead." This is not to trivialize its liberating aspect, for sure, in that more so than in any other age, the moderns come to ask more questions, challenge old taboos, and push for more openness on issues ranging from premarital sex to experimental relationships. But the point is that there is a high price to pay, with subsequent problems as increasing teenage pregnancy, single-parent families, rising divorce rates, political apathy, and the absence of a sense for the common good. And these problematics are not confined within the modern West and are spreading to non-Western societies as well, as they become more modernized (Section 6.2). (Asiaweek 1995a:36-41)

Secondly, a modern feels lonely in being less than others in material acquisitions -- the feeling of being left out. "With the death of God, everything is now permitted" -- this means that the decline of traditional religious institution and communal structure removes all constraints on biological and psychological appetites which can now grow without limit, to the point of degenerating into what Durkheim called "the malady of infinite aspirations" in modern life which cannot be satisfied with limited means and resources among many.

The result, especially when combined with loneliness of the first type, is an increase in cheating, suicide, crime, and mental illness for those who "cannot quite make it" or "cannot make it formally." In North America alone, suicide is the third most common cause of death among youth adults, after car wrecks and homicides --, while the rates of depression doubles roughly every

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15. Ireland, a conservative society as it has been with its strong Catholic Church, succumbs too towards the trend of secularization by legalizing divorce in a referendum on November 25, 1995 -- and thus becomes the last Western country to do so. From Headline News, broadcasted on Channel 14 (November 25-6,1995).
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decade. (R.Wright 1995:52) And the number of prisoners now comprise, as of 1994, a record 2.7% of U.S. population (5.1 million, that is, more than the total number of Asian Americans). (A.Miller 1995:3) This is so, thanks to a disenchanted world where the Olympia game of "more, higher, faster, and better" reigns supremely (B.Smart 1992:97), as opposed to the ideals of the True, the Good, the Just, the Beautiful, and the Holy with which the medievals in Christendom so much obsessed but which now fall on deaf ears.

"Cheating has become a sport" --, this critical comment of Laura Schlessinger, for instance, nicely captures how much many moderns dream of happiness without, however, being honorable. (K.Thomas 1995:1A) In recent American surveys, 70% of students (as in a 1993 finding) admitted to cheating, marital infidelity is continuously on the rise (as high as 70% by Shere Hite's controversial 1987 report --, and especially among wives), 46% of teens (as in 1995 poll) feel lying is OK, and the IRS is busy in penalizing tax evaders (as high as 4,789 major cases in 1994). This new sport affects not less the high-profile, well-to-do --, since, just as an illustration, Miss Virginia Andrea Ballengee lost her crown for padding her resume, baseball greats Duke Snider and Willie McCovey were found guilty on tax evasion, and Senator Bob Packwood, in face of impending expulsion by his colleagues because of his sexual misconduct and abuse of office, was forced to resign.16

But how many more are there who remain un-detected and un-caught? Schlessinger waits no time to find cause with the decline of traditional religion: "It taught respecting others and following tenets....Now, everyone is so sanguine about cutting corners," to the point that, as Miss America Organization CEO Leonard Horn admits, "something has happened where truth is no longer important to achieve a goal."

16. Packwood's forced resignation does not help the already shaken public confidence in government in modern (and now postmodern) times. (John Farrell 1995:1) Packwood's private diaries, for instance, include "frank descriptions of sex acts on his office floor, senators double-crossing their colleagues, lobbyists buying favor for their clients and other scenes that would not only fit comfortably in the script of a cheesy TV miniseries, but that may also confirm some voters' worst suspicions about the conduct of some elected officials."
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And violence has also become a most pervasive problematic in our times, as best illustrated by the emergence of 'no-go zones' for ordinary citizens and even law enforcement officers in many American urbanities. (P. Williams 1994:107) A trend towards increased criminal activities in many modern societies, Samuel Huntington (1995) argues, has been on the rise --, as is supported by another study, according to which "[c]rime, depression, suicide, eating disorders, alcohol and drug abuse have risen sharply among young people in almost all developed nations in the last 45 years," as Michael Rutter and David Smith thus explain, "[i]ncreased individualism and rising expectations that cannot easy be met may be among the causes of rising disorders." (The Boston Globe 1995:2) By 1995, for instance, 26% of 4th-6th graders in the States have taken drugs of some sort, up from 13% in 1980.

Sorokin (1956:226) had good reason to thus conclude: That more than any other age, ours is peculiar with "[t]he calculated coldbloodedness of crimes perpetrated for pecuniary purposes, in contradistinction to the passionate, impulsive, and spontaneous criminality of the past; the efficiency of scientifically organized criminal machines; technologically organized ‘racketeering’ on a large scale in collusion with political leaders and ‘respected citizens’; and the prominence of the role of the lower age groups in criminal activities." After all, it is hard to live a life where one cannot keep it up with the Joneses -- that is, one is looked down upon as a loser, in a culture where one’s social status is so heavily determined in this way. The buzzwords of the day are "money and fun" -- not "God and salvation." This "money and fun" civilization often brings out the worst of humans -- ignoring what might be their kinder, gentler side. (R. Wright 1995:52)

Ultimately, the problematic of this two-fold social malaise is precisely what Robert Bellah & Co.’s notion of "habits of the heart" (1985) and Lasch’s analysis of "the culture of narcissism" (1978) target against, in a modern society "in which neither class nor community nor ethnic group nor family nor
religion (nor any coherent set of beliefs) provides either meaning or support" - - , now that God is dead (N.Birnbaum 1986:26) in what Stephen Carter (1993) calls "the culture of disbelief," or what John Silber,7 president of Boston University, refers to as a culture of "indiscriminate violence." Akhar Agmed's observation (1995:14) is therefore quite pertinent here.

Society itself is threatened as never before in history. Divorce, drugs, alcoholism, domestic violence, incest -- the list is long and disturbing. Worse, the criminals are not psychopaths but the ordinary youngsters who live around the corner. Eighty-year old women are raped and robbed for a few dollars by young men, children are sexually assaulted and horribly killed by other children, fathers and teachers commit incest -- there is random violence on the streets. From Los Angeles to London no one and nowhere is safe.

In Heidegger's way of philosophizing (J.Bernstein 1988:106), the spiritual crisis of modern times lies in the problem of Being being forgotten in the technological age which, however, has nothing to do with what is technical but here means the inability of the moderns to think in any other way than through what they have come to construct for themselves, in their own imagery, now that, as Jean-Paul Sartre suggested, the moderns are alone with themselves, and the godless world stands opposed to them, "indifferent and unconcerned." (F.Polak 1973:238) The moderns live in what Nietzsche calls a "weightless" epoch of human history. (J.Lears 1981:41)

Now that God is dead, everything is therefore permitted. But the bygone era of the pre-moderns, though rightly criticized of its hypocrisy and unfreedom within a context of mechanical solidarity, yet has a redemptive didactic for the moderns (and now all the more the postmoderns) for its cultivation of that dimension of emotional intelligence which valued self-awareness, self-control,

7. In his commencement address to the class of 1995 at Boston University --, as broadcasted on C-SPAN (Saturday, May 27).
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These millennial years [in this fin-de-siecle twentieth century] are ushering in an Age of Melancholy, just as the twentieth century became an Age of Anxiety. International data show what seems to be a modern epidemic of depression, one that is spreading side by side with the adoption throughout the world of modern ways. Each successive generation worldwide since the opening of the century has lived with a higher risk than their parents of suffering a major depression -- not just sadness, but a paralyzing listlessness, dejection, and self-pity, and an overwhelming hopelessness -- over the course of life. Childhood depression, once virtually unknown (or, at least, unrecognized) is emerging as a fixture of the modern scene.

(c) On Having. The consumeristic lifeform (Chapter 2) best exemplifies this shift from life orientation of being and belonging to one of having (meaning here as a practical obsession with nothing but money, work and leisure) in a godless world. Its exclusive focus on sensuality and joy, on material acquisition and entertainment can most appropriately be called "a life against eternities," against the holy life so much obsessed by the religious of the old. But this life of having is as much affluent yet costly (Section 2.3) as comfortable yet banal (Section 2.2).

So what is the future of being, belonging, and knowing in this godless world?

3.3 The Revival of Religion, Performativeness and

The Post-Modern Problematic Reaction to The Godless World

The post-moderns have sense enough to confront the problematics of being, belonging, and knowing in the godless world with two appeals, namely, (1) the revival of religion, as in Daniel Bell's call for a "return in Western society
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of some conception of religion" (B. Smart 1992:160), and (2) the conception of scientific knowledge as performativeness, as in Jean Lyotard's work on postmodern knowledge -- and thus abandon the search for scientific objectivity so characteristic of a major part of the Western ideal of the modern self and start recognizing the imperative of the religious sacredness even in a secular world --, but without giving up the critical spirit of science. This postmodern reenchanting effort, I claim, is even more disenchanting in outcome, eventually to an increasingly nihilistic climate -- contrary to what the post-moderns expect. And what is left is the critical spirit of science without however endorsing realism, idealism (as in positivism), and historicism (including the performative type), while trying to learn something from each of them.

Consider first the issue concerning the revival of religion in Section 3.3a and then the question concerning performativeness in Section 3.3b in what follows.

3.3a The Postmodern Myth of a Post-Secular Society

Since there is no institutionalized state religion in America (in light of the separation of church and state), the U.S. is often regarded as the most religion-tolerant country in any human world there ever be. (R. Collins 1994) The revival of religion since the sixties is therefore not a surprising matter of fact, in special relation with the issue concerning new religions. James Beckford proposes to use the term 'new religious movement' over cult and sect for the dual reason that the old vocabulary is resonated with defiant orthodoxy and judgmentalism and thus has lost much of its neutral tone, and that many of these new movements are not sectarian splits from established churches and reflect religious innovations in a more pluralistic social context. (J. Beckford 1987:391)

But my concern is not solely with new religions, but with the revival of religion in general in postmodern times. The revival of religion in its general sense, as broader than Beckford's, is highly complicated but can be heuristically
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Firstly, some originate in Eastern mystical traditions (e.g., yoga, Tibetan and Zen Buddhist groups). Secondly, others fuse Eastern mysticism with pop psychology (positive thinking, mind cure, and humanistic and Gestalt psychology) in what is now known as the "human potential movement" (e.g., Scientology, Erhard Seminars Training also known as est, Arica, Silva Mind Control). Thirdly, some split from established churches and act for independence (e.g., various evangelical, pentecostal, and fundamentalist movements). Fourthly, some take the form of health-oriented, self-help movements, and the "psychotechnologies" they use are as much amazingly diverse as incredibly imaginative. Andrew Ross (1991:48-9) takes the trouble to provide a selective list, without, however, recommending any of them as effective: reflexology, rebirthing, creative visualization, aromatherapy, flotation, acupressure, actualism, herbology, muscle therapy, Touch for Health, mentastics, past life regression therapy, magneto-therapy, ecstasy breathing, body tuning and vibrational medicine, phototherapy, neurolinguistic programming, or else.

Fifthly, some others take the form of a revival of conservative Christianity, Islam, and Buddhism (such as the Moral Majority and the Nation of Islam). Lastly, others take the form of authoritarian sects or cults (e.g., the Unification Church, the Children of Love, the Way, the Alamo Foundation, the International Society for Krishna Consciousness also known as ISKCON, Love Israel). Sects and cults thrive when institutional religion declines in a secular social structure. The decline of the Catholic Church and mainline churches (as in the sharp decline of the numbers of nuns and new members) is partly responsible for the proliferation of cults and sects in the states, just as much in Europe as in Africa, where state church is much weakened in modern times. European countries with lowest church attendance (Germany, Switzerland, Danmark, and the Scandinavian states) have highest cult formation, for instance. (R. Collins

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1994) Of the roughly 400 sects and 500 cults in the states since 1960, in what Richard Ostling (1995:72) called the "greater diversity of religious groups than any country in recorded history" --, most decline over time. (R. Stark 1985c:chs.2,6; R. Collins 1994) After all, only a few are necessary to generate new religions.

But an important question here is how to explain this religious revival in a secular modern world. In other words, if these moderns tell us that they are still religious --, what exactly do they mean, and why, under post-modern conditions?

Never before in human history has there been so many religions as there are in modern times. The decline of traditional monolithic religious dominance (as exemplified in medieval Christendom) facilitates the emergence of a new religious market where new religions number in the hundreds (if not in the thousands) all over the globe. Does science really eliminate religious faith at all? Is there a reversal of the secularization process? There are four logical possibilities concerning the secularization process in relation to the future of religion, in that the process can be (a) declining, (b) steady, (c) cyclical, and (d) progressing over time. Let me examine them one by one.

(a) Declining. To argue for the decline of the secularization process implies a reversal to the monolithic religious dominance of the old days as in medieval Christendom. This, needless to say, is most inconceivable in a modern industrial setting (Section 2.4). Not even the Islamic fundamentalists want to go that far -- without all those goodies and emancipation so much characteristic of modernity, its much criticized darker side notwithstanding. Surely, those like Joseph de Maistre and Leo Strauss (S. Holmes 1993:21-7) who lament for the erosion of religion are not without sense: that secularization is the crisis of the modern world, and "any attempt to detach men from God is 'le chemin du neant,' a pathway into the abyss." Yet it is entirely something else for anyone to therefore yearn for a return to the old times. Octavio Paz (1991:38,40), the 1990
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Mexican Nobel laureate in literature, has thus to add: "The religious absence is the greatest problem of modernity," yet "we cannot return. Even traditional societies like Iran cannot go backward." On the contrary, post-Khomeini Iran has already starting reversing its theocratic course, be slow thought it may (as will be revisited in Section 6.2). (S. Huntington 1995)

(b) Steady. A plausible alternative is to view the process as steady over time. In other words, human spiritual quest is as much intense in our times as it was in pre-modern days. But this is highly problematic, since many human waking hours in a modern setting are devoted to the tasks of producing, consuming, and entertaining in a lifeworld which is essentially consumeristic (Sections 2.2 & 2.3) -- something certainly miraculous by ancient standards and still impressive by modern ones. It flies in the face to even suggest that somehow the moderns devote as much time and energy as the pre-modern ancestors did on religious endeavors. Religious devotion as a vocation of the old in Christendom has few followers in modern times, as Roderick Seidenberg (1951:60) wrote, "Science...marks a definite turning point and change of direction in the affairs of mankind. For it heralds the triumph of intelligence over instinct as the decisive principle of guidance in all the conscious adjustments of life."

(c) Cyclical. A more persuasive viewpoint is to propose that the religious enterprise has a history of ups and downs, that is, to see religious history as cycles rather than a linear trend toward increasing secularity. (J. Richardson 1985:113) This is to say, for instance, that it suffers a downturn in the early days of modernity, especially since the secular challenge as imposed firstly by the Scientific Revolution and later by the capitalist Industrial Revolution (Sections 1.2 & 1.3). And the proliferation of new religions in late modernity constitutes an upturn, or simply a fightback against the scientific-technocratic dominance within a consumeristic lifeworld.

My claim is that the emergence of new religions only confirms the progressing (not cyclical as so understood) nature of the secularization process.
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(while allowing certain ups and downs in its development for sure). In other words, the reenchanting effort is even more disenchanting in outcome. Why? This leads me to the last point.

(d) Progressing. One must first distinguish religious aims into what Randall Collins calls (i) transcendence (salvation, mystical experience, afterlife), (ii) socio-moral identity (social, communal membership), and (iii) magical/supernatural power (emotional energy reward, extraordinary power, imaginary compensation). The decline of magic in (iii) few could deny. (K. Thomas 1971; R. Collins 1994) Yet religion still offers a moral-communal identity in (ii) and transcendental compensators in (i). (R. Stark 1985a; R. Collins 1994) In this sense, the problematics of being (lacking a sense of life meaning in relation to a suprasensible realm) and belonging (lacking a sense of community) in a much disenchanted, Godless world creates social conditions for a revival of religious quest in the form of new religions aforedelineated.

My claim, however, is that the impressive number of new religions is misleading, since it only confirms how much further the religious order has collapsed into an eclectic chaos, now that God (with the capital G) is dead, within a pluralistic social structure whose consumeristic lifeworld pushes all alternative lifeforms into marginal existence. Thus this reenchanting effort is more disenchanting in outcome (the infinity of small gods in the market, not adding up to anything); after all, the very social condition for the existence of the holy of the old is increasingly no longer possible in modern times.

My rationale is five-fold.

(i) Commoditization. Firstly, many new religions become commoditized into the logic of late capitalism -- in search for as much wealth and power as physical well being.

Many instances of cult formation, Rodney Stark (1985:178-82) and William Sims Bainbridge argue, can be treated as a system of production and exchange of spiritual compensators. New religions are not less money-making in orientation
than other businesses. Their leaders sell novel compensators to potential buyers and are as money-smart as others in the corporate world. This is not to say, however, that they necessarily disbelieve in whatever they sell, but that new religions can become a money-making business. Competition among them are intense enough; the older, out-dated ones are eliminated in the process, while new ones often incorporate new products and ideas to keep up with a constantly changing market, especially within a capitalist setting where money often speaks the loudest. New religious quest becomes commoditized, absorbed into a capitalist indut-reality of space and time.

Instances of mercenary motivation are plenty enough -- often to the point of committing crimes in the name of God, hiding behind the tax-exempt clause for religious practice under the law. The Unification Church, for instance, is substantially involved into worldly, instrumental dealings, in the name of creating a material base for spiritual fulfillment. Sun Myung Moon thus told his followers: "the messiah must become very rich to fulfill his spiritual destiny, and must reclaim all wealth and land from the dominion of Satan" (T.Robbins 1987:395) -- and was later imprisoned for tax evasion. Yogi Amrit Desai in the Kripalu Center for Yoga and Health received an annual salary of $165,000, besides as much $20,000 a year in royalties from the sale of books and tapes as undisclosed substantial fees for conducting yoga seminars (W.Davis 1994:61,66), while preaching sexual abstinence, yet having affairs with his female disciples. Even many of the living expenses for him and his family were met by the center (including the use of beautiful cars and a large modern house).

Jim Bakker, while heading the Pray The Lord ministry, was so heavily involved in fraudulent financial dealings to finance his lavish lifestyle, in what Jerry Falwell calls the "Watergate Scandale of Evangelical Christianity",38 that he was later sentenced for 45 years in imprisonment. Or the founder of International Society for Krishna Consciousness also known as ISKCON was

38. Broadcasted in "American Justice" on channel 52 (12/24/94).
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tarnished with financial scandals. Both Rajneesh (and his assistant known as "Sheila") and Jim Jones, the well-known rew religion leaders some years back, were charged with financial misdeeds -- though the former later pled guilty and surrendered to authority while the latter led his 900-plus disciples into a notorious collective suicide. Jim Swagaart, a TV minister, urged his church's members to donate 1.8 million dollars to him, since God could take him away otherwise --, and the money did pour in before the deadline he set. And the cult known as Omu Shimrikyo ("Sublime Truth"), under its leader Shoko Asabara who has predicted that the world will end soon, went so far as to kidnap (and sometimes kill) cult members' relatives and families as a ransom for money, as Kiyoshi Kariya, it was reported on February 28th, 1995, was kidnapped to pressure his sister, a cult member, to donate handsome property to it. (C.Radin 1995:19; L.King 1995:1,26)

Consequently, it is not without good reason for Marvin Harris, in his study of such diverse groups as Silva Mind Control, est, Scientology, ISKCON, and the Moonies in American Now: The Anthropology of Changing Culture, to so conclude: "religious impulses are more often than not as much instrumentalities in the struggle for worldly wealth, power, and physical well-being as manifestations of the search for spiritual salvation." Likewise says Bryan Wilson in Contemporary Transformations of Religion: that new religions succumb too to becoming a mere commodity in the secular, consumeristic culture of late capitalism. (T.Robbins 1987:396) In serious instances, the very issue of exploitation can be raised when cult members become too dependent on gurus or spiritual masters (as in the Unification Church and Scientology). (T.Robbins 1987:401)

(ii) Psychopathology. Secondly, combined with the commoditized nature is a psychopathological character shared by some new religious leaders and many of their followers.

Some cult leaders, Rodney Stark and William Sims Bainbridge (1985:173-7) also argue, just as much as many of their followers, share certain mental illness
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which so much handicaps the victims as to be unable to cope effectively with the competitive outside world. Surely, their participation in cult/sect activity can sometimes beneficially relieve some of their psychic tensions, as William James in *The Varieties of Religious Experience* (1902) long ago claimed, mind-cure movements at times produce a "change of character for the better." (C.Lasch 1991:284)

Some examples of psychopathology are instructive here. An obsession anxiety of wanting to be perfect did John Humphrey Noyes, the founder of the Oneida Community, suffer, in that he enjoyed telling others of his having achieved a happy state of perfection and of being willing to help them do likewise, but only to be followed by "eternal spins" (depressive states) in which he was tortured by self-hatred. Or L.Ron Hubbard, the founder of Scientology, suffered from paranoid schizophrenia and regarded his invention of Dianetics (later known as Scientology) as "a milestone for Man comparable to his discovery of fire and superior to his inventions of the wheel and arch." Likewise in the Kripalu Center for Yoga and Health were many female disciples psychically bruised survivors of bad relationships and in psychotherapy. (W.Davis 1994:66) Or the poor Oral Roberts, a TV minister, was tormented with having sex with prostitutes while preaching spiritual virtues. So were many in Charles Manson's community tormented with mental imbalance of some type, as vividly recounted by T.Watson, a surviving member, in *Will You Die For Me?* (J.Coleman 1990:66)

Moreover, devotees in many cults and sects fail not undergoing intense indoctrination and conversion processes, be they coercive persuasion, brainwashing, thought reform or else. So do manipulative techniques many new religions exploit for sure, and a random list can include repetitive chanting, obsessive praying, trances, ecstatic arousal, snake handling, glossolalia, intense peer pressure, flagrant deception, and even physical coercion. (T.Robbins 1987:401,403) In other times, new religion leaders, callously exploit as they do the mental imbalance of uncritical devotees in various forms of sexual abuse, are
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notoriously exemplified by like figures of Krishna, David Koresh, Jim Jones, and Yogi Desai. Or they sometimes lead to a violent end, as best illustrated in the collective suicide by members of the Jim Jones’s Temple some years back and, quite recently, by 68 members of the Order of the Solar Temple in Switzerland, Canada, and France as well. (Boston Globe 1995b:2) And for the cult known as Omu Shimrikyo, brainwashing and drug injection (as some cult members were found dazed and disoriented in a police raid) are common enough. (C.Radin 1995:19; L.King 1995:26)

This is not to suggest, for sure, that the success of building social networks in new religions depends on mental illness as an important point to success; nothing is farther from the truth than an absurd view of this sort. The important point, however, is that all of these five factors combined (as herein, and hereafter as well, discussed) contribute to understanding why the revival of religion in postmodern times is to be explained.

(iii) Social Implosion. Thirdly, new religious formations can be understood as a phenomenon of subcultural evolution qua social implosion.

A cult group in a formative process, Rodney Stark, Randall Collins, and William Sims Bainbridge (R.Collins 1994; R.Stark 1985:183-86) suggest, often begins with a small number of individuals closely interacting with each other, offer as it does the social rewards of a communal bondage (support, consolation, and reconciliation) in group cohesion and spiritual compensators (a common sense of spiritual mission). (M.Spencer 1985:336-8) Yet the group in due time becomes increasingly withdrawn from external contacts (social implosion, as opposed to social explosion), just as its hostility towards the outside world increases as time goes on, as members often follow a distinctive, rebellious counter-lifestyle.

Any conflict with the outside world only intensifies the rightness of members’s worldview and mission. In the name of God, cult social implosion can result in a fortress of merciless hatred and micro-fanaticism (L.Morrow 1993:24-202
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5): the tragic ending of the Branch Davidians in Waco, Texas (after the heavily armed devotees under the leadership of David Koresh unsuccessfully clashed with federal agents), sorrowful as this was to their surviving significant others for sure, yet is not unexpected when viewed in the history of new religions. Or in the case of Omu Shimrikyo, cult members were arrested for gas bombings of the Tokyo subway system and for other criminal offenses. (C. Radin 1995:1)

Yet there is a brighter side to tell. New religions qua subcultural evolution --, useful certainly they are for supplementing a sense of community (as in the language of kinship like "fathers", "brothers and sisters") other than an exclusive affiliative and valuative dependence on the immediate family, especially for young adults (and also adolescents) who are increasingly socialized in peer-group contexts. (T. Robbins 1987:397) For this reason, Irving Horowitz, a severe critic of the Unification Church, concedes in "The Politics of the New Cults," In Gods We Trust: New Patterns of Religious Pluralism in America that "the Unification Church as surrogate family...does provide an effective therapeutic setting that offers linkage to the larger society without its turmoils." (T. Robbins 1987:398)

G. Baum's observation, consequently, is not without merit: that the new religious preoccupation "is not principally religious at all! It is largely symbolic of the quest for a more liberated human existence." (J. Richardson 1985:111) In the Nation of Islam, the cause is not less redemptive, that is, to fight against a decadent social environment haunting many black youths: drinking, smoking, gambling, prostitution, drugs, and crimes. And even in the Presbyterian Church, many find community not otherwise possible, as a female member at a service project like the Habitat for Humanity House sponsored by the church said in an interview, "This is definitely a family for me. A family away from my family." (D. Mattingly 1995)

But the underside of this communal formation in subcultural evolution means something else for relatives of devotees, often regard as they do their loved
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ones as "cult victims," try, with good sense, to "rescue" them by any means necessary. This issue did Florence Kaslow and Marvin Sussmann address in Cults and the Family. In the name of "true family" or "true parent", converts easily become vulnerable to be exploited and victimized in their unequal power relations with spiritual masters: sexual abuse (female victims mostly likely), physical coercion, destructive obedience, or else.

Some illustrations are deemed helpful. The recent blind obedience of a Swiss sect's members resulted in a tragic collective suicide, so did the same fate await members of Jim Jones's Temple some years past, and just recently, of the Order of the Solar Temple in Switzerland, Canada, and France.(Boston Globe 1995b:2) Or in the Kripalu Center for Yoga and Health, Yogi Desai, took advantage of what William Davis calls "a hypocritical exploitation of uncritical devotion" as he did in having sexual relations with female disciples, only put up a public show in preaching sexual abstinence, though Joel Kramer, a scholar on guru-centered communities, offers this explanation: "Without deep cultural restraints against it, scandals go with the occupation of guru because of its emotional isolation and eventual boredom."(W.Davis 1994:66) So was the same practice of sexual abuse and molestation report in the case of Krishna.

(iv) Politics of Resentment. Fourthly, the religions revival (not the new religions per se) can be contextualized within a politics of resentment against the hegemonic Same qua the legacy of white supremacy (and of regional polarity) in modern times (as will be addressed in Sections 6.3 & 6.4).

Perhaps an exemplary case is none other than the Nation of Islam. With the leadership of such charismatic, powerful figures as Malcom X and Louis Farrakhan, it also serves, besides its striving for a communal revival for black youths as aforediscussed, as a politics of resentment towards the white hegemony, as a politics of black empowerment in the aftermath of the institution of brutal slavery in past centenaries. After all, the revival of Islam represents "a delayed reaction to the psychological hegemony of European colonial rule" as in
the Muslim world or of white dominance as in modern America. (M.Marty 1994:814)

So did the neo-Confucian revival in East Asia follow the same logic, since it becomes a means of protecting or forging anew an ethnic or national identity in the postcolonial era, within the context of a complex feeling of what Tu Wei-ming calls "humiliation, remorse, regret, and bitterness" shared by East Asians (Koreans and Chinese especially), in soothing "their sense of crisis at confronting the West combined with a profound fear of annihilation and a powerful feeling of destiny." (M.Marty 1994:816)

The revival of religion is not what it always seems. As Immanuel Wallerstein (1991:236-7) explains, "We have to remember that, as empirical reality, the capitalist world-economy in its own process of expansion destroyed other historical systems. They ceased to exist as systems. Their influence remained as civilizational claims, that is, as claims in the present within the existing historical system about heritage, separateness, rights. They are as valid as they are asserted effectively."

(v) Marginalization. Lastly, perhaps most important is a lack of social condition conducive to religious practice as a vocation in modern life.

This is all the more important, since the recent expansion of conservative Christianity (as is the case of the Moral Majority led by Jerry Falwell) contributes to the revival of traditional moral community (R.Collins 1994) in a way not completely accountable for by the four reasons as aforesaid. In a sense, this revival is not a matter of historical accident, since it has much to do as well with the economic decline of America in late 20th century, with its concurrent rise of acute socio-economic problems of various kinds (Sections 2.2, 2.3 & 3.2b). As Sigmund Freud (1961:16,30) long ago claimed in The Future of An Illusion, the urge to seek solace is directly proportional to the harshness of social life. The sufferings and privations in bad times is conducive to religious surge, just as the lack of these sufferings and privations in good times frees both the body and the soul for activities other than merely religious ones for
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spiritual/communal solace and thus lessens the intensity of religious devotion. Yes, if you will --, there is a cycle of religious ups and downs, depending on specific historical contexts, that is, on good or bad times.

That qualified, however --, the religious revival is still greatly confined within the marginalized structure of modern (and now postmodern) society. Why, then, is this revival of conservative Christianity much constrained within the modern secular lifeworld, or why is the religious revival so pushed into the margins of modern lifeworld?

Modern times, unlike previous ones, constitute what Roderick Seidenberg calls "the crucial epoch" (1951:59-60) in human history (1951:78),

Science is inconceivable without the notion of time, as religion is without the idea of eternity. In centuring his attention upon mundane affairs, in deepening his sense of time and widening his consciousness of events, man at length lessened his concern with eternity; and, along with this slow transition in which he focused his thoughts upon the foreground of his perspective, science usurped the interest...formerly accorded to religion. And in harmony with this changed horizon man transferred his reliance upon implicit values to a new faith in explicit knowledge. The conscious discipline of science thus served as a kind of equivalent approach to the intuitive perceptions of religion...The change in emphasis from religion to science...thus marked a definite drift from man's faith in intuitively established evaluations to an ever more deliberate and conscious procedure in the solution of his problems and the assuagement of his doubts.

And under the auspices of capitalist transformation (Sections 1.2-3 & 3.1-2), this "crucial epoch" casts all other modes of thought as in the usual suspects of metaphysics, cosmology, and theology into the marginalized dustbin of history. The social condition for religious devotion of the pre-moderns is gone in modern times.

The religious revival thus find themselves on the margins of a secular world where the buzzwords of the day is money and fun, neither faith nor
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salvation. Generous allowance in an affluent, consumeristic lifeform (Sections 2.2 & 2.3) often release leisure time for its favourite child, the world of mass culture industry celebrating the instinctual (F.Jameson 1991:213), the unconstrained-sensual, the boundless-experimental, and the unfettered (D.Bell 1976:51). This brave new world, where it is more fun to watch the World Series than to attend church, more joyful to make love than to read the Bible, more exciting to watch Jurassic Park than to pray, and more rewarding to work for extra pay than to talk about God, is not religion-friendly.

And even when attending church and praying are called for (especially within the context of a declining postmodern America which is no longer as powerful, peaceful, and affluent as it used to be), they are often marginalized for various secular needs of modern (and now postmodern) life. Going to church, for instance, increasingly becomes an ingenious occasion for fun, partying, dating, and seeking friendship. The confession made by T.Collie, a member of the Presbyterian Church in Atlanta, Georgia, reflects the sentiment and motive equally shared by two-thirds of other members: "Really, to tell you the truth, I don’t care why they come through that front door....You can really have a good time. You can party, you can be with the friends you enjoy and hang out with....You’re looking at 300 great friends you can call in any time." (D.Mattingly 1995)

The secularization of this once holy devotion is all the more understandable in, and equally all the more encouraged by, what Stephen Carter calls, in American society, "the culture of disbelief" (1993), where religious believers are often treated with disdain in the public realm and where its law and politics often trivialize religious devotion and problematicize religious practice, as much by court decisions (as against the Unification Church) as by law enforcement activities (as against the Branch of Davidians) intruding into the domain of what a religious organization can and cannot do, just as by secular politics (as against school prayer in public schools) steadfastly holding to the
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absolute dichotomy between church and state in the public sphere. (S. Carter 1995)
As Carter (1993:6-7) continues, "one sees a trend in...political and legal cultures towards treating religious beliefs as arbitrary and unimportant, a trend supported by a rhetoric that implies that there is something wrong with religious devotion. More and more,...culture seems to take the position that believing deeply in the tenets of one’s faith represents a kind of mystical irrationality, something that thoughtful, public-spirited...citizens would do better to avoid."

In light of this unfriendly public atmosphere towards religious devotion in modern time, the once holy calling now takes an even more secular turn in postmodern time. At least, a religious participant can excuse himself in Collie’s tone: "Really, to tell you the truth, I don’t care why they come through that front door." That is, the non-holy turn marginalizes religious devotion within the legitimacy of this worldly mundaneness --, for instance, within the socially acceptable concerns of looking for fun, partying, socializing, seeking friendship, and dating.

If Durkheim is right (in his critique of British utilitarian individualism and empiricism, as in Spencer’s works, and of the Kantian view that categories of understanding are synthetic-a priori), religious ideas come from society and religious activity is archetypical of humans, without which society is bound to exist in a spiritual crisis. It is with good reason for him to be thus most critical of the unfettered freedom as exemplified in modern life, in its danger of degeneration into an anomic state. Like Hobbes and Freud, he saw human nature as essentially in need of limits and discipline: that freedom and authority should go together, in other words. (S. Lukes 1977:80-3, 88) But precisely here the modern consumeristic lifeform is most anomic in celebrating human instinctual and sensual nature to its extremity, further away as it is from any psychological and biological constraints. The coming 21st century culture, Camille Paglia (1994) predicts in an affirming neo-feminist tone, will be even more "pro-porn, pro-sex,
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pro-violent" -- where the sacredness of the old has only a marginal existence at best. Good news certainly this is not to the faithful.

Durkheim might well be an old conservative for sure --, yet his caveat of an anomic state in modernity is as much relevant today as yesterday. But late modernity, innovative as it is in producing various solutions to the anomic problematic, is not unprepared either. The religions revival is only one instance, though not without its holy sound and fury and much thunder and lightning (figuratively put, for sure), yet serving no major threat to the dominant system. Other heroic strivings, as in professional associations, grass-root social organizations, patriotic rituals, transnational units, and ethnic subcultures, though the list can be extended, for sure, yet fit in better with a secular world of indust-reality. And the religious revival finds itself competing with them at the edges of the dominant scientific-technocratic, consumeristic power.

Even the modern state, intend as it does not to be left out in the striving for filling the spiritual hiatus as through the cultivation of a political ideologue (e.g., anti-communism in America), aims to supercede the holiness of the religious type (Chapter 5), though a series of events in recent times as the Vietnam War, the Watergate Scandal, the end of postwar prosperity (N.Birnbaum 1986:67), and the beginning of the post-Cold War era make the populace more cynical to a return to ideological rhetorics of the old. The Cold War, after all, is over.

Die-hard religious advocates do not sit idle, without doubt. Andrew Greeley, for one, in The Denominational Society: A Sociological Approach to Religion in America, sees the religious revival as a reversal of secularist tendencies. This thesis Daniel Bell in "The Return of the Sacred? The Argument on the Future of Religion" published in British Journal of Sociology (December 1977) rejected, since it is precisely this emergence of new religions in light of the breakup of the very traditional institutional framework which further
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confirms how much our modern world is already secularized: "when religions fail,...the search for direct experience which people can feel to be 'religious' facilitates the rise of cults." (T.Robbins 1987:395) Even here, what was once religiously charged is quickly secularized, and religious activities come to carry extra-religious connotations ("cultural conservatism, conventionality, attachment to custom, and claims to social status"): "After a time, their effects weakened, the religiosity waned, even when new standards of duty and decency were disseminated." (B.Wilson 1985:17-9)

To summarize --, the religious revival is only a latest attempt of these other lifeforms to struggle for their marginal survival at best in a world dominated as it has been by a scientific-technocratic, consumeristic mindset -- with no end in sight, and in fact even more so in the centenary of late capitalism to come. As this pleases no theist, the sad fact is that the consumeristic lifeworld still reigns triumphantly in a godless world and pushes all alternative forms of life into a most marginal existence at best. The point to remember here does not concern whether or not science eliminates religious faith -- no, it never does, since the question concerning religious authenticity, Freud (1961:28) rightly said, is "a matter of faith" -- but that the capitalist indust-reality, driven as it has been by a scientific-technocratic spirit, renders the very holy life-devotion of the old (as a honorable vocation) obsolete and pushes any religious quest into the margins of modern lifeworld and all the more in a post-modern, late capitalism where consumption is glorified to its extremity. (C.Olalquiaga 1992:xviii)

Besides, their marginal existence is often absorbed into the extreme commodity logic of late capitalism (religious quest becomes commoditized) -- and, even when it is not, some religious leaders and many of their followers suffer from mental illness of a type which transforms many of them into disgruntled losers in being incapable of coping with the consumeristic world of capitalist
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indust-reality. The variety of religious experience (its impressive, absolute number notwithstanding) constitutes an eclectic chaos, no doubt as much a tragic outcome for the faithful as a disturbing spiritual crisis for the secularists, as a logical consequence of the decline of traditional religions when the world has become so secular as each decade passes on, subject to the hegemonic logic of late capitalism: that is, with the death of God, infinite little gods thrive without adding up to anything.

"Even apparent manifestations of religiosity are, then, not always what they seem," thus sensibly concludes Bryan Wilson (1985:18). The idea of a post-secular society in postmodern time is therefore a postmodern myth. After all, even Ireland, a conservative society as it has been with its powerful Catholic Church, succumbs too towards the trend of secularization in postmodern time by legalizing divorce in a referendum on November 25, 1995 -- and thus becomes the last Western country to do so.

3.3b The Postmodern Problematic Performative Turn in Knowing, & the Need of the Critical Spirit of Science

And in this post-modern, late capitalism --, the very notion of knowing is also undergoing a corresponding shift of orientation, namely, from that which is scientific-objective to that which is performative in a post-modern world. This post-modern conception of knowledge, I claim, contributes all the more to a nihilistic consciousness, farther away from any religious seriousness, and the critical spirit of science becomes all the more necessary to counteract its negative influence.

The narrowing of the gap between scientific advance and technological development is being carried to an extremity in late capitalism whose glorified consumeristic lifeform demands an even more intense performative rationality. In the older days, there was what Jean Francois Lyotard (1986:8) calls a Platonic myth of the social sciences: the denotative/normative dichotomy. The denotative
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(as in science) concerns what is to be scientific-objective, as opposed to the normative (the prescriptive in politics, the evaluative in aesthetics, and the performative in technical matters) which is somehow value-laden. (R. Rorty 1982:203; J. Lyotard 1986:16-8, 46) The right to decide what was true was to be separated from what was just, beautiful, useful, or else. This very right is now challenged.

John Dewey, Michael Foucault, and Richard Rorty, for instance, regard rationality as "what history and society make it -- that there is no overarching ahistorical structure (the Nature of Man, the laws of human behavior, the Moral Law, the Nature of Society) to be discovered." (R. Rorty 1982:204) The question of whether a certain point of view is scientific-objective is not to any point (J. Lyotard 1986:8): "Vocabularies are useful or useless, good or bad, helpful or misleading, sensitive or coarse, and so on; but they are not 'more objective' or 'less objective' nor more or less 'scientific.'" (R. Rorty 1982:203) It is not coincidental, in this light, that the very notion of scientific objectivity is problematic in its core (Section 3.2.1).

In pre-modern days, Arthur MacIntyre (1984) reminds us, certain social roles or statuses were both firmly defined and readily accepted as normative by members of the society and therefore that the denotative/normative dichotomy is of a modern origin --. Bernard Williams's critique (Cogito 1994:10) of this view as exaggerating notwithstanding. This modern origin is in a sense a Western patriarchal myth, since it regards narratives as "fables, myths, legends", fitting only for women, children and the primitives, and "belonging to a different mentality (savage, primitive, underdeveloped, backward, alienated, composed of opinions, customs, authority, prejudice, ignorance, ideology)." (J. Lyotard 1986:27) "We all know its symptoms", Jean Lyotard concludes, "It is the entire history of cultural imperialism from the dawn of Western civilization" -- though the very development of Western science, Meera Nanda (1991:37-8) and Lily Kay (1994) remind us, can be traced to some Oriental
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sources of the Egyptian, Phoenician, Babylonian, and Semitic cultures.

The search for scientific objectivity becomes what the later Wittgenstein called a pseudo-philosophical problem: the task now is to show "the fly out of the bottle." The Platonic myth, the summation of the dream of philosophy as knowledge about the nature of scientific knowledge, is now rejected -- something which Nietzsche, Heidegger, and Foucault all urge us to do. (R. Rorty 1982:222,226) The crisis of modern knowledge is that science is incapable of legitimating itself, since it also carries within itself "presuppositions" (Section 3.2.1) and metaprinciples as rules governing denotative statements. (J. Lyotard 1986:65; J. Lyotard 1990:339)

For instance, no one has ever seen ontological collectives in the noumenal realm -- be they the autonomous "I" of Descartes, the "eidos" of Plato, the "necessary being" of Christian philosophy, the "noumenal world" of Kant, or the "absolute spirit" of Hegel (G. Martin 1989:315) --, since they are not empirically given, and any conceptual constructs "that correspond to them seem to involve the shabbiest stereotypes or the vaguest generalizing thinking" (F. Jameson 1991:185) and are often merely "a handful of metaphors masquerading as concepts, poetic ideas that were taken as absolute truths" (C. Norris 1990:168) Any ahistorical, synchronic thought cannot, thus, be qualified as clear thinking, and "with it the last traditional vocation of classical philosophy vanishes." (F. Jameson 1991:218) How much less, therefore, is it capable of legitimating other domains of knowing (ethical, aesthetic, or social)? (J. Lyotard 1990:333)

In this sense, the critical spirit of science finally turns against itself, in undermining its own dream of scientific objectivity -- in what Nietzsche called "European nihilism" (J. Lyotard 1986,39): "All great things bring about their own destruction." (F. Nietzsche 1969:III,§27) "All science is nihilist," thus confirmed Harry Neumann (1991:3). The result is a post-modern inclination that consensus as implied in any quest for scientific objectivity is not to be had; what is now stressed is dissension.
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This is not to suggest that anything goes. Ruth Anna Putnam has written that simply because we make facts and values does not mean that they are arbitrary without practices and standards. Quite on the contrary --, even for the pragmatists these practices and standards must be developed together and are to be constantly revised as the situation requires. (H. Putnam 1987:78-9) After all, not all interpretations of human life are equal (A. Plotnitsky 1988:131), since, in Nietzsche’s parlance, to adopt a perspective is neither easy nor "arbitrary", as it "necessarily" involves a new form of life which is reached only through great effort and "only for what at least seems like good reasons at the time." (A. Nehamas 1985:36, 52) Some good exemplars concern certain regularities in social life, serving as sources of rough predictability, as in causal regularities of nature (snowstorms, earthquakes, or else), causal knowledge of social life (e.g., educational opportunities and social stratification), and scheduling of social actions. (A. MacIntyre 1984:97-8)

Nor is this to endorse historicism without reservation, in light of its problematic of explaining many philosophical problems away (as is the case of Wittgenstein) or reducing them into cultural/institutional evolution --, as I have stressed time and again. We need to go beyond historicism (including the performative type in postmodern time) as well, and the critical spirit of science without its dreams seems to be what is left (as will be elaborated shortly).

Yet, this is not to deny that what is knowledge becomes heterogenous, in that there is no metalanguage unifying different language games (ethical, scientific, aesthetic, social, technical). But late capitalism is hegemonic, in imposing the performative rationality at the expense of others to a new height, in that the criterion of performativeness further narrows the gap between scientific advance and technological development. In this sense, I distance myself from the Lyotardian celebration of the multiplicity of language-games. Lyotard’s intent is heroic enough: to direct our sensitivity to differences, to enhance our ability to tolerate the incommensurable --, and thus what is
celebrated is not homology but paralogy. (J. Lyotard 1986:331) This celebration, however, is as much naive as dangerous: naive, because not all language games are equal, just as not all perspectives are equal, as some are to be dominant while others are pushed into a marginal state of existence, for better or worse -- and dangerous, because, as Stuart Sim (1992:89,115) nicely puts it, at the endpoints of multiple, free-playing little narratives lie tyranny and anarchism.

But this is not to deny the performative criterion’s demanding what Jean Lyotard detailedly analyses in The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge (1986:44) as the imperative of efficiency: what is true is increasingly that which best achieves a given task within the constraint of given means --, though the gap is not totally closed, since any advance in scientific knowledge is not yet totally subjugated to the performative imperative of technological investment. (J. Lyotard 1986:45) But that which is true is increasingly equated as what use it is, whether it is saleable, or if it works: "universities and the institutions of higher learning are called upon to create skills, and no longer ideals -- so many doctors, so many teachers in a given discipline, so many engineers, so many administrators." (J. Lyotard 1986:48,51) Even in an earlier time as by the twenties when the postmodern condition had yet to exist, David Noble argues, science was already increasingly transformed into capital, as dictated by the modern industrial use of technology, especially in a capitalist setting (A. Ross 1991:124):

From the start, modern technology was nothing more or less than the transformation of science into a means of capital accumulation, through the application of discoveries in physics and chemistry to the processes of commodity production...Modern science-based industry [was] industrial enterprise in which ongoing scientific investigation and the systematic application of scientific knowledge to the process of commodity production [had] become routine parts of the operation.

And Harold Adams Innis, in his study of civilizations (as in The Bias of
Communications) as an environmental field within a culture in which media contain the very locus of information so crucial for the life of a culture, tells us how much modern culture perpetuates the dominant mode of knowledge as technical, secular, materialistic, commercialistic, future-oriented, at the expense of other modes now rejected as illegitimate. (W.Kuhns 1971:155,162)

This performative shift in how knowing is to be understood intensifies all the more in the post-modern, information age --, with the cybernetic/artificial-intelligence revolutions in the process of further development (as will be elaborated in the last chapter "A Final Thought"). Roger Schank, an artificial intelligence scientist at Yale, makes the point well (S.Turkle 1984:259),

We're addressing the same questions that Aristotle addressed... We have a different method of doing it. That method can be summed up in one word: process.... In other words, the whole question of whether you really know... can be addressed in terms of what you do when you see the word "know".... Under what circumstances?... And this kind of change... is what the philosophy of AI [Artificial Intelligence] is all about. What I'm saying is, let's look at the old philosophical questions. Let's look at them in terms of what we do, in terms of how we approach and operate on these things rather than on truth. Truth is a nonmeaningful AI term."

As is true of everything, of course, there is as much opportunity as danger in this performative shift. The danger is already familiar to us, thanks to the works of Martin Heidegger, Michael Foucault, Erich Fromm, Herbert Marcuse, Max Horkheimer, Theodore Adorno, Max Weber, Noam Chomsky, and Jurgen Habermas, among others: that when rationality becomes totally instrumental, merely as a service to power (as the will to dominate and master), the result is the decadent triumph of modern totalitarianism (Nazi, Fascist, and Communist), of the Holocaust, of Foucault's micro-power subjugated subjectivity (D.Levin 1988:4,21; S.White 1991:120), of Chomsky's manufacturing of consent (1988), or of Weber's iron cage. The legacy of instrumental rationality in its extreme form is therefore terror.
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Or conversely, the opportunity is not less striking: its allowance for intellectual emancipation, for instinctual celebration, for imaginative playfulness, for creative liberation, for difference politics, for artistic spontaneity, to the point that even a most critical opponent of modern life and world cannot take away this brighter side -- its danger of degeneration into decadence notwithstanding. (Chapters 2-5)

But in light of this abandonment of the quest for scientific objectivity and its performative successor which still keeps the critical spirit of science at the service of late capitalism, the smart thing to do is to go beyond postmodern historicism (of the performative type) and to keep this critical spirit" without its performance-obsessed ethos, that is, to keep it from being totally instrumental in late capitalism. Or in Dewey's parlance which Rorty

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39. My position here should not be taken as an anti-science stand. The anti-science phenomenon has a long history indeed, and its proponents can be classified in four categories, whose views I all reject as romantic, for reasons as follows.

(a) A major opponent of science is known as the "cyclicist." (G. Holton 1993:126-7) The cyclicist views science not as a progressive, cumulating activity but one which develops from childhood and youth to old and death --, just like a biological organism. Oswald Spengler is an exemplary figure. Science at its bottom is, Spengler claims in The Decline of the West, "anthropomorphic," based as it is on culturally conditioned illusions, in that each culture tests its own science with its own conceptions and dynamics: "to the classical belonged the conception of form; to the Arabian, the idea of substances with visible or secret attributes; to the Faustian -- ours -- the ideas of force and mass." (G. Holton 1993:132) And it will come to an eventual end, because the attraction of the scientific-technological profession is diminishing and because the non-Caucasian races will adopt the technical arts and "conquer the Western nations themselves." (G. Holton 1993:134)

As Gerald Holton rightly criticizes him, "one cannot fail to note the presence of distorted versions of Hegelian and Marxian dialectics, and more specifically the frequent, basic misunderstanding about science by Spengler and his heirs."

(b) A second anti-science stand takes the form of questioning the distinction between science and fiction -- ranging from Mary Hesse's "social myths" to Bruno Latour's "rhetoric" (G. Holton 1993:153), though Latour (1995) in a recent talk suggests that he is not against science. As already discussed earlier (in Section 3.2a), this radical view does no justice to the tremendous scientific/technological achievements in modern times.

(c) Or some proponents appeal to what Holton (1993:154) calls the "Dionysian" spirit which can range from New Age thinking through countercultures of the 1960's to Eastern mysticism. As afore-discussed in Section 3.3a and later in Section 4.4, this backlash constitutes just another infeasible rechanting efforts which have their roots in 19th century Romanticism (if not earlier).

(d) Finally, some anti-science advocates take the feminist line and regard science as the fatal flaw of "androcentrism," that is, as a male-oriented projection of Oedipal obsessions with force, energy, power, or conflict. (G. Holton 1993:154) They, like Sandra Harding, then call for "a more radical intellectual, moral, social, and political revolution than the founders of modern Western cultures could have imagined." Again, as already discussed in Section 3.2a (and will be further addressed in Section 5.4), this radical stand does no justice to how much our understanding of the world is enriched through the advance in science and technology, just as it remains impotent as a postmodern politics of difference in intensifying social cleavage.

In rejecting these four exemplary anti-science groups, I therefore refuse to reject the enterprise of science --, though solely in the form of its critical spirit (without, however, its ideal of scientific objectivity as afore-criticised).
cites, the will to truth is to be kept, but free as much from any empiricist
naivety of scientific objectivity and for that matter of "system" and "method"
(R.Rorty 1982:206-8,226), as from any euphorious expectation for the future, that
is, free from the false human pride which assumes more about being human than
what culture has shaped them into what they are, beyond which humans are nothing
--, no Transcendental Self, no Nature of Man, no Laws of Human Behaviors, no
Nature of Society, no Objective Knowledge, no Utopia.

The performative shift can be understood in contemporary sociology of
knowledge as a new version of cultural constructionism in the post-industrial,
information age --, in its critique of idealism and realism (and of a weaker
form, as is the case in probabilism/reliablism), in special relation to the bad
business of "representation" (or of the naive theory of truth as "correspondence
to reality") and of scientific objectivity (as afore-discussed in Section 3.2).
Yet, this is not to revive Idealism nor Nominalism40 (as in positivism) of some
sort in its millenarian debate with Realism. On the contrary, the performative
shift dissolves the debate as another victim of the bad business of pseudo-
philosophical problems. Hume is right, in that we cannot understand reality
itself in the end (other than its regularity). Yet this is not to endorse the
performative turn without qualification, as discussed before --, quite on the
contrary.

Neither, as I have stressed time and again --, is this to mean that
anything goes. On the contrary, the way humans think and behave reflects some
form of life which, in Wittgenstein’s parlance, is neither true nor false,
neither reasonable nor unreasonable, yet requires great effort and
experimentation in long historical eons (and thus are neither arbitrary nor
easy). Nietzsche could not agree more, in that truth in the end is nothing but
value creation, which however is neither easy nor arbitrary, often require as it

40. This is the view that mathematics is not about real objects but mostly make-
believe. (H.Putnam 1975b:x1)
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does great effort under challenging conditions, beyond whose life-form there is nothing about being human, that is, other than what culture has shaped them into what they are --, as discussed before.

An equivalent process of deconstruction is under way in aesthetic, moral, and political discourses as well (Chapters 4-5): allegorical, dissensual, diachronic, emotivist, poetic, rhetorical, symbolic, intertextual, as opposed to referential, consensual, representational, synchronic, objective, real, true. At the very least, one can simply do what Edmund Husserl in his phenomenological bend had long suggested the moderns to do: to bracket, that is, to refrain from making any judgements concerning, the things-out-there in their "real" spatio-temporal existence. (S.Sim 1992:12)

The scientific spirit in the end can still keeps its critical edge and means something like what Rorty calls argumentative (R.Rorty 1982:220), that is, behaving like a lawyer in cross-examining, checking relevant precedents, providing a persuasive case, clarifying what is blurred, or in brief, making a good case beyond reasonable doubt -- or what Nietzsche refered to as the paradigmatic spirit of the Enlightenment without its dreams: "clear thinking of reason, rigorous thought, cautious judgment, logical conclusions" (A.Megill 1985:66), within the boundary of sensual experience, of course, plus sensitive looking, creative imaging, and open-mindedness.

This critical spirit thus understood therefore do not lament over the death of the Western ideal of the modern self which concerns the search for scientific objectivity, nor celebrate the performative turn in truth claims. Who killed this once euphoric ethos? No one did, certainly not religion. It is just the critical spirit of science which turns against its own naive ideal. Science is thus nihilist, as much towards itself as towards others. Nor is there good reason to assume, in late capitalism, an end of this process in sight awaiting our human future. Be that as it may, yet in the end it is neither scientific objectivity nor God, just as much as neither the performative turn nor infinite little gods
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of knowing, but the critical spirit of the Enlightenment without its dreams, plus its enemies' sensitive looking and creative imaging again without their romantic hopes, which triumph in the fight between the two antagonists of science and religion.

What is left, therefore, is to maintain the critical spirit of science without endorsing realism, idealism (as in positivism) and historicism (the performative turn included), while learning something from each of them.

3.4 The Morning After the Collapse of the Way of Heaven

But are the problematics of the godless world in the Same also spreading to the Others as well? Surely they are, I claim. Take the case of this Other qua the Chinese.

The very notion of the death of God in this Other means something a little different from the Same's experience. The ancients of this Other, after all, lacked a transcendental spirit so crucial for the formation of any otherworldly consciousness. (K. Sun 1985:392) Even the concept tian in this Other's cosmology, though being quite close to a transcendental indexical term, yet means something within the phenomenal world qua heaven and earth. (K. Sun 1985:282, 297) With the religious import of Indian Buddhism, they only had a conception of the universal mind (as evolving in Zen) which was sinitized by neo-confucians into a this-worldly orientation. (M. Sze 1959:24) This should not be surprising, since within the thisworldly metanarrative of this Other, all things were regarded as part of a totality which was to be as much constantly in a cylical state of change as harmoniously yet hierarchically linked in their mutual interactions.

Or alternatively put, Takeshi Umehara (1992a:10-1), a well-known Japanese philosopher, nicely summarizes the mental ethos of this Other as mutualism (an ethics based on interpersonal responsibility, not on individual rights) and cyclicity (a cosmological view that all things repeat themselves in a continuous cycle of life, death, and rebirth). The very notion of a suprasensible being qua
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God in the noumenal realm was therefore not needed, since if all things under heaven and earth were to be in the cyclical constancy of change and in a harmonious yet hierarchical interrelationship, life meaning was viewed on the basis as much of harmonies and hierarchies of all things as of the linkage of all human lives, be they past, present, or future in a cyclical evolution of time. (T. Fang 122) A God’s blessing became un-necessary in the already quite secular world of this Other. (W. Cheng 224)

This cosmological presupposition largely shaped the epistemic orientation of this Other. Unlike the Same’s pre-moderns, this Other’s ancients were obsessed with a holistic attitude towards things (integrating the whole, as opposed to analyzing differences) within a context of this worldliness (emphasizing the concrete, as opposed to the abstract and the transcendental). (Y. Cheng 1988: 152-3; M. Jie 1991: 39) Anyone who comes to contact a humanist of the old type in this Other even in our times can still be stunned by the unmistakable absence of a vigorous analytical, theoretical mind as if the latter’s power of reasoning suffers from a severe underdevelopment. The cultivation of this extremely thin epistemic mindset was further value-laden within a heavily moral-earnest viewpoint of the world in which, in the presence of harmonies and hierarchies of all things and the constancy of change in a cyclical evolution, all thoughts and behaviors were to be shaped in accordance to the way of heaven so presupposed (that is, when translated into ordinary language, stressing group think, social order, hierarchical structure, sensual discipline, and emotional restraint).

What counted as truth was therefore expected to appeal ultimately to this orthodoxy of the Other. The literati-officials in the last millennia of this Other’s past were notorious in mastering (read: rote-memorizing) this equivalent canonical metanarrative of theirs. Any claim to truth was to be consistent with this paramount source of authority qua the Way of Heaven (as much in Taoist as in Confucian texts). The bright side of this canon was its pragmatic stress of the link between knowing and behaving in any quest for truth (that is, empiricist...
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enough to use practice and experience, not abstract/transcendental categories, as the guide to truth). (X. Chen 1992:550; K. Sun 1985:406-7) The dark side of this all, however, was its subsequent severe underdevelopment of a mind which was most un-analytical, un-theoretic to the point of rendering a Scientific Revolution (in the modern West) unimaginable in this Other, minimal as their standard for knowledge acquisition was. (S. Lao 1992:485; K. Sun 1985:402-5) Less diplomatically put, this Other never paid much attention to the development of an epistemology in the strict sense of the word, in light of their obsessive (pathological) motivational purity in moral cultivation within a cosmological metanarrative aforedelineated. (M. Jie 1991:39; S. Lao 1992:485)

If religious aims are differentiated into what Randall Collins (1994) refers to as the transcendental, the socio-moral, and the magical --, there was a religion in this Other only in terms of the needs of socio-moral identity (as in Confucian ceremonial rituals) and supernatural power (as in folkloric tales of ghostly spirits), in the absence of a transcendental spirit (the lack of a consciousness of salvation). The cosmological-moral metanarrative of this Other constituted, consequently, a religion only in the sense of providing a social-moral identity qua a legitimation of its communal bondage and a sense of awe towards the extraordinary power of mystic spirits. The very analogue of the death of God in this Other’s context must therefore be understood as the deconstruction of this metanarrative. But how has this come about?

The answer lies in the Same’s hegemonic challenge to this Other from the 19th century on. After all, the Europeans were not just another deja-vu "barbarians": "The Orient’s contact with Europe shook nations to the foundations, calling into question the roots of their civilizations and all the assumptions and institutions on which their lives were based." (P. Harrison 1979:51) Unfailingly --, this Other’s foundation (the very metanarrative of the Way of Heaven) was too badly shaken in its humiliating encounter with the modern Same. The death of God in this Other therefore means the shaking of the Way of Heaven
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to its foundation by the Western impact.

The sequences of soul-searching efforts (as discussed in Section 1.5 and thus not to be repeated here) from the Self-strengthening Movement and the Hundred Days of Reform through the May Fourth Movement and the Marxian experience to the state-market reform in our times constitute successive reenchanting efforts in a godless world of this Other -- always through some emulation of the Same’s values and ideals in a progressing scale with the passage of time. To illustrate the point, Maoism did not derive its ideas from ancient Chinese sages but Western Marxist thinkers (especially Stalin, Lenin, and Marx), the haunting spirit of this Other’s past on the founder as suggested by some sinologists notwithstanding (M.Altaisky 1971:51-2,58;V.Holubnchy 1964:14-7;D.Wilson 1980:8;H.Creel 1953:205;M.Goldman 1975:438) --, just as contemporary market reforms learn much from Westernized East-Asian and Western economic successful experiences.

This Other’s disenchanted world means a world where its traditional ideals of the True, the Beautiful (Section 4.5), and the Good and Just (Section 5.5) become devalued as "backward", "feudalistic", "superstitious", "ignorant", or else. Confucian, Taoist, Buddhist, and folkloric, the beliefs of these types the "new youth" moderns took as oppressive, unprogressive, or what Lu Xun, the literary giant of this century in this Other, called a "man-eating" tradition.(G.Barme 1992) Shocking this iconoclastic view was indeed -- as much to them then as to us now; yet no other phrase summarizes the death of God in this Other better than this merciless dethronement of their tradition to such a lowest of the low degradation. And Mao wanted to outdo this rejection in carrying out countless "anti" campaigns of the most destructive form against their past as nothing but feudalistic and imperialistic in an intensely derogatory tone. No other comparable civilization has undergone such an extreme disenchanting loss of traditional identity as this Other had.

How successful then is the reenchanting effort of this Other in emulating
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the modern Same? Consider (1) the price that this Other had paid before the era of market reforms when the critical spirit of science was never fully institutionalized in the intellectual and socio-business realms, and (2) the great transformations since then.

(1) In the intellectual realm, both the literary and the revolutionary "new youth" moderns (Section 1.5) had always championed the need, among others, of a scientific spirit in liberating their country from the backward mentality of the ancien regime. (J. Wang 1992:44; H. Cheng 1989:61) But since history proved unreceptive to the romantic tendency of the former (Section 1.5), the latter succeeded in conquering the power structure of a new China where, true Marxists as they were, the revolutionary junta never wholeheartedly shared the ideal of scientific objectivity as embodied in the Western ideal of the modern self, their rhetoric and ideal notwithstanding (the Marxian faith in scientific advance and technological emancipatory power), since science was a form of abstract knowledge -- incompatible with the Marxist dialectic, historicist view of thought formation.

After all, within a social context of revolutionary fervor, class analysis always depicted scientific objectivity as nothing but the subversive rhetoric of the capitalist, exploitative stratum. Mao was often torn between the "red" imperative as a politically correct orientation in a revolutionary context and the "expert" need for advanced knowledge in building a new nation, and, in light of his contempt for the pretenses of the learned (from previous humiliating experience in his younger days) and distress at their high social status (F. Teiwes 1984:14), acted time and again against the former, in order to "show that the lowly are most intelligent while the elite are most ignorant so as to expropriate the capital of the cocky senior intellectuals." (F. Teiwes 1984:20) Intelligentsia in this Other, as much out of jealousy as of ideologue, were badly treated and poorly rewarded as the "stinking number nine." (T. Tsou 1984:65; J. Wang
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1992:293-4)

The social sciences and humanities, consequently, lost as much their appeal as integrity qua disciplines in a much politicized environment. (S. Ogden 1991:305,319) The cultivation of a scientific spirit was never fully institutionalized, save in the natural and formal sciences where a scientific method of enquiry modelling after the Soviet experience spread in formal educational institutions (polytechnic institutes, vocational and industrial colleges) to a degree of influence unknown in the history of this Other. (J. Wang 1992:284; M. Tu 1979:44) Even here, rote-memorizing (of factual knowledge) was stressed at the expense of critical thinking, analysis and originality. (S. Ogden 1991:311) After all, the thinking mode of the day was not whether or not something was scientifically thoroughly thought out but that it must be politically correct.

Secondly, the same mental and behavioral tendency was equally shown in the socio-economic world as well. The point to remember here is that, as compared with the older days of their ancients when the family and kinship structure exercised control of the individual, it was the work unit (and the street committee) which fulfilled the task in the Maoist epoch. (A. Walder 1993; L. Pye 1991:189) It was in such work units as factories, shops, communes, cooperatives, brigades, teams, and offices that the party (as in primary party committees) and state cadres made their immediate contact with the individual. The work unit was where the state (qua the Party and cadres) and society (qua the individual workers) met. (J. Wang 1992:92)

The Parsonian abstract mental/behavioral schema of (a) ascription-achievement, (b) particularism-universalism, (c) affectivity-neutrality, and (d) diffusiveness-specificity were relevant only within limits in such a much politicized world.

(a) To be in the wrong class (as with a bourgeois background) in this revolutionary Other was as much unfortunate as to be an untouchable in an Indian caste system is. Needless to say, the Marxists in this Other were most un-
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Parsonian in their ascriptive ethos of a class-based ideologue -- save the role of women. Never before in the history of this Other, Qiu Shijie a sociologist in Guangzhou thus spoke in an interview, was equality between the sexes so much stressed as during the Maoist era.

(b) The state for sure met the individual worker often in a paternalistic form (if not as a legacy of the Confucian stress of a benevolent sovereign so deeply ingrained in this Other for millennia), since the individual worker came to depend on socio-economic benefits and services as made eligible only through his work unit (as in state-owned enterprises). The list was too long indeed: meals, bath facilities, entertainments, library usage, health insurance, medicare care, child care, pensions, loans, education (A.Walder 1986:14), permission to travel, job transfer, local residence registration for a relative or spouse, housing, sometimes lessening legal punishment for a criminal offense (A.Walder 1986:16), vacations, annual home leave, personal leave, visits to sanatoria, and special medications. (A.Walder 1986:22)

This socio-economic eligibility, however, depended on whether or not the individual in question had politically correct attitudinal and behavioral dispositions, which often carried more weight than work performance in a revolutionary environment. Regular political study sessions, as an illustration, were held in the work unit (mostly in the evenings) -- in order to monitor as much any sign of political deviance as implementation of state policies. Those active politically and diligently enough, once become as they did the activists and group leaders, helped make the state infiltration into the workshop easier by serving as a representative of both shop management and the workshop party branch to the rank and file workers. (A.Walder 1986:105) That they thereby developed a patron-client tie with work unit officials, in which decisions on promotion and demotion were made on the basis of loyalty and service rendered to management and party in accordance to a politically correct line, constituted an essential tie in what Andrew Walder called a form of principled particularism, 226
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based on the Marxian-Leninist, Maoist orthodoxy (A.Walder 1986:25) -- as opposed to the Parsonian universalism.

(c) Consequently, unlike the Weberian-Parsonian affective neutrality (H.Tai 1989:9), an "affective model" of paternalistic management took a most personal interest in a worker to ensure sufficient ideological correctness (C.Wong 1987:174) -- beyond the concerns of work performance. The state security bureau and the personnel department in the work unit, Big Brother as they so played, kept political dossiers on every worker. (A.Walder 1986:19)

(d) Interpersonal relations were therefore as much diffuse as in pre-modernity -- all the more intensified since the implementation of the commune systems. No one escaped the gossip nor watchdog of any other in a tightly controlled totalitarian regime.

The critical spirit of science therefore never penetrated very far into this Other's lifeworld which then enjoyed the subsequent fortune of never being entrapped into a scientism as the early Western moderns had been, and of never enduring the feeling of loneliness as in a Western urbanity. Yet the price this Other ended up paying was a misfortune of the other polarity: a heavily ideologicalized worldview and a most oppressive communal living in a police state. One cannot then resist asking an imaginative question: which one is better, the scientism and loneliness in the Same qua the Western world or the ideologue and police state of the Other qua the Maoist one? If confronted with the two choices, I would choose the former --, so do many contemporaries in this Other. Why?

(2) A short reply is, So much has changed for the better since the death of this Other's tyrannical founder (though in the imagery of the hegemonic capitalist modern Same). Consider the great transformations since the opening of this Other to the outside world (a) in the intellectual sphere and then (b) in the socio-business world, in relation to the Parsonian four-pattern abstract
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mental/behavioral schema.

(a) In the intellectual sphere, the critical spirit of science is being all the more institutionalized. Even in the older days, as much in the natural as in formal sciences a scientific method of enquiry modelling after the Soviet experience had already spread in formal educational institutions to a pervasive extent unknown in the history of this Other. (J.Wang 1992:284; M.Tu 1979:44) The opening to the outside world has the good fortune, just as it did in the Hundred Days of Reform (1898) of their Manchu ancestors, to learn from the critical spirit of science (be it social or natural, instrumental or substantive) as originally cultivated in the Same qua the modern West. The sending of thousands of Chinese students abroad (mostly to Japan and the Western world) is consequent of this Other's liberalizing gesture.

The critical spirit of science is useful not solely in constructing necessary abstract mental and behavioral schema as in the socio-business world but also in appealing to vigorous analytical reasoning which is then used to develop a healthy critical attitude as much towards fallacious thinking as towards any bias resulting from scientific or related views as well. (Z.Wei 1992:600) When asked whether or not she believed in religious sacredness (devils, evil spirits, ghosts, witches), Zhu Qingying a hospital doctor thus responded, "No. As a scientist, how could I believe in something like that?" Why not, Mrs.Zhu --, after all science cannot explain everything? "My faith in science", responded she, "is that whatever cannot be now explained by science would be so eventually." So was a similar view held by Prof.Lin Li a social researcher: "Superstitious beliefs will be eroded with the advance of science. After all, the Chinese never has a conception of a monolithic God."

This is not to suggest, nevertheless, a similar pattern of scientism at work here as well (as was the case in the early modern West). The reason is not hard to see: that this Other benefits from two circumstantial advantages which

[1]. Real name was not revealed -- as requested.
prevent them from being entrapped into the positivist naivety of scientific objectivity in the same. Firstly, as a latecomer in espousing the critical spirit of science, they benefit from learning the problematic of scientism (Section 3.2) in contemporary post-modern critique of the very ideal of scientific objectivity. So do they benefit, secondly, from their pragmatic cultural heritage as mentioned earlier which is more inclined to accept performativeness as the criterion to truth in an increasingly consumeristic lifeworld, constantly bombarded as it is with the efficiency message as part of the logic of late capitalism from advanced societies. To this two-fold extent, they leapfrog in the scientific learning curve.

Yet a long way to go this Other still has, as it is handicapped in a three-fold way -- firstly due to their relative developmental backwardness qua still a primarily agricultural economy, secondly due to the Party’s ideological rigidity in a dying gerontocracy, and lastly due to the absence of a cultural heritage for a vigourous analytical, theoretic mindset so crucial to scientific discovery and intellectual exploration (as in the social and humanistic disciplines most particularly). It is not without good reason for Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel to regard this Other’s civilization as “static”, in that, in a classic passage by John Stuart Mill (1975:34) in “Of the Liberty of Thought and Discussion”, this Other could not have produced an intellectually active people in a social atmosphere so characteristic of oriental despotism where mental and behavioral conformism was elevated to the status of a virtue.4 Nothing is more unconducive to scientific advance and intellectual flourishment than a mental

4. This cultural legacy will continue to impose a heavy price for this Sinitic Other (and for that matter, for other East Asian Others) to pay in the long process of catching up with the same. Just to see how miserable the record of these Oriental Others to generate original ideas is, consider Hamish McRae’s comment (1994:86) which is worth repeating: "The paucity of Asia’s contribution to world knowledge is clear from the distribution of Nobel prizes for natural sciences. Up to 1991 there were 410 prizes awarded. Out of these 159 (or 39 per cent) went to researchers to the U.S., followed by 65 to the UK, 60 to Germany, and 23 to France. Only five prizes went to Japan, and even fewer to any other Asian nations. Even making some allowance for the tendency of a Swedish foundation to favour European scientists, and the relatively recent climb of East Asia up the ladder of economic progress, the imbalance is startling." The imbalance is startling, indeed.
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slavery of this type is --; the closing of this Other’s mind in Mao’s epoch and the crashing of dissident thought in 1989 democracy movement constitute only two contemporary cases.

Yet the successful market reforms offer good prospects for this continual transition to a more efficient, instrumental lifeform further away from this three-fold mental and behavioral backwardness and moving towards performativeness as the criterion to truth as it has already transformed the late capitalist world of the hegemonic modern Same. Why?

(b) Market reforms have contributed much to the institutionalization of the criterion of performativeness as the critical spirit of science qua instrumental rationality in the socio-business world when this Other is rapidly evolving into a new age of indust-reality of time and space -- along the Parsonian mental/behavioral four-pattern schema.

Firstly, market forces have weakened state power through an emerging social differentiation consequent on the liberalizing impact which has the virtue of producing a degree of what David Strand calls "independent social identity" in various associations and institutions (universities, factories, mass media, farms) -- often resulting in the weakening of party and bureaucratic control over many work units. (J. Wang 1992:240) Where state/party’s control still shows some force, political correctness is no longer to be consistent with class-based orthodoxy but in the spirit of production efficiency.

Yet there is a price to pay. With the decline of state power, however, the monster of traditional sexism is unleashed, mostly among the less cultivated and backward in this Other. A 18-year-old peasant girl spoke candidly of some biopsychological differences between the sexes in an interview: "Men are better." Why? "Because they are stronger and endure better". So did Qiu Shikie, a sociologist, and Yu Dingbang, a social researcher, hold a comparable view, in that men are advantageous in carrying out certain assignments (as in the military
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and manual tasks) and being less burdensome (as in the freedom from pregnancy).

Yet the power of market forces, Xiao Xianbin, a social researcher, suggested in an interview, has started eroding this ascriptive attitude (and will accelerate its demise in due time) in favouring a new ethos which rewards whoever performs better -- with neither the virtue of state’s sanction of equality nor the vice of traditional sexism, as is most extensively so in large enterprises and ordinary job situations. And with the impact of the hegemonic ideational advance of the Same qua the Western World, many -- like Zhang Bing, a college student, and his friends -- end up being increasingly influenced by the modern Western ideal of equality of opportunity between the sexes and a more progressive meritocratic mindset.

Secondly, the same logic applies to the tradition of particularism. An adherence to merely generalized socialist beliefs is now sufficient (A.Walder 1986:230-1), while activists and group leaders are to show their biaoxian (work attitude, political thought, helpfulness to coworkers and group leaders, obedience to leaders) instead through being a "advanced worker", in alerting management to brewing problems, seeking to convince rank and file workers to comply, and acting to help the implementation of management initiatives. (A.Walder 1986:133,233) The more liberalized the economy of this Other is from state and collective controls, He Yuefu a historian here remarked, the more universalist work decisions become, on the basis of the market imperative of efficiency (in light of a corrupt tendency of the old, as in state and collective enterprises where, Wong Xianli a Foreign Affairs Office staff reminded me, building good relations used to be more paramount than anything else).

East Asian modernizing drive, so it seems for some scholars, is distinctive in its ascriptive/particularistic practices as most exemplified in small businesses. Yet this claim requires qualification, since relation network, Cai He and Qiu Shijie, two sociologists thus argued in an interview, is necessary in the initial stage of modernization, especially for small businesses lacking what
Yu Dingbang a social researcher called sufficient capital to attract more qualified personnel on a more competitive, meritocratic basis -- in a society which is still governed more by relation network than by a system of law (Y. Lee 1993:13) and where, as Chen Lijun a social researcher put it, many have to struggle to have their means met. Corruption thrives in a harsh environment of this sort, for sure in the shorter term.

Yet there seems to be little future for particularism to live happily with market forces, as Chen Bo a vice-chairman of a Guangzhou Resident Committee summarized it well: "Because of the market reforms, you lose your face if you hire someone who is not that competent, simply on the basis of his being in connection with you. Surely, nepotism still exists -- but is on the way out, though gradually."

Thirdly, as the market forces penetrate into the socio-business realm, interpersonal relations are also becoming less diffuse. Concerns beyond work performance, as exemplified by the existence of political dossiers on every worker (A. Walder 1986:19), are now history of the old --, superceded by a more professional, business-oriented outlook.

And lastly, this then means that interpersonal interactions become more business-oriented, less personel-affective as well. When asked to what extent he cared about the personal life of his co-workers, He Yuan, a shoe factory worker gave this answer: "If he has a problem, I may find out what indeed happened, or just inform him of an alternative job I might know." How about letting him stay in the latter's place for a couple of days if he were broke? "No way," so replied he.

This Other in our times thus succumbs more and more, as will be clear shortly, to the institution of an individualist, minimal self, the more the logic of the market penetrates into its socio-business realm, in its obsession with having (Section 2.5). At the endpoint of this individualist lifeform lies a

\footnote{Real name was not revealed -- as requested.}
moral, spiritual minimalism where time is money and money is glorious. The problematics of (b1)being and (b2)belonging in a godless world await this Other in its modernizing process as well.

(b1) The breakdown of orthodox Marxism with a Maoist face, together with its critique of the feudal past, has left many in a spiritual vacuum in this Other's godless world, where the only practical alternative is to escape into a consumeristic dreamworld in the imagery of the modern Same. The cognitive-appreciative, psychic, and environmental costs (Section 2.5) putting aside --, the spiritual problematic of estranged being surfaces once more, if not more intensely for a people who now have the chance to open widely their eyes to the affluent modern Same with as much envy as obsession.

The proliferation of new religions is becoming a readymade escape route in this Other -- as in the mushrooming of Christian churches (with the support of Western missionaries) and the spreading of cults -- at a time when the state finds it less and less relevant, with the passage of each year, to proclaim its existence in the name of Marxist ideologue. In the good old revolutionary days (which never were), by contrast, life-meaning could be most sublime at the point where it was so heroic and reverent to sacrifice one's life, be it in the name of a coming Communist utopia or of the semigod Mao. But who now really cares, bluntly put, of this cliche of nowhere anymore, while being successful in the market is so materially rewarding? The critical spirit inherent in market consciousness is cool-headed, instrumental, and materialist (as in the Parsonian mental/behavioral schema): "Time is money, not to be wasted in idle talk." Market forces thus break down pre-existing norms and values (Section 2.5), be they of the Way of Heaven of their ancients or of the Communist Utopia of their contemporary revolutionaries.

The search for spiritual alternatives knows no boundary: the revival of ancient isms, the reappearance of superstitious beliefs and practices (lavish burials and folkoric tales of evil spirits), the resurface of Christian churches,
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"clan associations, religious organizations, and secret societies" (M. Tu 1993:xiv), or else (X. Q. Chen 1990:321) Perhaps a most interesting phenomenon is the emergence of cults and sects in this Other as well. The story of a cult leader by the name of Mr. Fu is most telling. Frequent south China as he did, this Mr. Fu claimed the mastery of techniques to mind-cure various physio-psychological disorders ranching from smoking addiction and obesity through chronic bodily pain and dwarfishness to depression -- with the use of deep meditation and mysterious therapeutic techniques. When many did not receive what he promised, local academics accused him of foul play with a mercenary motif in manipulating the desperate (if not equally mentally imbalanced) mood of those searching the holy grail of psychic consolation in a troubled time of spiritual decay. Yet the story of Mr. Fu is neither the first nor the last there ever be; just with a little stretch of the imagination, it is not difficult to foresee the emergence before long of other cults in whatever name it may be pertinent at the time in this Other -- in which case, the five-fold rationale for the proliferation of new religions in the Same (Section 3.3) can be applied here too.

And the degeneration of the 1993 celebration of Mao’s 100th birth anniversary is another intriguing tale. The ruling junta of this Other, for sure, intended to use the occasion to strengthen the socialist appeal in an epoch when its own future is numbered. Yet the results contradicted the motif, be good-intended as it may. Business entrepreneurs used the occasion instead to make a buck (selling Maoist miniatures, pictures, watches, pins, buttons). Die-hard romantics, in the presence of widespread corruption, felt justified, on this occasion, to yearn for the good old Maoist days which never were. Disgruntled artists, being persecuted and imprisoned time and again notwithstanding, exploited the Maoist fever as a sarcastic expression through their art works of

44. A program on contemporary mainland Chinese culture broadcasted on a Hong Kong Chinese TV channel at 10:30 p.m. (12/22/93).

45. "The Reemergence of Mao's Cult" broadcasted on the English TV channel in Hong Kong (01/06/94).

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an innocent age forever lost. Their romanticization of the founding father of
this revolutionary Other which was never married is both a tribute to the
increasing irrelevance of what the semigod stood for and a protest against the
extant order which is spiritually shallow. The downtrodden and uneducated
welcomed it as a spiritual alternative which never is and elevated him to the
status of a new god (food to be offered to a Maoist shrine daily, and pray to be
given to it before each mealtime, etc.).

This Other of our time is in a most anomic state -- thousand thanks as they
should to the critical spirit of science disguised as instrumental rationality
which helps to make an unprecedented prosperous time unknown in its previous
history possible and yet, be ironic as this is, devalues the very legitimacy of
its past, be it feudalistic or Maoist. Or in the phrase used by some locals as
quoted by Andrew Jones (1995), a "nonsense culture" is in the making.

(b2) This devaluation infiltrates inside communal relations as well. How
nostalgic it is for those born in the old days and yet living in the present with
its declining communal-moral order to think of a past where the sense of
community reigned supremely. A temptation hard indeed it is for them to resist.
"Social order has broken down, and combined with increased population leads to
a rise in crimes," Lun Ning, a desk receptionist told me in a moving tone, "I
do not feel safe to walk home at night anymore" -- in a society which once prided
itself of being so moral-straight that even if you lost a wallet, a good
Samaritan comrade would return it intact to you in no time. Nowadays, please do
watch your wallet in public transports, since it could be lost anytime. In the
old days, bikes could be safely left unlocked, Wong Xianli the Foreign Affairs
office staff thus confided to me, but in our days, even her bike which was
heavily locked was stolen as well. Your fellow comrades are no longer
gratuitously expected to be good Samaritans but someones who can cheat you for
a buck if you appear too innocent.

*“. Real name was not revealed -- as requested.
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A world so transformed into a godless world turned business universe is one where monads of minimal selves thrive. Superficial appearance ("You better look good, comrade") now counts a lot. And you want to make it in the business world? "Well, better to fabricate a business card with impressive titles and positions -- even if you lie on them" -- thus advised me Robert Liu a hotel manager in an interview (and his willingness to adopt a English first name while doing business clearly indicates something of a commercial ethos rapidly growing to dominance, in the imagery of the modern Same). A social world like this becomes alienating in human relations. Social loneliness intensifies in an absence of a sense of community. Those who "do not quite make it" -- the unemployed, the beggars, and the migrant workers wandering in major urbanities (Section 2.5) -- feel most lonely in the public domains where the passers-by wear no face and thus do no virtue a la three monkeys’ style: hear, see, and speak nothing of them. Nor do those who "do not make it formally" fare any better, in resorting to Machiavellian methods or "by any means necessary" as an equivalent Malcom X turned business con here would put it. Black marketeers, gangsters, corrupt officials --, a "frontier economy" of this type is spreading fast in this Other (and in Russia, for that matter). (K. Pennar 1994:28)

As an emergent trend, humaneness stops at the exit of immediate family and close friends in a brave new world as much instrumental in social relations as estranging for those being left out. This sounds ironic enough, since, if one asks a southern native of this Other in our times, Andrew Walder (1993) once suggests, which historical epoch in this Other’s civilization he wants to live in, the answer most likely fall in this post-Mao modernizing epochal category. The best of all possible worlds in this Other, just as it did to the Same before, does not fail to be equally a most preposterous idea for the nouveau pauvres qua the losers in the new social order (beggers, floating migrants, the newly
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unemployed). As in the environs of Guangzhou University, the nouveau pauvres built unlivable shelters (out of stacks of newspapers or blankets under trees, or alternatively, out of most rudimentary wood or brick materials) -- and washed their cloths, bags, and everyday necessities in polluted lakes and fountains (unaware of germ infection to their bodies) or in austere and unsanitation public houses. Or most miserable peasant houses along the Guangzhou-Shengzhen highway are not hard to notice, as many houses, when looked from the outside, can easily be seen of their spartan and backward interiors.

Train stations in Guangzhou and Shengzhen are as gloomy as elsewhere. Here and there are seen children and adults begging, grasping whatever garbage leftover on tables and floors, fighting over dimes and cents given by tourists. If many are most gruesome in appearance (dirty, uncombed, sun-burnt, shabbily in dresses, bad in smell, skinny, awful teeth, torn-apart shoes or nothing at all) and consume extremely cheap, but highly unhealthy spoilt food (meat, vegetables, fruit), this suffering which can break a human heart yet receive no sympathy from some of their fellow locals but scorn and contempt (to the point of cruelty) in a Socialist regime which has long taught its citizens a most humane, comradely spirit in interpersonal interaction. Yelled at and sometimes even pushed away as they are, yet local police qua public servants show no more compassion to them than private citizenry to strangers.

At the endline of consumeristic orientation lies a cold desert of the narcissistic self which, as an emergent process, knows little sense of community, little virtue, little humaneness. The sense of community increasingly falls on deaf ears, or in the words of Chen Lijun a social researcher, "Now, no one cares anymore." The only thing left which is glorious is to be rich, and reality is therefore increasingly commoditized. Perhaps no other work illustrates more

47. As of 1995, more than 40 million people are unemployed, while 100 million others are underemployed. And about 100 million (known as "floating population") wander around big cities, drift from job to job and feed on their discontent --, with the numbers expected to rise to 200 million by the end of the twentieth centenary. (J. FlorCruz 1995:45-6)
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vividly the spiritual emptiness of this Other in our times than the individual
tale stories so touchingly recounted in Feng Jiang's Xin Jia Zu (New Family
Archives, 1993): double-cross, foul play, callousness, revenge, moneymania, FUS
(Fly to the United States), sexual liberation, cynicism, amorality, decadent
nightlife, betrayal, nihilistic mindset, and everything else which spits to the
face of moral commandments. "I have nothing," a song by Cui Jian, a singer who
mixes Western rock/rap music with Chinese themes (A. Jones 1995), best captures
how much this Other has lost its Communist soul, in its parody of the first verse
of the Maoist "Internationale": "Don't say we have nothing! We will be the masters
of the world!" The didactic point here is: yet more than two scores of years of
Communist experimentation, they still have nothing, to the point that, as in the
song "Made in China" by another band known as Softhard Wizards, everything under
heaven and earth is ridiculed. A kind of "nonsense culture" is rapidly emerging
in this Other which is no longer red and just does not mean much of anything,
save "the rampant lust for power, money and carnal pleasures." (B. Liu 1993:21)

The critical spirit of science qua instrumental rationality in the socio-
business world is most deconstructive to values and canons of the old forever
lost, in creating a new social condition in the imagery of market-oriented
indust-reality, or in state-market modernity, which is most impatient to whatever
that is not for business -- in this Other as much as in the modern Same. Karl
Marx is quite right: when money is treated as the new rationalization of social
relationships, fellow humans become a means to a given end, an instrument to a
calculated goal in a form of social interaction which lacks substantive human
attachment, with no genuine, spontaneous human communicative
discourse. (A. Giddens 1985:15) The problematics of being and belonging all the
more haunt this Other, the more it transits itself into the rank of industrial
societies with a market face --, just as they already have in the Same qua the
modern Western world.

The didactics here is, If this Other, primarily an agricultural economy as
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it still is, already confronts an emergent spiritual crisis of being and belonging (in soul-searching modernity) in less than a score of years of market experimentation (in state-market modernity), how intensely more will this "nonsense culture," as an ongoing process, be when its modernity is to be completed one day in the centenaries to come, or when this Other becomes a full-fledged modern society (and for that matter a postmodern one) in the coming 21st century (if not the 22nd)?

But the critical spirit of science is not content with creating a godless world and the problematics along with it, but also to deconstruct as well the search for aesthetic autonomy (Chapter 4) and for moral universality for a just society (Chapter 5), as the other two elements in the Western ideal of the modern self -- and by the same logic, in other civilizations too.

Why? Let me first examine how the search for artistic autonomy is inherently problematic in the chapter to come hereafter.
[The autonomy of art, its independent value, becomes... the outmoded, illusory peculiarity of a transitional period, a value which stands between cult-value and an exhibition-value....

-- Sandor Radnoti (1986:138)

[There is no guarantee of any corpus of works or canon in art criticism or literary criticism. These discourses, too, are the historically specific product of social relations and practices, and hence as partial and contingent as art and literature themselves. To put this rather simply, the task of discovering the essential common feature of a Beethoven, Middlemarch, Vermeer's Music Lesson and Chartres Cathedral (so far, as it happens, never achieved) now appears as both ideological and misguided, for why should they have anything at all in common?

-- Janet Wolf (1983:15,17)

The attempts to declare everything to be art and everyone to be artist, to retract all criteria and to equate aesthetic judgement with the expression of subjective experiences, all these undertakings have proved themselves to be sort of nonsense experiments.

-- Jurgen Habermas (1990:350)

Artists, gallery owners, critics, and the public wallow together in the "anything goes," and the epoch is one of slackening....[A]rt is said to be "everywhere" and "dead" [now that God is dead].

-- Jean-Francois Lyotard (1986:76)

This chapter accounts for the third element of the bitter struggle within free-spirited modernity, in special relation to the modern search for an aesthetic inner logic --, and how this has been spreading to the Others through

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hegemonic modernity.

After an introduction, in Section 4.1, about why the ideal of artistic autonomy was related to the emergence of bourgeois self-understanding, I argue that such a search in modern arts (as in Bourgeois Art, as a historical successor of the pre-modern Sacral and Courtly Arts), turns out to be illusory. This is for three reasons (in Sections 4.2 & 4.3), in that it has been (a)much politicized, (b) much commercialized, and (c) much reduced to meaningless solipsism of nowhere.

And the postmodern reaction to this modern malaise is not helpful either, I further argue in Section 4.4, and needs to be rejected as well, for three reasons, that is, (a) its pathological effect of even more unconstrained celebration of human instincts and sensuality, (b) its impotence and misery in stylistic eclecticism, and (c) its alienating abyss in centerless pluralism. The death of God in the aesthetic realm (as in postmodernism) is not something to be celebrated --, though not without the deconstructive heritage of historical avant-gardism preceding it (as discussed in Section 4.2).

The promise of the realization of the other half of human freedom/potentiality in aesthetic autonomy (as long dreamt by the Romantics) is nowhere to be found. And this problematic has been slowly yet steadily spreading to the Others as well through hegemonic modernity (as is the case of the contemporary Sinitic Other), for similar reasons (as dealt with in Section 4.5).

4.1 Artistic Autonomy and Bourgeois Self-Understanding

The godless, consumeristic lifeworld, as much because of its cognitive-appreciative banality and technological costliness (Chapter 2) as because of its spiritual emptiness, social loneliness, and naive scientism (Chapter 3), facilitated a yearning for human authenticity undistorted by instrumental rationality (means-ends activity) so pervasive in the modern capitalist indus-

reality of space and time. It was assumed that there existed the other half of
human potentialities yet to be realized through aesthetic autonomy, independently
of practical concerns, away from the intrusion of particular interests so
characteristically represented by the feudal nobility and medieval ecclesia whom
the rising bourgeoisie in early modern times fought hard. (P. Burger 1992:54)
'Artistic autonomy' is thus a modern concept -- closely tied with the rise of the
bourgeois stratum in 18th century Europe.

By contrast, in medieval times, artistic activity was often closely
associated with particular interests of the nobility and the Church, and were
therefore not removed from the context of life praxis. Art works were in these
older days either (1)sacral or (2)courtly (P. Burger 1992:57) -- as opposed to
(3)bourgeois art in modern times. Let me explicate what these mean, in relation
to Burger's typology as shown in Table 1.

Table 1. The Nature of Sacral, Courtly, & Bourgeois Art

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Sacral Art</th>
<th>Courtly Art</th>
<th>Bourgeois Art</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Function</td>
<td>cult object</td>
<td>representational</td>
<td>portrayal of bourgeois</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(purpose)</td>
<td></td>
<td>object</td>
<td>self-understanding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Production</td>
<td>collective craft</td>
<td>individual</td>
<td>individual</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reception</td>
<td>collective (sacral)</td>
<td>collective (sociable)</td>
<td>individual</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Peter Burger, "On the Problem of the Autonomy of Art," Art in Modern
p.59.

At the outset the term 'art' need be defined, but as a concept, art is hard
to clearly delineate. (R. Williams 1992a:316-7) For instance, if art is defined as
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conscious performance, then dance, music, and drama clearly fit in easily. How about cave paintings (images of bears, lions, rhinos, horses, deers, or else with a sense of rhythm and texture) -- which is now generally accepted as art? (L. Jaroff 1995:81) Yet it is totally unclear how often, if at all, cave paintings, hidden as they often were in dark and inaccessible caves, were exhibited and seen in primitive times, in accordance to art defined as conscious performance. Or art may be defined as a highly skillfully executed work. But then a knife, pot, aeroplane, bridge, or typewriter could be good candidates for works of art as well. So we need a better definition. Suppose art be defined as a work designed for aesthetic properties (perceptions of harmony, rhythm, proportion, form, colour, or else). Yet this definition becomes problematic when allowing comparable perceptions of the human body, animals, birds, trees, flowers, and even the shapes and colours of land be qualified as aesthetic. Besides, even in such areas as dress, ornament, furnishing, decoration, and gardening --, comparable perceptions by the same criteria of harmony, proportion, or else could become aesthetic; yet we do not normally regard this as art in the strict sense.

So what is art? The lesson to be learnt here, as Raymond Williams (1992a:318) thus concludes, is that what is understood as ‘art’ (or ‘non-art’ for that matter) shifts from one historical era to the next, or that art canons are the specific product of social relations and practices contingent on a series of historical events and accidents. (J. Wolff 1983:17)

(1) In the case of Sacral Art, as exemplified by the art of the High Middle Ages, it was then produced collectively as a craft to serve as cult object, that is, wholly integrated into the need of the religious institution. It was so institutionalized as to be received as collective (meaning ‘sacral’) as such.

(2) But Courtly Art, as exemplified by the art at the court of Louis XIV, was then produced individually by artists who detached themselves from the sacral tie and developed a consciousness of the uniqueness of their artistic endeavor, as a first step towards the liberation of art from religious domination. Yet the artists ended up craving for the reception of a different collectivity qua the
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patrons of the nobility. In other words, art works of this type were representational of aristocratic interests in serving "the glory of the prince and the self-portrayal of courtly society."

(3) A second step towards the emancipation of art lied in the search for aesthetic autonomy, which constituted the first decisive turning point in modern art history. But how is this conception of autonomy to be understood? If the autonomy of art is defined as art's existence apart from society, then the problematic, Peter Burger argues (1992:51), consists of how to explain this apartness as a product of a historical and social development in the first place. But if this apartness is defined in terms of the artist's imagination, then it tells us nothing about its status consequent on a historically conditioned process. An alternative is to locate the development of this concept within the rise of the bourgeois stratum in its fight against the particular interests of the feudal nobility and medieval ecclesia, and therefore the emergence of a conception of art which is to be non-purposive in creation and disinterested in pleasure is representational of bourgeois self-understanding. Thus if one asks why this separation of art, that is, this search for l'art pour l'art (art for art's sake) is something desirable to have, it must be put within the portrayal of bourgeois self-understanding in what Herbert Marcuse called a two-fold, conflicting role: firstly, to protest against the dominance of instrumental rationality in modern practical life, and secondly, to therefore project a better order for such universal values as humanity, truth, solidarity, and joy not available within the particular interests in this practical lifeworld. (P. Burger 1992:59) But l'art pour l'art as representative of bourgeois self-understanding takes different forms in its history. Two illustrations will suffice.

(i) The Appeal of Critical Reflection. Firstly, consider the claims of Immanuel Kant and Johann Schiller.

In Critique of Judgement (1790), Kant appealed to a notion of judgement of taste which is to be "disinterested" -- that is, apart as much from utilitarian concerns in practical life so characteristic of the emerging capitalist lifeworld
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as from the aristocratic and ecclesiastic particular interests in the ancien
regime. "If anyone asks me whether I consider that the palace I see before me is
beautiful, I may, perhaps, reply that I do not care for things of that sort that
are merely made to be gaped at", thus wrote Kant, "Or I may reply in the same
strain as that Iroquois sachem who said that nothing in Paris pleased him better
than the eating-horses. I may even go a step further and inveigh with the vigour
of a Rousseau against the vanity of the great who spend the sweat of the people
on such superfluous things." (P. Burger 1992:54) But why not, Mr. Kant? "All this
may be admitted and approved; only it is not the point now at issue", so
responded he, "All one wants to know is whether the mere representation of the
object is to my liking."

The aesthetic is not just to be removed from the sensual and the moral
(that is, the beautiful is neither sensually agreeable nor morally good) but also
to be independent of the theoretical (that is, the beautiful is not subject to
logical proofs) and therefore is to occupy a special position between
sensuousness and reason (both practical and theoretical), in its appeal to the
universality of an aesthetic judgement which is somehow grounded in the agreement
of an idea as based on the human faculties of imagination and understanding. The
disinterested pleasure so achieved is "an empty pleasure which contains within
itself the renunciation of pleasure, a pleasure of purified pleasure." (T. Eagleton
1990:196) But this conception of universality is precisely the very point where
Kant closed his eyes to the particular interests of his privileged class
(contingent upon the freedom from life necessities and a sensuousness apart from
any means-ends relationships, just as dependent on the social conditions which
make possible this judgement through learning by habit and exercise at a

It was Friedrich Schiller who took a step further along the Kantian
project. In reflecting over the deterioration of the French Revolution of 1789
into the Reign of Terror, Schiller came to regard the lower classes as slaves to
the immediate gratification of the senses, consequent on a class society (as an
Chapter 4. The Ideal of Artistic Autonomy, and Its Disillusion inevitable result of the division of labour) which cannot be abolished by a political revolution, since revolutionary junta cannot avoid being stamped by their own class and are unable to contribute to the furtherance of humanity in its totality. (P. Burger 1992:55-6) Neither human good nature nor the educability of reason is the source of the solution. The only way left is the aesthetic disinterestedness on whose basis the development of the totality of human potentialities can be possible --, and thus lies a paradox in which artistic autonomy, disinterested as it is, can still fulfill a social usefulness: the furtherance of humanity. Yet Schiller was pessimistic enough to see no chance of the building of a society so understood in his lifetime.

Thus, l’art pour l’art during late 18th and early 19th centuries allowed critical reflection upon society, not as a total separation from it (J. Schulte-Sasse 1984:x-xi), since there was still a hope that artistic autonomy, through the use of narration techniques and artistic treatment of language, can influence society by communicating meaning (as in critique of extant norms and values). This striving for critical consciousness were already seen as early as in Romanticist paintings. The depictions of the unconscious (as in Theodore Gericault’s Decapitated Heads), of the marginal and the excluded (as in Gericault’s Portrait of A Negro, 1822-23 and Francisco Goya’s The Maja Nude), of the dark side of political life (as in Goya’s The Third of May, 1808; The Battle of Friedland, 1836; and Disasters of War), and of covered-up human tragedies (as in Gericault’s Raft of the Medussa, 1818-9) shifted the direction of artistic concerns to the fugitive, the ephemeral, and the contingent of the present, often as an allegorical critique of the extant order. And with Eugene Delacroix’s Freedom Leading the People, 1830 (which celebrated the uprising that in July, 1830 put an end to the white terror of the restored Bourbon monarchy), art ceased turning to the past (as in Courtly and Sacral Art) and becoming an art which could be critical of its own time. (B. Buchloh 1994)

And 19th century Realism took a step further towards this direction. Gustave Courbet, for instance, reversed the idealistic imagery of the princes and
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kings in Courtly Art (often with an ideological depiction of ordinary folks as loyal, obedient, and content) and instead gave a heroic yet realist touch of lower social strata in their concreteness and complexity. Seasonal adjustment, entertainment, adventures, daily routines, folk life --, rural images so depicted was inconceivable in the ancien regime, centered as it was in the confines of courtly society and religious sacredness. Just compare Thomas Couture’s Romans of the Decadence, 1847 (with its fictitious imagery of Roman life: Greco-Roman mythical figures, mass orgy, and erotic entertainment) and Courbet’s Painter’s Studio (with its allegorical panorama of different social strata, of different passages of an individual’s life, and of a heroic center in the painting with no one else other than a little kid wondering around, a naked woman and the sitting painter). This should not be surprising for an artist who claimed himself of being alone of the artists of this time to express the sentiments of the masses and thus of his art’s being in essence democratic. (M.Schapiro 1978:52-3)

By the same logic, Edouard Manet portrayed in The Old Magician (1862) the personages of the wondering Jew, the drunken Gypsie and rural migrants -- as a critical reflection of the problematic of displacement, loneliness, and alienation in modern life. After all, vast sections of Paris in his time were destroyed, with the dislocation of thousands of poor folks, in order to build public sewage system, housing, and transport --, while urban slums emerged for the sub-proletarians, those without the means and resources to decently sustain themselves, much less to get access to industrial works. (B.Buchloh 1994) His painting, Olympia (1863), attacked capitalist hypocritical, oppressive lifeform. In portraying a naked white woman (a prostitute) with a black male servant holding a flower (seduced as a future client), it raised class issue (the whore as a heroic personage, with defiance and pride within a social context of unacceptance and contempt as symbolized in the shadow and dirt on her feet), undisclosed the hypocrisy of privileged social strata (the female left hand hiding her private part as the symbol of the very thing the upper-class male audience wanted to see), and parodized the alienated, commoditized modern
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cultural expression (the whore as a product of exchange, and nothing left which was not commoditized). He exemplified what Diana Crane (1987:139) called the iconoclastic artist using art as way of attacking bourgeois conventions.

The Impressionists did likewise to travestise the light, pleasant, and utopian existence of the capitalist, consumeristic lifeform, to attack the purely sensory rendition of momentary expressions (F.Polak 1973:276) -- as was their focus on fashions, designs, public urban space, and colorful nightlife. Edgar Degas was notorious, in Woman on a Cafe Terrace, Evening (1877), At The Cafe Concert: Song of the Dog (1875-7), and Cage Singer (1878), in making fun of the lifestyle in fashionable society: mostly notably in the hand gesturing of cabaret singers symbolizing that of a dog.(B.Buchloh 1994) Similar satirical probings of the amusements of urban nightlife as in "those artificial homes of vertiginous pleasures, the cabarets, vaudeville theaters, and circuses of late 19th century Paris" in her most charming fin-de-siecle moments appeared in works of Jules Cheret (Folies-Bergere, Les Girard,1877 and L'Amant des Danseuses,1888) and Georges Seurat (Le Chahut,1889-90 and L'Homme a Femmes,1890), with the faces, arms and legs of the personages caricatured.(R.Herbert 1958:156) This depiction of the pleasures of decadence (dancing places, music halls, circuses, or else) amidst the grace and joy of modern life was to bear witness "to the great social trial taking place between workers and Capital."(T.Crow 1983:218) Their sympathetic leaning towards the ordinary folks, for sure, led to a dignified depiction of the menial labour of the lower social strata (as in Degas’s Laundresses Carrying Linen in Town,1876-8) and of how the latter lived (as in Seurat’s Bathers at Asniers,1883-4) and worked (as in Seurat’s Stone Breakers,1881).

By the same tokens, Van Gogh the Post-Impressionist depicted the Other qua the exploited working class with as much dignity (in Men Digging Seen from the Back,1882 and The Weaver,1884) as with critical attitude towards the luxurious upper social strata (as in the contrast between The Potato Eaters,1885 and Restaurant Interior, Paris,1887): here five Dutch peasants shared a dish of
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potatoes in a dark background alluding to the soil, as opposed to the privileged dining in a luxurious restaurant for the well-to-do.

After all, "the life of our city is rich in poetic and marvellous subjects," Charles Baudelaire in "The Salon of 1846: On the Heroism of Modern Life" (1982:ch.3) wrote, "We are enveloped and steeped as though in an atmosphere of the marvellous; but we do not notice it." As opposed to the idealistic imagery of courtly life in Courtly Art and the glorified depiction of religious sacredness in Sacral Art, modern art is to turn to "the ephemeral, the fugitive, the contingent, the half of art whose other half is the eternal and the immutable." (C. Baudelaire 1982a:23) The heroic personages were no longer kings and princes, but women and the natives, the stranger, the proletariat, or especially, le flaneur (the stroller qua the experience of "a freedom to move about in the city, observing and being observed, but never interacting with others." (C. Baudelaire 1982a:25; J. Wolff 1990:38-9)

Modern art so understood as the first step towards the emancipation of art from aristocratic and religious bondage often carries a special designation known as modernism in late 19th century: the artistic throwaway of all historical precedents to the garbage-can of 'tradition', in celebrating the idea of the present (T. Eagleton 1992:95), not with timeless utopias but with a historical criticism stemmed from what Clement Greenberg (1961:22) called "the bold development of scientific revolutionary thought in Europe" which "examined in the terms of history and of cause and effect the antecedents, justifications and functions of the forms that lie at the heart of every society" -- that is, the critical spirit of science.

There is, nevertheless, an irony here: in being critical towards the extant order qua the bourgeois lifeworld, these modern artists, good-intented as they were, ended up idealizing, in the name of modern art, the imagery of the marginal and the disadvantaged, just as the imagery of the princes and kings, in a reversal, was no less idealised in Courtly Art. History seems to repeat itself, as each epoch has its own heroes and heroines, always at the expense of some
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(ii) Aestheticism. However, and secondly, during this later part of 19th century, l'art for l'art movement took a more radical step in separating artwork altogether from average everydayness, with Aestheticism as the culminating point, when form in art (the command of techniques) becomes dominant (at the expense of content qua elements to make statements, political especially), with critical social usefulness thrown out of the window. (P. Burger 1984:19-21) Such artists in Formalism and Abstract Art as Picasso, Braque, Mondrian, Matisse, and Cezanne preoccupied mostly with form (the invention and arrangement of spaces, surfaces, shapes, colors, or else), to the exclusion of whatever content there be. (C. Greenberg 1961:23) "In turning his attention away from subject matter of common experience," Clement Greenberg wrote, "the poet or artist turns it in upon the medium of his own craft." But the price to pay is its semantic atrophy, its void of meaning. (J. Schulte-Sasse 1984:xiii)

For this reason, Abstract Art easily intimidates the less aesthetically-sensitive's lacking the necessary training and conditioning so characteristically required for its appreciation, in contrast to Sacral and Courtly Art in medieval times whose content even the less sophisticated, lower social strata could grasp. Greenberg's example of a peasant who prefers a painting by Repin (or actually by someone else, as he later corrected himself), as opposed to one by Picasso is most didactic. (C. Greenberg 1961:27-8) In the former, the peasant sees a battle scene: sunset, exploding shells, running and falling men. The meaning is self-instructive. But in the latter, he sees instead some lines, colors, cubes and spaces which do not seem to represent much of anything. He then seems to say to himself, "I have not the slightest idea of what this means." The preference is no longer in doubt: Repin's is his choice.

This is so, Peter Burger (1984:19, 32-3) argues, due to the progressing trend of division of labour in capitalist society, to the point where the social subsystem of 'art' evolved into a wholly distinct entity -- at a time when the bourgeoisie successfully consolidated their political rule. But the linkage
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between art's becoming a social subsystem and its autonomy status is by no means automatic. Quite on the contrary, artistic autonomy has always been vulnerable to external attacks --, as in the exemplars of the Fascist, Nazist and Communist politics of art which rejected its autonomy, just as well the large number of legal proceedings against artists for immoral offenses and its succumbing to profit motives in liberal democracies (to be addressed in Section 4.3). (P.Burger 1984:24-5)

The break with society, the artist's loss of social function -- culminated in Aestheticism as the developed bourgeois art. Besides, such revolutionary late-19th-century advance in media production as the invention of photography (and later, cinema, radio, and television reproduction and recording) fundamentally changed the art world (R.Williams 1992:25), in that the traditional mimetic mode of representation in the fine arts became obsolete, to be challenged by photography with its precise mechanical reproduction of reality (P.Burger 1984:32) and thus facilitated the shift from content to form in Aestheticist art.

Aestheticism in bourgeois art is equally distinctive in (a) its purpose, (b) production, and (c) reception. Let me explain what they mean.

(a) The purpose of bourgeois art so understood is its disjointure of the work and everyday life (no longer with the pretense of reality representation), and now an artwork can become its own end in the strict sense, with no social usefulness. (P.Burger 1984:53) Jurgen Habermas identified the search for three major residual needs in bourgeois art which could not be fulfilled otherwise in the instrumental lifeworld: namely, (i) solidary living, (ii) mimetic intercourse with nature, and (iii) the joy of imaginative and spontaneous experience not reducible to means-ends rationality. (P.Burger 1984:25) The satisfaction of these needs precisely reflects the stage of self-reflection in bourgeois art: apart from life praxis.

(b) As to its mode of production, bourgeois art is the act of individual, in its individuality not so much to express just something but something
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extraordinary, as a work of genius. An artist's aesthetic sensibility is taken to be highly special, unusually individual in its inspiration.

(c)So is its reception as well individual, in that producer and recipient are clearly distinct, however active the public may be. By contrast, Sacral Art is collective in its purpose, production, and reception.

Not until the historical avant-garde movement in the 20th century did this search for artistic autonomy (as in Aestheticism) come to be attacked. What was negated was not so much earlier forms of art but art as an institution unassociated with practical life: that is, the negation of bourgeois art itself and, for that matter, the questioning of bourgeois self-understanding. After all, the yearning for artistic autonomy was consequent on an emergent capitalist stratum who, champion as they did robust individualism in the socio-economic realm, only anxiously and embarrassingly discovered spiritual emptiness and social loneliness as the price to pay (Chapters 2-3) and therefore imagined a kind of universal subject to somehow provide an affective bond which transcends social alienation, in the name of disinterested fraternity (T.Eagleton 1990:24-5, 36-9) --, while fighting the particular interests of the feudal nobility and medieval Church.

But the historical avant-gardes, though failing in their attempt to destroy the status of artistic autonomy, produced an impactful legacy to what art in post-modern times comes to be. Why?

4.2 Historical Avant-Gardism and the Deconstruction of Aesthetic Universality

The historical avant gardes (as in such movements as Dadaism), restless mobile emigres or exiles as they often were in "Cities of Strangers", found the bourgeois lifeworld too alienating and therefore sought for a better order beyond the realm of money and commerce (R.Williams 1992:26), into a kind of politics of resistance. But this critique-oriented reintegration of art into life praxis
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sounds so much like the early l’art pour l’art movement. Yet the historical avant-gardes considered the latter as socially-ineffectual, insofar as the latter (as in Realism) appealed to a language of representation in their critique of the extant order and therefore were still somewhat trapped within the world of instrumental rationality, besides its impotency of changing society. (P. Burger 1984:22) And when contrasted with the Aestheticists, the historical avant-gardes were most critical of the former’s decadence qua the absence of any social effect at all.

What the historical avant-gardes wanted is, as in Marx’s introduction to the Grundrisse (P. Burger 1984:20-3), a self-critique of the present, as opposed to an immanent critique. In an immanent critique, the past is criticized from the perspective of its being a prehistory of the present, such that the present is taken as more progressive without however carrying the critique to its logical conclusion (as in a self-critique), that is, the present will soon be passe as well, not by introducing a future to compare with but by a self-critique of the present. In an immanent critique of religion, for instance, past religious ideas are criticized in the name of present ones. But in a self-critique of religion, a distancing is presupposed in relation to opposing religious ideas -- the criticism of religion as an institution, that is, how religion is produced, distributed, and received in a specific historical era.

In the case of the historical avant-gardes, the self-critique of modern art is a criticism of art as an institution: that is, how art is produced, distributed, and received at the time, in relation to previous phases of development. Dadaism is an exemplary case: the point is not so much to criticize previous avant-gardes or previous schools that preceded it as to see how the past phases of artistic development (as in Aestheticism) made the very self-critique of art possible in the first place. In other words, only when art is totally separated from everyday life can the social ineffectuality of artistic autonomy be revealed, which in turn prompts the historical avant-gardes to take a more radical step.
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And this more radical step is to sublate art (in Hegel’s understanding), not so much to destroy art as to integrate it back to life praxis (not back to the praxis of instrumental rationality as in producing social consequences but back to a domain where art is practical and the praxis is aesthetic). This sublation as a concept is not easy to grasp but can be clarified in terms of (a) the function, (b) production, and (c) reception of a historical avant-gardiste artwork. (P. Burger 1984:49-53) Let me hereafter explain what they are.

(a) Function. Firstly, as opposed to an Aestheticist artwork where the apartness from life praxis (social functionlessness) becomes its content, a historical avant-gardiste work of art counters this functionlessness by unifying both art and the praxis such that they become one and the same thing, but then the artistic purpose (or its absence) can no longer be discovered. Just think of Vito Acconci who put a match to his breast and burnt its hair off. (S. Gablik 1984:42-51) Or consider Burden who once had himself nailed to the roof of a car, and had himself shot in the left arm by a friend holding a .22-caliber rifle 12 feet away. Now imagine how T. Hsieh locked himself up in a small cage in his loft on Hudson Street in New York and lived there for one year, reading nothing, writing nothing, and watching neither TV nor listening to radio.

In all three cases, how can one draw the line between life praxis and art -- even if one is told that the artists were doing historical avant-gardiste works? The historical avant-gardes are therefore most un-Kantian -- blurring the very distinction between the aesthetic and the non-aesthetic altogether.

(b) Production. Secondly, as opposed to an Aestheticist artwork which reflects the act of an artistic-gifted individual --, a historical avant-gardiste artwork demystifies the concept of artistic genius so understood. Valery, for one, trivialized the so-called artistic genius by reducing it to psychological motifs and the availability of technical means. (P. Burger 1984:51)

Consider Fountain (1917) by the Dadaist Marcel Duchamp. Mr. Duchamp, then known as Richard Mutt, submitted a urinal to an open sculpture exhibition. They said that any artist paying six dollars might exhibit, but Mr. Mutt’s fountain was
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rejected. (L. Lippard 1971) The reasons? Immoral and plagiarist, just a piece of plumbing. "Now Mr. Mutt's fountain is not immoral, that is absurd, no more than a bathtub is immoral. It is a fixture that you see every day in plumbers' show windows," Lucy Lippard amusingly rebutted, "Whether Mr. Mutt with his own hands made the fountain or not has no importance. He CHOSE it. He took an ordinary article of life, placed it so that its useful significance disappeared under the new title and point of view -- created a new thought for that object. As for plumbing, that is absurd. The only works of art America has given are her plumbing and her bridges."

But whether the fountain is really immoral and plagiaristic or not is not quite the issue here. The point is, If this is art, then even a five-year-old child can do it, with no need of Mr. Mutt's artistic genius. Now Mr. Mutt, Dadaist as he was, had a subtle point to make, highly sophisticated indeed: to shock, to provoke, to deny the aesthetic privilege to the esoteric artistic genius in a democratic age. (B. Buchloh 1994) But a common product like this, which, as Mr. Mutt himself put it, is "indifferent" (M. Duchamp 1961:141-2) to "good or bad taste" nor original (as a "manufactured," "ready-made product"), received $56,715, paid by the London Auction house of Sotheby's. (B. Buchloh 1994) If this is art, then everything else can be art as well. Art then, if not an oxymoron as a term, becomes too superficial, heroic though it certainly is in its most democratic spirit. Everyone can then be an artist and famous for fifteen minutes (as Andy Warhol used to be, so it seems). His signatory known as "R. Mutt" was therefore mocking of what is to be individual in an artwork, since Fountain is inscribed on a mass product which is already manufactured (nothing original to claim). "That cannot be serious", one is inclined to say. But this only proves the point: to demystify the concept of artistic genius.

(c) Reception. Lastly, the historical avant-gardes intended to negate the Aestheticist antithesis between producer and recipient. Bertolt Breton, for instance, insisted poetry to be practiced (pratiquer la poesie), since reading poetry and living one's life as best as one can in relation to it can no longer
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be distinguished. (P. Burger 1984:53) Or think of Mr. Hsieh’s living in a small cage and yet doing artwork: the producer and recipient merged into one. But the underside of this is solipsism, a retreat into an isolated subject, an empty subjectivity.

This talk of intentionality, shocking for sure in the effect, yet tells us nothing specific about the shock techniques explored by the historical avant-gardes, two of which stand out most, when compared with previous art techniques: namely, the selection of what is (i) random and (ii) eclectic -- as hereafter explained.

(i) Randomness. To negate tradition as such in historical avant-gardism is not new, since to be modern is, in John Locke’s maxim, to refuse to accept what has been as what should of right be. In Sacral Art, by contrast, the same themes concerning the sacredness and tradition were mechanically reproduced in hundred different ways but nothing was new. (C. Greenberg 1961:22) Artistic virtuosity was reduced to the concerns of small details of form and techniques, leaving important issues (laid down by the old masters) untouched, since what had been was revered as what should of right be. Sacral Art was static in this sense. Modern art, be it l’art pour l’art, Aestheticist, or historically avant-gardiste, has no stomach for this conservative statism. Tradition is to be negated, not preserved, all the more so in a capitalist society where for products to be sold, it is imperative to lure potential buyers with the appeal of something new. (P. Burger 1984:61)

What is peculiar about the historical avant-gardes in their search for the new, however, consisted of their intention to abolish the institution that is art, once and for all. (P. Burger 1984:63) The German Dada movement (George Grosz and Wieland Herzfelde), seven years after Tristan Tzara’s "Dada Manifesto of 1918" (C. Harrison 1993d:450-1), was much inclined to relinquish all traditions without nostalgic sentimentality, including all pre-existing values, meanings, and memories. (D. Gross 1992:54) And thus marked their suicidal aesthetics of "antiart for antiart’s sake".
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An effective means to do so is to appeal to the category of chance (randomness) in a society where what chance reveals escapes the logic of exchange and is free of bourgeois false consciousness. The Surrealist movement is most illustrative. A term coined by Apollinaire, 'surrealism,' in Andre Breton's "The First Manifesto of Surrealism" (C.Harrison 1993:432-38), refers to the belief in the dreamful, disinterested play of thought (thanks to Freudian psychoanalysis) -- as in dream, in free association, in hypnotic states, in automatism, in ecstasy or delirium (R.Krauss 1985:15) --, as a rejection as much of the positivist, logical method as of any aesthetic, moral concerns, to the point of asserting "complete nonconformism" of conventional lifeform: "A story is told according to which Saint-Pol-Roux, in times gone by, used to have a notice posted on the door of his manor house in Camaret, every evening before he went to sleep, which read: THE POET IS WORKING."

From Tristan Tzara's newspaper clipping through most modern happening to action painting (Tachism) -- the celebration of the category of chance is most intense. (P.Burger 1984:64,67) Jackson Pollock's action painting proves the point: paint is dripped or splashed on the canvas, to allow chance reveal itself. The artist is therefore free of all the constraints and rules of creation by letting chance do the painting --, and even if the artwork can be planned with the most painstaking calculation, often as it is, the outcome is most unpredictable.

The downside, however, is the arbitrariness of this freedom, in the bad sense of the word. And the unpredictable becomes predictable over time, so the shock does not shock anymore, as Peter Burger was quick to thus notice.

(ii) Eclecticism. A different shock technique as mostly exploited by the historical avant-gardes is to appeal to eclecticism in the concept of allegory. Walter Benjamin has much to say on this. (P.Burger 1984:68-72) The Benjaminian concept of allegory, in that "any person, any object, any relationship can mean absolutely anything else" (J.Todd 1989:103), consists of four major elements: isolating reality fragments from their original context, positing meaning through a rejoining of these fragments, preoccupying with the melancholic (the isolated,
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the insignificant), and regarding history as decline -- and can be traced back to Nietzsche's perspectivism.

Nietzsche treated the human world as an "artwork" (A.Nehamas 1985:4), in which there is no limit to the ways in which the world can be interpreted (A.Nehamas 1985:64) -- thus foreshadowing Derrida's deconstruction project. But this is not to say that a perspective can be entirely arbitrary. On the contrary, it always reflects the interpretation of some historical figures (like Christ and Napoleon) who succeeds in having it accepted in the wider community as truth. But truth here does not refer to its corresponding to external reality but to its relation to the particular physiological dispositions behind which is always the specific voice of a will to power by some individuals and groups at the expense of others. (F.Nietzsche 1969a:84; A.Nehamas 1985:28,36,52) Thus, not all perspectives can be incorporated into a coherent, unified whole, insofar as they constitute different voices of the will to power. (A.Nehamas 1985:49) To therefore ask, What is truth?, only leads one to see that truth is the "creation" of new values, as "our creations eventually become our truths." (A.Nehamas 1985:174) But this is only to say, if pushed far enough, that to regard something as true reflects some humans' need of it in a condition of life. In other words, there are as many kinds of truth as many voices of the will to power.

Likewise, Foucault, when applying perspectivism into the discourse of archaeology of knowledge, treated the historical past as "seriogenic" (that is, a series of account of historical origin), in which knowledge of a historical past is unavoidably yielded by a sign system qua a historical text. (E.Noujain 1990) This historical text consists of a series of elements, each of which is a concatenation of components (sub-elements). And how this series is to be structured in re-constructing a historical past constitutes a "seriogenic" task in genealogical archaeology. Just as there is no limit to the ways in which the world can be interpreted in Nietzsche's perspectivism, there is no limit, roughly speaking, to the ways in which the historical past can be structured in Foucault's genealogical archaeology.
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Perhaps more radically, the historical avant-gardes, in their treatment of material, are relentless in their taking reality fragments out of their functional context that gives it meaning in the first place, as if the historical past were to be seriogenically reconstructed. In Sacral and Courtly Art, by contrast, material was taken most seriously, in respecting its significance as grown out of concrete life situations, in its totality of historical continuity. The historical avant-gardes instead tear it apart and denies its totality, its continuity -- into fragments.

The constitution of an artwork, under the iconoclastic hands of the historical avant-gardes, lies in positing new meaning through a reconstruction of these fragments -- often in a new meaning with the forever melancholic message that meaning has ceased to exist. The Surrealist's escape into the dreamy, into the hypnotic, into the ecstatic (R.Krauss 1985:15) reflects their ennui, their sickness with meaning in a instrumental lifeworld, their melancholic rejection of historical continuity. History is no longer viewed as progressive, as teleological to a higher state (as was the case in Sacral Art in Christendom) --, quite on the contrary, as declining. The Surrealist search for a return to the primordial nature proves the point.

The use of reality fragments in art is by no means peculiar to the historical avant-gardes. As in Cubist montage (Picasso's Still Life, 1912) and John Heartfield's photomontage, there are already artistic precedents, since montage as an artistic technical procedure already presupposes the fragmentation of reality. (P.Burger 1984:73-8) Heartfield's photomontage entitled Adolph -- The Superman (1932) was shocking enough at the time, with a coded title of Hitler as the superman and a lengthier explanation, "swallows gold and spouts junk."

But the historical avant-gardes take a most radical step: to posit a new meaning that there is no meaning -- to shock, to abolish art as an institution. (P.Burger 1984:80) One should recall how much furious the public once was in its response to Dadaist works -- as in much of Dada poetry, often made as it was by rolling dice, or by some other trick ("cutting up the phrases or words in a newspaper..."
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editorial, stirring them in a hat, and pasting them on a piece of paper in the order in which they are withdrawn"." (O.Hardison 1989:170)

But the eclecticness in allegory has its limitation in use: the aesthetics of shock is incapable to sustain a permanent shock effect. "Nothing loses its effectiveness more quickly than shock; by its very nature, it is a unique experience. As a result of repetition, it changes fundamentally: there is such a thing as expected shock," as Peter Burger (1984:81) sharply puts it, "The violent reactions of the public to the mere appearance of the Dadaists are an example: newspaper reports had prepared the public for the shock; it expected it." Over time, the allegory returns to the state of normalcy: the shockable is expected, just as the unpredictable becomes predictable. The shock effect loses its potency, with the passage of time.

The result is not what the historical avant-gardes want to hear: their effort to abolish art as an institution has failed. Art as an institution still exists today, just as it did yestertime. They are now taken as a fad in the modern art scene, as another avant-garde movement, another historical passe. But the legacy of the historical avant-gardes still haunts us today in a different sense: the loss of universal aesthetic validity. (P.Burger 1984:87) This is the equivalent death of God in aesthetics: the very possibility of legitimating aesthetic norms as valid ones is deconstructed. L'art pour l'art movement, Aestheticism, Realism, historical avant-gardism -- the fact that they exist side-by-side in our time, often mutually conflicting as they are, tells us how much the evaluative issue in artworks is taking a functional turn, into psychological and sociological concerns. This has important consequences for postmodernism (Section 4.4).

Artistic autonomy does not face the challenge of the historical avant-gardes alone -- but more, external attacks by socio-political authorities and the market place.
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4.3 Kitsch, Ideological Politics, and Modern Art

Politics and the market -- they have long been two powerful forces shaking artistic development in modern times. The bourgeois status of artistic autonomy is not immune to this dual power (1) of politics and (2) of the market. Let me examine them in turn, starting with (1).

(1) The Power of Politics. Bertolt Brecht, a major artist and "probably the greatest literary figure" within the German Left in the post-war period, tempted enough as he was to the Marxist fusion between knowing the world and changing it, thus restored a didactic-realist aesthetic theory in which change-oriented activity and pleasure are no longer separate from each other; only then can a non-alienated production of art be possible. (F. Jameson 1992:65,69) As Brecht (1992:81) wrote,

We want to master things in politics and art; we do not wish simply to "master." Assume that someone comes up and says, "I am mastering." Would not everyone ask, "What?" I hear you say: "With our tubes of oils and our pencils, we can only reproduce the colours and lines of the things, nothing more." This sounds as if you were modest men, honest men, without pretenses. But it sounds better than it is. A thousand examples prove that one can say more about things with tubes of oils and pencils, that one can communicate and expound more than simple solids with lines and colours.

Such an optimism was too tempting in those days when revolutionary advances in media production as the invention of photography, cinema, radio, and television reproduction and recording seemed most useful to be harnessed to politicizing, didactic purposes (as in leftist montage art). (F. Jameson 1992:71)

This political tradition was shared by some in Dadaism and Surrealism, Socialist Realism -- and not the least, Walter Benjamin who in "Author as Producer" argued for a politicized element in art production to encourage spectators to be self-reflexive, critical towards official ideologues. This was
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all the more important, Benjamin argued in "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction" (1992:297-306), in light of the revolutionary alteration of the once elitist nature of art works which could now be disseminated, with the invention of photography, amongst the lower social strata. (A. Trachtenberg 1980:100) Film, photography, and photomontage became excellent mediums to this effect. (F. Frascina 1992:293-4) John Heartfield's photomontage, *Adolf-The Superman Swallows Gold and Spouts Junk* (1932), was most telling in deconstructing the hidden interests underlying Hitler's heavily ideological messages in Nazi propaganda photography. (F. Frascina 1992:293-4)

Not willing to be a merely literary movement as was originally so in the first two issues of the journal *La Revolution Surrealiste* in 1925, the Surrealists engaged in a revolutionary cultural practice in declaring solidarity with the Communist journal *Clarte* -- as expressed in the "Declaration of the Bureau de Recherches Surrealistes" on 27 January 1925, with 25 signatories in addition to Aragon (including Breton). The wording could not be more shocking: "We are specialists in Revolt", "We are determined to make a Revolution", and "We have joined the word surrealism to the word revolution solely to show the disinterested, detached, and even entirely desperate character of this revolution." (C. Harrison 1993a:439)

When Soviet Russia in 1920, for instance, launched the Goelro plan for electrification and economic regionalization in order to reconcile collectivity and technology (as in Soviet Constructivism) --, the Berlin dadaists of Huelsenbeck, Raoul Hausmann, and Yefim Golyscheff (M. Tafuri 1987:129, 131) unquestionably accepted the project of the Constructivist International: "Because to us art means nothing other than the creation of new 'objects'", Erich Bucholz thus offered a sympathetic reading of the work as a unifying moment of Soviet intelligentsia and their colleagues in the West, "We consider the triumph of the constructive method to be essential for our present. We find it not only in the new economy and in the development of industry, but also in the psychology of our contemporaries in art." (M. Tafuri 1987:143-4) Eight years later, Breton's
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*Surrealism and Painting* intended to stir a crisis in capitalist consciousness by using painting as an expedient medium in the service of revolution -- with Pablo Picasso's genius in unceasingly creating deceitful appearances with reality as a subversive model. (C.Harrison 1993b:440-46) And in 1929, he issued "The Second Manifesto of Surrealism" to endorse Trotsky Marxism. (C.Harrison 1993c:446-449)

By the same logic, in the name of socialist realism --, many aesthetic practices (as in modernist photomontage and factography in the early part of the century) were phased out instead, contrary to Benjamin's media optimism, into monumental propaganda machines (as exemplified by Vladimir Tatlin's Monument to the Third International,1919-20 and N.Andreev's Obelisk of Freedom in Soviet Square in Moscow) for the building of a new industrial, collective society.48 (I.Golomstock 1990a:112) Major avant-gardes as El Lissitzky, Alexander Rodchenko, and Stephanova found themselves now collaborating with Stalin's State Publishing House. (B.Buchloh 1984:104,109,117) The tale of Alexander Rodchenko was highly instructive for an artist who documented the heroic technological achievements of the Stalin government (as in the construction of the White Sea Canal) through voluminous photographic records, without however showing any of the 100,000-plus lives lost in inhumane working conditions, while wasting no time in condemning the criminal impulses of pre- and counter-revolutionary elements.

The "battle for art", that is, for socialist realist art as work of "engineer of human souls", as reflected by the Central Committee Decree of 1932 in Soviet Russia, was decisive in suppressing all artistic styles, forms and

4. One may be tempted to say that this political intrusion into arts is possible only in dictatorial regimes. Quite on the contrary --, even in liberal democracy, artistic expression is not immune from its influence. Michael Lija, in "Art and Modernity at the U.S. World's Fairs: 1893-1915" (1986), precisely shows how the occasions of the U.S. World's Fairs during 1893-1915 were much exploited, through the media of, say, public sculptures, decorative arts and paintings, to convey cultural conservatism (self-control, discipline, lawfulness), to construct social consent towards social goals and national visions, and to document a Eurocentric view of civilizational progress culminating in the American achievements in science and technology and in world leadership and manifest destiny (while downgrading the civilizations of the Others as evolutionarily primitive and backward).

Even recently built monuments like the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington, D.C. are physical aspirations to rebirth and immortality, in spite of the recognition of "the finality of death," according to Stephen Greenblatt of the University of California at Berkeley, since they rise on "the fantastic dreams of such renewal" and are futile attempts at a spatial conquest of time, to deal with what J.C.Louis (1996:21) calls "the pain of past persecutions, ethnic strife, and other forms of historical violence."
movements deviant from official ideologue: "Socialist art is a new and higher stage on the path of development of humanity's cultural activity. We stand on the threshold of a new Renaissance." (I. Golomstock 1990a: 82) Artistic production was to depict reality in its "revolutionary development", in accordance to "the task of the ideologically refashioning and education of labouring people in the spirit of socialism." (I. Golomstock 1990a: 85-6) Painting, drawing, and sculpture, convenient as its immediate impact on the masses was, became the first victims for monumental propaganda even as early as in Lenin's Russia in 1918, and by 1934 the same fate awaited Soviet literature, especially under the most unprecedentedly intense Stalinist personality cult. The All-Union Congress of Soviet Writers, for instance, under the leadership of Gorky, attacked modernism as one of "decline and decay" (not less including various Russian modernist vanguard aesthetics of the earlier era as in suprematism, constructivism and productivism). (B. Buchloh 1984: 83; I. Golomstock 1990a: 88) In a highly politically charged environment of this type, what was politically correct changed as often as the movement of dust in the air: what was an enemy of the people in one day became a friend in the next or an enemy again the day after (as best illustrated by the political metamorphoses before, during and after the Stalin-Hitler pact).

Those who well conformed to socialist humanism so disguised were awarded accordingly, with the gold badge of the Stalin Prize as the highest honour, and with memberships to the Soviet cultural megamachine (the Union of Soviet Artists, the Ministry of Culture, and the USSR Academy of Arts). (I. Golomstock 1990a: 97, 102, 108) But those who did not were arrested and stood for political trials most terrible there ever was as in 1937 -- in the name of committing state crime (as "Enemies of the people", "Trotskyist-Bukharinite rabble", "Fascist agents"). (I. Golomstock 1990a: 111-2) Who knows, Igor Golomstock asks, how many gifted artists, with their creative talents, perished or were wasted under Stalin's cultural terror in the name of Socialist Realism: just to name a few, Kazimir Malevich, Gustav Klutsis, V. Sterlingov, V. Ermolayeva, Aleksandr Drevin, Konstantin Istomin, Nikolai Punin, Serge Tretiakov, P. Kiselis, and Vladimir

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Tatlin? (I.Golomstock 1990a:113)

It is not coincidental, to this effect, that by the 1930's many avant-gardes, revolutionary as they previously proclaimed themselves to proudly be, became disillusioned with the Communist Popular Front, Stalin's Russia, and the euphorious, promised land of nowhere.

Instead, other artists were nostalgic to the mystical past (as in post-Impressionism, with Primitivism and Symbolism as exemplars), sometimes as a prelude to Fascist and Nazi art decades later. In opposing the Enlightenment project as philistine and banal (in its superficial, trivial urban life), the Post-Impressionists (Paul Gaughin, Emile Bernard, Paul Cezanne, and the Cubist Pablo Picasso) re-emphasized the mystical experience of the primordial, set free of psychic resistance as embodied in religious fervor, explored the world of the Others qua noble savage, and challenged traditional aesthetic representation.

Paul Gaughin, in *La Belle Angele (MMe.Satre)*, 1889 as an ideologue of Symbolism, sought for a profound remaking of one's root (the prelude to Fascism): the painting of a peasant closer to the soil, to the Christian foundation, to the essentialist model of identity. (B.Buchloh 1994) In *The Yellow Christ* (1889), the exotic and primitive were transformed into a return to dada "from my childhood, the good old wooden horse" (as a prelude to Dadaism in the 1930's), not so much to celebrate Christian faith but an unconscious return to its primitive form, to the religious mystique (colouring as in blue lines so constructed to allude to deep psychic states). (A.Solomon-Godeau 1989:122) In *La Orana Maria*, the Others qua the Polynesians was painted as paganish, not so much to degrade their primitiveness but to protect this heathen culture from the secular capitalist industrial order, from the destructive colonial administration and missionary intrusion.

Emile Bernard, in *Breton Women at Pardon* (1888), depicted confession and prayer, ritual and feast as much proximal to the Others qua ethnicity and gender, as deeply involved with the primordial as with the sacred. And in *Self Portrait With a Portrait of Gaughin* (1888), the primitive realm became essential to
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paintings of the 20th centennia in its critique of the superficial Impressionist emphasis on vision (as empirically observed, as scientifically affirmed), to be now replaced with a return to the realm of the unconscious, to the mystical as radical, as counter-Enlightenment, as anti-scientific. This "I" of the artist qua an exemplary subject now refused to submit to the empiricist, scientific objectivity of instrumental rationality in the capitalist world, against its utopian vision of knowledge and progress, and instead affirmed a new vision of subjectivity qua a quest for the Freudian unconscious. And Paul Cezanne, influenced as he was by the Primitivist wave, sought a freedom from this estrangement of secularization, from the philistine world of mechanic reproduction -- as well illustrated by his work on a man (in the image of his father) reading newspapers in the morning, replacing the moral function of doing daily prayer as in the religious past. No, and twice no --, many of their contemporary were instead driven to know what happened to the stock market, to the business world, in order to catch up with the Joneses.

The Primitivist and Symbolist legacies in Pablo Picasso's works were profound indeed. Probably nothing expressed this better than The Demoiselles d'Avignon (1907). As he once strode for the first time in the Museum of African and Polynesian Arts in London, the world of the Others qua the African and Polynesian arts confronted and struck him with awe, ironically for someone who was so much involved in scientifically exploring perceptual depiction (geometric, cubic forms): "When I saw these objects, I knew what art was to be. I also knew if I failed to acquire those intensities, I would fail to be an artist." (B. Buchloh 1994) The redemption of this stunning experience was to free art work from secularization, from the imperative of commoditization into the magical, primitive realm, in what Walter Benjamin called the inevitable shift to the rituals and the cults.

Art was now to redeem one from banal, philistine existence of the bourgeois life praxis, in searching for a profound subjectivity unreducible to conventional representational categories of the empiricist kind. As originated in a painting
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on some medical students examining prostitutes in a brothel, the masterpiece made
use of negative space (cubic, frozen space as opposed to positive one of
background objects and figures), with a female face reflecting a primitive mask
of a noble savage. What was subversive here was to disturb the concepts as much
of traditional representation (the voice of the Others as opposed to conventional
physiological representation) as of cultural identity (the profound
commoditization of material existence under attack in the symbol of the female
bodies as prostitutes).

Cubism thus challenged traditional aesthetic representation, -- as in Two
Nudes (1906), where female physiology (head and hands) suffered anatomical
distortion, not to pretendingly tell the viewers what the body qua object is to
be, but to problematize the empiricist world of representation in demanding their
visual intervention (as in La Vie,1903 as well). In Guitar (1912) --, the same
attack took the form of a conflict between romantic projection of Bohemian desire
and industrial object. Human mouth was now depicted as a structure of hollow
incision to the skull: the logic of representation is arbitrary, as if to fall
into the Saussurian semiology on language as an independent system of object
meaning without organic meditator nor causal connector between signs and objects,
or to destroy the European mimemic music tradition.(B.Buchloh 1994)

Yet what was terribly wrong with the nostalgic return to the primitive
mystique, away from the commoditized industrial representational reality,
innocent as certainly it was not, contained what Abigail Solomon-Godeau called
"the dense interweave of racial and sexual fantasies and power -- both colonial
and patriarchal" -- analogous to Edward Said's devastating critique of Western
The widespread flight from capitalist modernity (its urban lifeform and
instrumental social relations) reflected in what Jackson Pollock termed the
crisis of representation so much derided in Primitivism, Symbolism, -- and post-
Impressionist Japonisme. Camille Pissarro explained this syndrome as a capitalist
retrenchment in the face of a threatening, rising working class:"The bourgeoisie,
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frightened, astonished by the immense clamor of the disinherited masses, by the
insistent demands of the people, feels that it is necessary to restore to the
people their superstitious beliefs. Hence the bursting of religious symbolists,
religious socialists, idealist art, occultism, Buddhism" (A.Solomon-Godeau
1989:122) --, it served as a desire for the fulfillment of a return to the
feudal, rural, static, spiritual, primitive.

This atavist return to the mystical past, to the origins, historical
precedents had it in Rousseauist back to nature, in Romanticism, and in popular
exoticism, yet was implicated in fantasies of imaginary knowledge, power, and
rape. (A.Solomon-Godeau 1989:123) Gauguin, for instance, wrote in the margin of
the Noa Noa manuscript of his adventures in the Polynesian land, "I saw plenty
of calm-eyed women. I wanted them to be willing to be taken without a word,
brutally. In a way, longing to rape" (A.Solomon-Godeau 1989:125), and to his 1897
letter to Armand Seguin: "I have a 15-year old wife [a Tahitian] who cooks my
simple everyday fare and gets down on her back for me whenever I want, all for
the modest reward of a frock, worth ten francs a month", including a tale of
frolicking with another 13-year old mistress (A.Solomon-Godeau 1989:127) --,
sexual relationships of this sort would be considered criminal in Europe. And in
the African and Polynesian pictures, images of men were singularly rare; and even
when present, they were portrayed more as a possession in the shadow of colonial
imagery. The female natives, on the other hand, were peculiarly glossed by
constant reference to the languour, gentleness, lassitude and seductiveness of
the noble savage. (A.Solomon-Godeau 1989:124)

The dark side of the nostalgic return to the primitive, to the mystical was
thus implicated into a mythic speech which was not spoken: its absences, its
silences, its omissions revealed the colonial, patriarchal, racist, sexist
fantasies and power of the Same vis-a-vis the Others. (A.Solomon-Godeau 1989:119-
20,125) After all, the tourist/artist/colonialist lament "for the loss of the
authentic, primitive culture it seeks to embrace is itself a significant
component of the primitivist myth. For within this pervasive allegory, as James
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Clifford points out, 'The non-Western world is always vanishing and modernizing. As in Walter Benjamin's allegory of modernity, the tribal world is conceived as a ruin.' The nostalgic yearning for the origins was by no means innocent as it seemed.

Quite on the contrary --, the atavist return to the origins contained an even darker side: its prelude to Fascist and Nazi art. Gaughin's *La Belle Angele* (Mme.Satre) (1889), in its search for one's deeper root was appealing to the Fascist yearning for a return to the glorious aristocratic Italian past which never was. His *Nation Francaise* (1880's), in its anti-semitic celebration of the French original (Christianity versus Judaism), was in tune with the Fascist hatred of capitalist culture (often with the Jews as the readymade scapegoat). Nazi propaganda under Adolf Hitler's National Socialism notoriously placed its emphasis on national origin and socio-political positioning (with the epithets "Jewish" and "bourgeois" as hate-words). (I.Golomstock 1990a:110) In both militarist states, the cult of youth (strength and optimism) and their love of danger (war) despised aesthetic autonomy as "the exclusive privilege of the bourgeoisie" and their philistine lifeform, with nothing good save its "incurable spiritual sterility" -- and, partly due to the exploitation of the nascent communications technology as in transportation, autbahns, radio and television (F.Jameson 1992:67), rendered the Futurist celebration of war, as by Marinetti, for its exemplification of human dominion over machinery into a higher aesthetics (W.Benjamin 1992:306) vulnerable as well to Fascist propaganda machine. (F.Polak 1973:277)

A sense of being alone in a struggle against a spiritually sterile capitalist world (as in Hitler's ideologue of a global Jewish-Imperialist conspiracy undermining the basis of German racial purity and spiritual growth): modernism was degraded as decadent and degenerative. And if such avant-garde works of Gaughin, Van Gogh, Picasso, and various others were banned in the two militarist states (I.Golomstock 1990a:104-5,109), this did not refute, as in Gaughin's, the prelude of the primitivist theme to Fascist and Nazi arts, since
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their leaders realized, Clement Greenberg argued, that it was politically more effective to manipulate the cultural tastes of the masses in vulgar, philistine forms of the reargardes in mass culture than in abstract, sophisticated terms of the avant-gardes -- without tarnishing a bit the primordial retrogression in their own ideologues. (C. Greenberg 1961:31)

To this effect, the Fascist cultural policy demanded deep loyalty of artists to the regime: "You are either with us or against us. If you are with us, you must create from the standpoint of our Weltanschauung: if you are not with us, then your place is in the concentration camp." (I. Golomstock 1990a:90) "Paint us a painting that shows how everyone under Fascism moves forward, grows and prospers." The Fascist cultural megamachine offered state prizes (the prestigious "Cremona Prize") in honour of those loyal artists, with possible candidacy to the Fascist Academy, the National Syndicate of Fascist Visual Art, the Ministry of Popular Culture, and the Government Section of Contemporary Art. (I. Golomstock 1990a:118-19) The analogous institutions existed in Germany under the Third Reich too.

The goal was nothing other than the cultivation of a new human species who was, in Hitler's parlance, "stronger and more beautiful" (I. Golomstock 1990a:84) in the shadow of Nietzsche's imagery of Zarathustra, and "only then will Rome once again lead the world", as Benito Mussolini spoke before the National Conference of the United Fascist Syndicates of Free Arts and Professions in 1932, in lamenting the loss of the once glorious yet mysterious Roman primordial. (I. Golomstock 1990a:114-16)

(2) The Power of the Market. Besides the onslaught of official authorities, the status of artistic autonomy also confronts the seduction of the market place. "No culture can develop without a social basis, without a source of stable income", Clement Greenberg argued (1961:24-5), and with the decline of the feudal nobility and medieval ecclesia, art patronage was shifted to the market world of the bourgeoisie, at a time when the demand of the urban masses for their own
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cultural consumption was on the rise and the future of folk culture whose background lied in rural life was on the way out in the aftermath of industrialization. The result is an ersatz culture called kitsch "destined for those who, insensible to the values of genuine culture, are hungry nevertheless for the diversion that only culture of some sort can provide" as in popular, commercial art and literature, magazine covers, illustrations, large-scale reproduction and records (M.Calinescu 1987:255), ads, slick and pulp fiction, comics, tap dancing, Hollywood movies, and all the rest (Chapter 2).

The success of kitsch is enormous, for anyone familiar enough with the mass culture industry in modern times (Section 2.2), and their mega-profits often tempt irresistibly the avant-gardes. (C.Greenberg 1961:26) Not only the avant-gardes are threatened (since, after all, they are no gods), but also folk and native cultures the world over come under its attack as well. "Kitsch has not been confined to the cities in which it was born, but has flowed out over the countryside, wiping out folk culture. Nor has it shown any regard for geographical and national-cultural boundaries", Greenberg wrote, "it has gone on a triumphant tour of the world, crowding out and defacing native cultures in one colonial country after another, so that it is now by way of becoming a universal culture, the first universal culture ever beheld."

Welcome to the planetary world of kitschified culture (C.Calinescu 1987:255)

The reason is simple enough (C.Greenberg 1961:28,30): sophisticated artworks of the avant-gardes require a considerable amount of previous training and experience ("conditioning") for enjoyment, whereas kitsch can be enjoyed with no effort, since it is made for unreflective pleasure, for maximal excitement with minimal effort. (M.Calinescu 1987:259) Adorno and Horkheimer thus wrote, "if it is to remain pleasure, it must not demand any effort and therefore moves rigorously in the worn grooves of association. No independent thinking must be expected from the audience: the product prescribes every reaction: not by its natural structure (which collapses under reflection), but by signals."
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(M.Horkheimer 1947:137) Kitsch therefore becomes most democratic in orientation, if only at the price of demagogy and the levelling-down effect. Even tyrants love kitsch; after all, Hitler, Mussolini, and Stalin, being skillful politicians as they were, realized the most immediate impact on the masses more from the banality of kitsch than from avant-garde sophistication for their political objectives at hand. (C.Greenberg 1961:30-1)

But this distinction between avant-garde artwork and kitsch suffers increasing irrelevancy, as the former is being lured into the market place. The art world (and museums particularly) becomes more like an art industry, or better, the "consciousness industry". The term 'industry', as first untimely used in the art field by Hans Magnus Enzensberge decades ago and now picked up by Hans Haacke, refers to "the entire range of activities of those who are employed or working on a freelance basis in the art field" (H.Haacke 1984:60) The word 'consciousness' owes to Marx's insight in The German Ideology: that human consciousness is never a pure, independent, value-free entity with its own internal, self-sufficient, and universal laws. (H.Haacke 1984:64) Quite on the contrary --, it is shaped by the respective sociopolitical and most especially economic relations at a historical epoch (the ideological superstructure in relation to its economic base). For those who still hold a romantic, idealistic view of art, it is scandalous, or, worse, sacrilegious to use such a term as the consciousness industry. Yet the art world in late capitalism has radically changed from what it used to be. The Kantian ideal of "disinterested pleasure" in art seems silly by contrast, when art is increasingly made for the sake of business. Why? Let me examine this commercial aspect (a)firstly, from a brief history of the avant-garde movements and (b)then, from the development of the modern art world into an industry.

(a) A Brief History. Art as a confirmation of commodity culture is not exclusively a 20th-century phenomenon. Back to the old days of Impressionism (as in Manet's images of the absinthe drinkers, dissolute picnics, and upstart whores of the 1860's; Seurat's depiction of commercial diversions of fin-de-siecle Paris
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of the 1880’s; and Cheret’s technique of advertisement iconography), the boundary between high and low culture, between avant-gardiste artwork and kitsch was already somewhat blurred. (T. Crow 1983: 216-7) This avant-garde schism at the time had been prompted by the surrender of some artists to the philistine demands of the modern marketplace as much for the rising urban masses as for the utilitarian bourgeoisie, though in the case of Manet, Stéphane Mallarmé offered an excuse in that the former’s painting of this period was only a tactical retreat before restoring decades later its high artistic autonomy.

Not surprisingly (with historical hindsight), the blurring was of great interest to tyrants like Hitler who was much impressed by Cheret’s brilliant iconography in his inquiry of how high and low culture could be fused for the benefit of Nazist propaganda machine. (B. Buchloh 1994) Even in our own days, the Impressionist legacy can still be seen in various tourism-oriented posters, advertisements, brochures, and catalogues, besides in decorative art for some modern business offices. Similarly, the same fate awaits some Post-Impressionist works (as in Gauguin’s depiction of female Tahitian native females as languish, gentle, and seductive), whose mythic speech of tropics = ecstasy = amorousness = native still retains its attraction to this day -- "any Club Med brochure for Tahiti demonstrates its uninterrupted currency." (A. Solomon-Godeau 1989: 127-8) Perhaps among the most notorious of all avant-gardes who sell their souls to the market are the Surrealist Salvador Dalí (who was so willing to exchange his signatory in any artwork for a buck that his wife finally could take it no more and deserted him) and the Pop artist Andy Warhol: "Cash. I just am not happy when T don’t have it. The minute I have it I have to spend it. And I just buy stupid things."

Warhol’s confession tells us something of why Pop art exemplifies what Jean Baudrillard called the art of consumption. (J. Baudrillard 1988: 34-5) It is an art of the non-sacred par excellence, tied to no moral nor psychological values, concerned with no quest for truth nor redemption --, within an axiological relativism which late capitalism need for its success. (D. Gross 1992: 56) Its aims
Chapter 4. The Ideal of Artistic Autonomy, and Its Disillusion is most immanent of the mundane world, most integrated in this world of industrial and serial production. Warhol's 100 Campbell's Soup Cans (1962), its shock intent to resist the law of exchange notwithstanding, succumbed as well to the lure of commercialization. (P. Burger 1984:61-2)

This is not to suggest, God forbids, that Pop artists have no inspiration. Nothing is farther from the truth; they are no inferior to earlier artists. Listen to Oldenburg's moment of inspiration (J. Baudrillard 1988:37):

I drove around the city one day with Jimmy Dine. By Chance we drove around Orchard Street, both sides of which are packed with small stores. As we drove I remember having a vision of "The Store." I saw, in my mind's eye, a complete environment based on this theme. Again it seemed to me that I had discovered a new world, I began wandering through stores -- all kinds and all over -- as though they were museums. I saw objects displayed in windows and on counters as precious works of art.

Or lend your ears to Rosenquist: "Then suddenly, the ideas seemed to flow towards me through the window. All I had to do was seize them on the wing and start painting. Everything spontaneously fell into place -- the idea, the composition, the images, the colors, everything started to work on its own."

Neither do Pop artists lack a sense of humour; nothing is again farther from the truth, since one is tempted to react with a smile of derision or an all-out laugh when looking at a Pop artwork. "That cannot be serious", or "Even a five-year-old child can do it", we are inclined to say.

And for that matter, neither do Pop artists lack good intent. (J. Baudrillard 1988:37-8) "Art should be an affirmation -- not an attempt to bring order," John Cage wrote, "but simply a way of waking up to the very life we are living, which is so excellent, once one get one's mind and one's desires out of the way and lets it act of its own accord." Or let Andy Warhol speak, "The canvas is an entirely ordinary object, as much as this chair or this poster." (J. Baudrillard 1988:39) Why, Andy? "Reality needs no intermediary," thus answered he, "one simply has to isolate it from its surroundings and put it down on the canvas."
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Both Cage and Warhol have the good intent to free art from sinking into the logic of commodity once more, to go beyond the restraints of both the Ego and the Super-ego into the free play of the id (in Freudian language), as if they were searching for "a vague Zen or Buddhist mystique" of some sort.

No, to be sure --, neither the lack of inspiration nor the want of humour nor the absence of good intent are their problem, which lies elsewhere: that is, "the author's content or intentions are not enough," Baudrillard continued (1988:40-1), "it is the structures of culture production which are decisive." The culture production in late capitalism absorbs whatever it be within the logic of commoditization once more, since, as opposed to the Protestant work ethic which Weber thought was responsible for the emergence of early capitalism, contemporary economic mode of behavior encourage a total reversal of the traditional ethos of temperance, restraint, and thrift to its extremity (M.Calinescu 1987:245): the celebration of the instinctual (F.Jameson 1991:213), of the unconstrained sensibility, of the idea of boundless experiment, of unfettered freedom (D.Bell 1976:51).

Kitsch, with Pop art as an exemplified case, excels in what Adorno referred to as "the parody of catharsis" (the parody of aesthetic consciousness), in imitating whatever that be, from primitive or folk art to the latest avant-garde limited only by the market (M.Calinescu 1987:226,241):"Kitsch appears as an easy way of 'killing time', as a pleasurable escape from the banality of both work and leisure. The fun of kitsch is just the other side of terrible and incomprehensible boredom"(M.Calinescu 1987:248) -- the author's content and intentions notwithstanding. And this notwithstanding-ness subverts much of what is left of the distinction between avant-garde art and kitsch, between high and low culture.

(b) The Art Industry. The transformation of the art world into an industry constitutes the other side of the same process. Art managers of our times make no apologies for their skills in budgeting, investment, and price-setting strategies and have studied organizational goals, managerial structures, socio-
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political environment of organization, labour relations and even interpersonal interactions as part of their business-smart curriculum. (H. Haacke 1984:61-2) The boards of trustees of U.S. museums, dominated as they are by members from the world of business and high finance, prepare budgets and development plans whose success often has repercussions to their career prospects. Even many artists in the new age are acquiring managerial training in workshops, as good business skills have a direct bearing for survival, in light of the rapidly shrinking (of traditional aristocratic elites who used to be the major source of financial support for them) which then force the avant-gardes, Greenberg insightly observed more than three decades ago (1961:22,24), to remain attached to capitalist society precisely because they need its money.

"Everything in life seems to be who you know and when you know them and where you are", thus advised R. Indiana, "and to be in the right place at the right time with the right thing is about what Pop amounted to." (S. Gablik 1984:60) The Soho dealer I. Karp commented that he saw up to one hundred artists each week, almost all being totally professional and certainly all looking for an opportunity to sell their works. (S. Gablik 1984:58) But their will to money is not without a price to pay: "They don't have to listen to me, but I will only show the works that I like in the gallery. In other words, if an artist who is scheduled to show does not produce the kind of works that I want to dignify my gallery with, then I won't show them." (S. Gablik 1984:64) And the role of paid advisors, accountants, lawyers, and public relations agents becomes equally important for these artists as well.

The Tut show at the Metropolitan Museum, for instance, generated $111 million for the economy of New York City (as was welcomed by local politicians), while the Museum of Modern Art is actively involved in real estate (as in the erection of a luxury apartment tower over its own building). (H. Haacke 1984:62-3) As is true everywhere else, real-estate speculators follow with great interests the move of artists in low-rent commercial and residential areas for gentrification and lucrative development. And collector Peter Ludwig bought a
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large chunk of government-sanctioned Soviet art and displayed it in his museum in Germany so as to open the Soviet market for his chocolate company. It is not a matter of sheer contingency that economists in our time include in the computation of GNP the art industry as part of the ever-growing service sector. (H. Haacke 1984:64) The "consciousness industry" becomes a big business in its own right, and it speaks business and nothing but business.

All this sounds cynical enough in tone. After all, does anyone still remember the good old days when a lonely, reclusive artist known as Albert Ryder cared nothing for money, social prestige, or comforts, so it was told, and "lived frugally on thirteen cents a day and slept in a carpet roll; at night he wandered the bridges, ferries, and waterfronts of New York, 'soaking up the moonlight' and watching the shadows a boat's sail made upon the water"? (S. Gablik 1984:59) Or recall the heroic strivings of Picasso and Braque, protected as they were from financial pressure by their dealers, devoted single-mindedly in Cubism as a personal, solely aesthetic exploration. (S. Gablik 1984:66) In our days, there may still be for sure some privileged players in the art world who retreat to the private cocoon (various dandyisms and contemporary versions of artistic autonomy). Or some social-rebellious avant-gardes like the American Social Realists have virtually no ties with the art world and instead confine their artistic efforts to the creation of wall murals in local working class neighborhoods, not so much to change society but to communicate social and aesthetic messages targeting inequitable economic and political conditions of their times. (D. Crane 1987:139-40)

Yet their major problematic is either the absence of institutional support structure for sustainable development (D. Crane 1987:141) --, or as soon as they start enjoying greater exposure, their art world succumb too to the forces of the market. (H. Haacke 1984:64-5) Besides, public opinion and prevailing political climate constitute potent forces to be reckoned with, even in liberal democracies where, so we are taught to believe the myth (H. Haacke 1984:65-67), there is always freedom of consciousness. Museums and other institutions, stage as they
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do exhibitions and educational as they often proclaim themselves to be, are under constraints of funding as much as of opinion polls and mainstream views. One is never innocent to play the game well for success. "Agility in dealing with political parties, possibly even membership in a party, can be an asset," Haacke continues, "The arrival of Margaret Thatcher in Downing Street and of Francois Mitterand at the Elysee noticeably affected the art institutions in their respective countries. Whether in private or in public museums, disregard of political realities, among them the political needs of the supervising bodies and the ideological complexion of their members, is a guarantee of managerial failure." (H. Haacke 1984:67)

But this talk of political intrusion is not to downgrade the commercialized aspect of the art world; rather, it forces us to realize how much more complex the world of art has become, in their confrontation with diverse interest groups: private donors, public agencies, political climate, business corporations, art collectors, and, in Hollywood terms, media coverage, opinion polls, box-office. (S. Gablik 1984:68) Philippe de Montebello, director of the Metropolitan Museum, revealed a sad truth about the art world in Newsweek some years back: "It’s an inherent, insidious, hidden form of censorship." How, Mr. de Montebello? "We’re censoring ourselves," thus replied he (H. Haacke 1984:71), shocking as this was still to him, as it is all the more so to those who hold on a romantic, idealistic image of the art world as clean, pure, disinterested, bohemian.

Even private donors are not as philanthropic as they seem, often come on board as they do with attractive collections and often demand as they do a part in policy making. (H. Haacke 1984:68) Nor does corporate funding fare any better. The Rockefeller family, for instance, funded an exhibition of Latin American art at the Lincoln Center in New York after successfully acquiring massive oil interests in Mexico (huge oil spots and explorative rights); even then, those Mexican mural paintings mixed with socialist, revolutionary messages were banned from display (B. Buchloh 1994) and those eligible for entry were deemed compatible
Chapter 4. The Ideal of Artistic Autonomy, and Its Disillusion with the American Way of Life.

Corporate funding also helps projecting a favourable public image of the company as "a good corporate citizen" and of course offers a chance to advertise its products as well. A public relations executive of Mobil in New York called his company's art support "a good will umbrella", and his colleague from Exxon, "a social lubricant."(H.Haacke 1984:70) Some years back, Mobile candidly explained in an op-ed page advertisement in the New York Times under the headline "Art, for the Sake of Business", that "What's in it for us -- or for your company? Improving -- and ensuring -- the business climate." And Rockefeller had this to say about corporate sponsorship of the arts: it "can provide a company with extensive publicity and advertising, a brighter public reputation, and an improved corporate image. It can build better customer relations, a readier acceptance of company products, and a superior appraisal of their quality. Promotion of the arts can improve the morale of of employees and help attract qualified personnel."(S.Gablik 1984:67)

This is not, however, to portray art institutions as being one-sidedly seduced by the corporate world. Quite on the contrary, they often invite it in, as during the recessions of the seventies and eighties, when many private donors could no longer contribute at the accustomed rate and many governments had to cut arts funding to reduce huge budget deficits. The Metropolitan Museum in New York, for example, in a pamphlet entitled "The Business Behind Art Knows the Art of Good Business", wooed prospective corporate sponsors with this message: "Many public relations opportunities are available through the sponsorship of programs, special exhibitions and services. These can often provide a creative and cost-effective answers to a specific marketing objective, particularly where international, governmental or consumer relations may be a fundamental concern."(H.Haacke 1984:69-70) Art institutions are just becoming brilliantly business-smart in their press releases, posters, advertisements, and exhibition catalogue to draw crowds and to select events that are "exciting" (meaning not necessarily of high quality).
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The art industry is never innocent, and art is increasingly becoming art for the sake of business, rather than art for art's sake, where even the most sophisticated avant-garde artwork has become familiar, and the unpredictable predictable. (S. Gablik 1984:55-8) This constitutes the triumph of kitsch in a narrow sense, and that of late capitalism in a larger one.

4.4 The Death of Aesthetic Norms, and the Problematic of Postmodernism

The dilemma confronting the project of artistic autonomy is that, even when realized, it is socially ineffectual, elitist, solipsistic, and meaningless (form-obsessed) --, besides its constant vulnerability to external attacks of official authorities, sublation of art, and commercialization.

"Nothing is more conservative than the apocalyptic genre" --, Jaque Derrida has a point. (Y. Bois 1992:326) Yet is there an end of the euphorious talk of artistic autonomy of some sort? Benjamin, for one, answered in the affirmative, as in Sandor Radnoti's parlance (1986:138), "the autonomy of art, its independent value, becomes, in this sketch, the outmoded, illusory peculiarity of a transitional period, a value which stands between cult-value and an exhibition-value which has lost every remnant of culture and is thoroughly politicized." Hans Gadamer, for another, regarded the very autonomy of art as a "beautiful illusion," since an artwork can only be understood within a hermeneutic reading, in which the creator, the audience, the work, and the whole historical tradition participate. (S. Radnoti 1989:128)

To make a critical stand towards artistic autonomy is not to endorse the end of art altogether, which is absurd. Art will always be, just as it has always been. The point is what Roland Barthes once wrote, "To be modern is to know that which is not possible any more." (Y. Bois 1992:329)

But it is harder to say than to do. A story about Pablo Picasso is worth
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repeating, in reference to his notorious statement in 1935: "There ought to be an absolute dictatorship...a dictatorship of painters...a dictatorship of one painter...to suppress all those who have betrayed us, to suppress the cheaters, to suppress the tricks, to suppress mannerisms, to suppress charms, to suppress history, to suppress a heap of other things." (B. Buchloh 1992:230) Why was Picasso, an angry man by nature he was not, yet so angry? This came at a time when the failure of modernism as an esoteric cultural project was already in sight, and "[l]ike senile old rulers who refuse to step down, the stubbornness and spite of the old painters increase in direct proportion to the innate sense of the invalidity of their claims to save a cultural practice that had lost its viability." (B. Buchloh 1992:230)

Precisely here postmodernism comes into the picture. The term 'postmodernism' is relational in meaning, both in relation to (a)perspective and (b)to time, and thus defiles essentialist definition.

(a) In Relation To perspective. Here diverse views number as many as there are stars in the sky. Federico de Onis: postmodernism is a conservative reaction with modernism itself. (B. Smart 1992:163) Jean Lyotard: it is a part of the modern, but with the performative principle carried further, within a "politics of resistance." (B. Smart 1992:176,178) H. Foster: it is "a counter practice not only to the official culture of modernism but also to the 'false normativity' of a reactionary postmodernism." G. Graff: it is a logical culmination of romantic and modernist premises. G. Raulet: it is a renewed modernity, as a new start. D. Harvey: it is a transition from Fordism to flexible accumulation. (B. Smart 1992:184) Jurgen Habermas: it is to complete the unfinished project of modernity. (C. Norris 1990:51)

Fredric Jameson: it is precipitated by the development of late capitalism ("consumer and multinational"). (B. Smart 1992:179) D. Hebdige: it is a Marxism "without guarantees", that is, "without the hopes and dreams which made modernity possible." (B. Smart 1992:204) E. Laclau and C. Mouffe: it is a "post-Marxist" analysis predicated on a "whole series of positive new phenomena." Craig Owens
Chapter 4. The Ideal of Artistic Autonomy, and Its Disillusion (1983:61-2): it "may be another masculine invention engineered to exclude women" and "what we must learn, then, is how to conceive difference without opposition." Z. Bauman: it is a recognition of the limits of modernity. (B. Smart 1992:218) Jean Baudrillard: it is a rupture of representational space, a refusal of the signifier into nothing more than a simulacra to nowhere. (A. Kroker 1988:183) Matei Calinescu: it is a counterculture characterized as post-Modernist, post-Freudian, post-Humanist, post-Protestant, post-male, post-white, post-heroic, post-Jewish, post-sexual, post-Puritan, or in brief, post-everything. (M. Calinescu 1987:137) Stephen Toulmin: it ends the historical era of modernity by returning to the renaissance (the oral, the particular, the local, and the timely). (S. Toulmin 1990:7, 186-203)

(b) In Relation to Time. Perhaps a more useful way to tangle the messy business of 'postmodernism' is to examine its usage historically. It was first used by Irving Howe and Harry Levin in literary theory to lament in the 1950's the decline of modernism which was then split between the modernization euphoria of Futurism, Constructivism, Neue Sachlichkeit, and the building programs at the Bauhaus School in Weimar, and the critique of them in what Andreas Huyssen (1986:258-9) called the "romantic anti-capitalism."

In the 1960's, 'postmodernism' continued in circulation, much credit as it owed to such literal critics as Leslie Fiedler and Ihab Hassan who disagreed on what a postmodernist literature was to be. The technological euphoria (Chapter 2) was still intense, as in the media breakthrough in television, video and the computer (McLuhan's "cybernetic and technocratic media eschatology" and Hassan's praise for the "runaway technology", the "boundless dispersal by media", and "the computer as substitute consciousness"), just as the technological advance in photography and film was likewise received by Dziga Vertov, Tretyakov, Bertolt Brecht, John Heartfield, and Walter Benjamin in the 1920's. (A. Huyssen 1986:265-6) Yet an increasing sense of rupture, of cultural crisis, and an iconoclastic attack against bourgeois institution art and its ideology of autonomy were under way.
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The "populist" counterculture in its rather naive attempt to validate low culture as opposed to high art in fashionable society, as in its celebration of rocking roll, folk music, and popular literature, was crucial to the postmodern rejection of the high/low-culture and art/non-art dichotomies. The debate of whether Pop Art was legitimate art or not proved the point, so did the call for a "post-white", "post-male", "post-humanist", "post-Puritan" social order, by emergent minority subcultures which did not accept the dichotomies as legitimate, since the latter only perpetuated the marginal existence of the others in the shadow of the dominant high culture, in the name of High Culture and Art of the Avant-Gardes. Bourdieu's work on how art canons reinforce social stratification is most relevant here. (R. Bourdieu 1990:213; J. Wolf 1983:36)

In the 1970's, 'postmodernism' was spread to Europe (Kristeva and Lyotard in France and Habermas in Germany), and the debate on whether French poststructuralism should analogously be applied or not to the arts (not just literature) began. (A. Huyssen 1986:256) Meanwhile, a more sober and critical assessment of the excesses in the previous decade was made in relation to technological optimism (the oil shock and the dire predictions of the Club of Rome), to the iconoclastic countercultures (now denounced as "infantile aberrations of American history," in the aftermath of the Vietnam War and the Watergate scandal), and to the populist trend (the exhaustion of the pop, sex, and rock avantgardes). (A. Huyssen 1986:268-9) Nor did the postmoderns accept the narrow versions of modernism (Adorno in music and Greenberg in visual art), now regarded as the legacies of the disturbing eras of Hitler, Stalin, and the Cold War. Instead, postmodernism was split between a non-modernist, non-avant-garde critique of the status quo and an eclectic affirmation of the celebration of the instinctual and the sensual.

By the 1980's, the break with modernism was most decisive in postmodern architecture. (A. Huyssen 1986:257) Charles Jencks spoke for postmodern architecture in dating the demise of the modernist program at 3:32 p.m., in July 15, 1972 -- when several slab blocks of St. Louis' Pruitt-Igoe Housing (built by
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Minoru Yamasaki in the 1950’s) were dynamited, as the whole ambitious program turned out to be unlivable. The new architectural style to succeed the old was most eclectic, as in Philip Johnson’s AT&T highrise design (a neoclassical midsection, Roman colonnades at the street level and a Chippendale pediment at the top). Yet this eclectic affirmation led to a nostalgic call by Hilton Kramer in "Postmodern: Art and Culture in the 1980’s" for a restoration of modernist autonomy and artistic high seriousness. (A.Huyssen 1986:276) The coinage 'neoconservatism', therefore used by such critical theorists as Jurgen Habermas, was now circulated side-by-side with 'postmodernism' -- most especially when Daniel Bell in The Cultural Contradictions of Capitalism argued against the destructive impact of the celebration of the instinctual in mass culture on the "motivational and psychi-reward system" of capitalism (as in the earlier Protestant ethic) which had sustained it in the first place.

Thus began a debate on neoconservatism between the Frankfurt school under Habermas and the French poststructuralism. (A.Huyssen 1986:275-7) Since Habermas stubbornly remains hopeful of the eventual realization of the Enlightenment project of social emancipation (Chapter 5), any vision of a post-modern culture which concerns solely with art history and a return to features of early capitalism is essentially reactionary in tone (and thus 'neoconservative' within the context of postmodernity). French poststructuralism (as in the works of Michael Foucault and Jacques Derrida), by contrast, celebrate the playful transgression of textuality and permanent struggles (the rejection of representation and reality, denial of subject and history) and treats deconstruction as nothing in the end, "like a house of cards waiting to be blown down," in Derrida’s own terms. (D.Boucher 1985:186;A.Megill 1985:259-60,270) Or in Foucault’s mode of thinking, each extant order is subject to discursive attack, and as soon as it is overturned by a new dominant one, the latter too will in turn be treated likewise -- in an endless archaeology of knowledge (A.Megill 1985:95,239) -- which then invites Mark Poster (1982:146-8) to ask, "Without connecting us to our traditions and with a prospect of improving our
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future, the archeaology of discourses appears to be much like digging the proverbial trench only to be able to fill it up again." It is no wonder that Andreas Huyssen (1986:281-2) regards the poststructuralists as dogmatic and pessimistic, with no belief in redemption nor emancipation.

Yet the virtue of poststructuralism which precisely makes it post-modern lies in its growing out of the failure of modernism, in clearly recognizing how futile it is for modern art to engage in political subversion without somehow being forced back, with disillusion, into the aesthetic realm (or even absorbed into the logic of exchange). For this reason, the poststructuralists drop all pretense to go beyond the prisonhouse of language-games (beyond epistemology and aesthetics) and free arts and literature from the overload of impossible responsibilities (the sad legacy of Sartre in the 1950’s and 1960’s as a telling case). But Huyssen’s question (1986:283) is a good one: Is this a high price to pay for postmodernism in the poststructuralist sense (which ends up being still a theory of modernist literature, though in a more sophisticated form)?

The postmodernist response to the problematic of modernist autonomy is therefore intensely ambivalent. The very fact that various opposing stands exist side-by-side in the art scene reflects something deeply troubling: the loss of an ideal of God, of humanness in a world where "God is dead," meaning a Nietzschean nihilistic world (Chapter 3) in which all highest values hitherto have devalued themselves. The very ideal of aesthetic universal norms and values is destroyed once and for all, as when applied in the arts, the devaluation is most forcefully marked in its (1) centerless pluralism, (2) irreverent eclecticism, and (3) unfettered celebration of the instinctual. Let me examine them one by one.

(1) Centerless Pluralism. It is hard to deny the centerless pluralism in the art scene of our postmodern times.

Take the case of painting. In roughly five scores of years, modern painting has thrived under such diverse styles as Primitivism, Symbolism, Impressionism, Realism, Neo-Classicism, Surrealism, Abstract Expressionism, Cubism, Op Art, Pop Art, Minimalism, Futurism, Constructivism, Productivism, Socialist Realism,
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Social Realism, Concept Art, Earth Art, Body Art, Happening Art, Tachism, Installation Art, Feminist Art, Black Art, "Victim Art" (M. Dufy 1995:68), Mural Art, and more. Never before in human history have artistic genres mushroomed at this pace. Or as Pitirim Sorokin (1956:54) rightly commented on the modern art scene, "It is so rich in its variety that almost anyone possessed of any degree of taste can find in it something that meets his approval. Primitive, archaic, Egyptian, Oriental, Greek, Roman, medieval, classic and romantic, expressionistic and impressionistic, realistic and idealistic, Renaissance, baroque, rococo, visual and tactile, ideational and sensate, cubistic, futuristic, and old-fashioned, religious and secular, conservative and revolutionary, saintly and erotic."

The price to pay is therefore a loss of unity, of coherency, of centeredness, of harmony (P. Sorokin 1956:56), with its alienating consequences. "We are determined to make a Revolution", we hear a Surrealist says one day. The morning after, a Pop Artist comes and says, "Cash. I just am not happy when I don't have it." A day later, we hear a Dadaist says, "I had the happy idea to fasten a bicycle wheel to a kitchen stool and watch it turn." Then someone else interrupts and says, "Art should be an affirmation." And....

In a world like this, an artist, unlike his medieval colleague, no longer has any function to transmit traditional skills nor impart any standard knowledge of art nor know what should be learned and what should not, much less why he should and should not learn them (S. Gablik 1984:116-7). Everything is up for grabs. What is destroyed is not just tradition, but equally the art of previous avant-gardes (S. Gablik 1984:116); after all, each avant-garde, save the historical avant-gardes, is expected to be in the forefront of artistic development, more advanced than previous others. Modern axiology, in its emancipation from ontology of the old after the death of God qua the deconstruction of all meta-narratives, leaves behind it a secular abyss (J. Fekete 1988:iii-iv), a centerless wandering, an absence of transcendental warranty in a world where everything is tolerated, in the name of unconstrained freedom of
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choice: "With the death of God," thus spoke Ivan Karamazov in Fyodor Dostoyevsky's *Three Brothers Karamazov*, "everything is now permitted." This "loss of an ideal image of God," and "of an ideal image of man," in Frederick Polak's usage (1973:278-9), characterizes the death of the roots and rules of humanistic-religious aesthetics, the very artistic values of the "beautiful and the good." But where does this lead us to? "Beyond a certain point, freedom -- like technological progress -- is counterproductive: it defeats its own ends and becomes alienating," Suzi Gablik (1984:120) warns us, "For artists to lose the sense of being members of a tradition which transcends both themselves and their contemporaries leads to demoralization." Sytlistic pluralism for sure blurs the boundary between what is acceptable as art and what is not, or what is high culture and what is low culture, in the presence of a pluralistic social structure where emergent minority subcultures regard these dichotomies illegitimate, since they only perpetuate the marginal existence of the others in the shadow of the dominant high culture, in the name of High Culture and Avant-Gardiste works.

Surely this postmodernist celebration of boundary effacement is not without opposition. "The attempts to declare everything to be art and everyone to be artist, to retract all criteria and to equate aesthetic judgement with the expression of subjective experiences," Habermas (1990:350) critically remarks, "all these undertakings have proved themselves to be sort of nonsense experiments." The central problematic of the value of art in our times, Jay Bernstein (1988:88) argues, lies precisely in this phenomenon of the "death of art," of aesthetic alienation.

Yet this irreconcilable conflict thereby reveals the very depth of postmodern cultural crisis. (S.Gablik 1984:75-6) The coexistence, for instance, of *l'art pour l'art* movement (the appeal of critical reflection), historical avant-gardism, Aestheticism, and Realism -- including traditional "imitation" theories of art (J.Stolnitz 1960:110,118,126,159) -- in postmodern times destroys the possibility of universal aesthetic norms and values and results in from each
Chapter 4. The Ideal of Artistic Autonomy, and Its Disillusion according to its preference to each according to its interest.

(2) Irreverent Eclecticism. It is equally hard to deny a trend towards irreverent eclecticism.

Unlike many modernists who more often than not looked down on the pre-modern world as backward, the postmodernists learn from the shock techniques of historical avant-gardes (as in the play of chance and allegory) and irreverently appropriate whatever material and fragment out of their context and posit new meaning therefrom, as exemplified in the postmodern architectural design of Philip Johnson (as in an AT&T highrise with a neoclassical midsection, Roman colonnades at the street level and a Chippendale pediment at the top).

By contrast, Sacral Art in the old days was most reverent, arising as much from tradition as from religious concerns and being produced for collective needs. (S.Gablik 1984:52) Carving a template gate or making a ritual mask in Bali, building sculptures as "houses" for supranatural spirits to control over them among the Kalabari of southern Nigeria or the Maori of New Zealand, painting Jesus Christ's last supper with his twelve disciples or his death on the cross in Christendom, or else --, these were not artworks of revolt, nor those to express individuality for some irreverent shock artists, but exemplified a collective sacredness which provided as much life-meaning as group identity for members of a larger community beyond the self. In other words, what counted was not irreverence nor eclecticism, but historical continuity and preservation of tradition.

Precisely this traditional historiography the postmodernists reject, in favour of a fragmentary historical rupture, in reference to pastiche, simulation, parody, textual freeplay, arbitrariness, shock (J.Baudrillard 1986:19; R.Krauss 1992:219): "Not only has the master voice dissolved, but any sense of loss is rendered deadpan. The work labours under no illusions: we are all deliberately playing, pretending here -- get the point? Shock, now routine, is greeted with the glazed state of the total ironist." (T.Gitlin 1989:350-3) Nietzsche is right after all: truth in the end is nothing but value creation, or, "[M]odern man, for
Baudelaire is not the man who goes off to discover himself, his secrets and his hidden truth: he is the man who tries to invent himself", Foucault wrote, "This modernity does not ‘liberate man in his own being’; it compels him to face the task of producing himself." (T.Eagleton 1990:391) Fragmentary historiography is the answer to this call for self-creation in postmodern times.

In architecture, a similar eclectic playfulness does not fail to be present, as Robert Venturi’s celebration of adhocism in postmodern architecture well summarizes its eclectic spirit: "I like elements which are hybrid rather than ‘pure,’ compromising rather than ‘clean,’ distorted rather than ‘straightforward,’ ambiguous...rather than direct and clear. I am for messy variety over obvious unity." (O.Hardison 1989:112) And in modern music (many New Age types), what is celebrated is no less irreverent eclecticism: demolition, pandemonium, cacophony, dissonance, with no original creative power nor positive symbolism. (F.Polak 1973:284)

Ostensibly and consequently, this eclecticism of the postmodernists has its own vice. Perhaps no one explains it better than Charles Baudelaire (H.Janson 1995:888) himself, this spokesman of the heroism of modern life:

Eclecticism has at all periods and places held itself superior to past doctrines because, coming last onto the scene, it finds the remotest horizons already open to it; but this impartiality only goes to prove the impotence of the eclectics. People who are so lavish with their times for reflection are not complete man; they lack the element of passion. No matter how clever he may be, an eclectic is but a feeble man; for he is a man without love. Therefore he has no ideal...; neither star nor compass. Doubt has led certain artists to beg the aid of all the other arts. Experiment with contradictory means, the encroachment of one art upon another, the importation of poetry, wit, and sentiment into painting -- all these modern miseries are vices peculiar to the eclectics.

(3) The Unfettered Celebration of the Instinctual. And once more, it is hard to deny the celebration of the instinctual, of the sensual, of the playful to a more intense form in postmodern times.
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The decline of the sacred (Chapter 3), in particular relation to a consumeristic and technophilic lifeworld (Chapter 2), was most traumatic in expurgating little faith there remains in spiritual and moral values, at a time when being modern (and now post-modern) was to refuse whatever has been as what should of right be (Section 1.2). Tradition was taken as a hiding place for dogmatism, superstition, and backwardness, and Kant in "What is Enlightenment?" sought for an autonomy (human understanding and reason) away from what was passed down by tradition. Yet it has a darker side in postmodern times: tied with no moral nor religious values, interested in no truth nor redemption, having neither genuine love nor passion, and being most solipistic, anti-social, in the name of the self's inner life which never exists or does so with a high price.

The price to pay is a pathological effect of its unconstrained celebration of human instincts and sensuality -- political and economic considerations aside. Artistic autonomy becomes an opening of the Pandora's box for the exploration of the human instinctual, of the deep substratum of the self (now no more restrained by the sacred after the death of God). From the Surrealist search for the subconscious within an unreal and irrational dreamworld qua a Nietzschean will to power (F.Polak 1973:281), through the Nude as exemplified in imagery of the female body and the black man's sex (K.Mercer 1986:66), and the Primitivist turning towards the primordial liberation, to the imaginative strivings for the beyond as in Happening Art and Body Art (C.Levin 1988:44) -- what is celebrated is the instinctual (F.Jameson 1991:213), the sensual, the playful, and the unfettered (D.Bell 1976:51), at a time when late capitalism produces its most consumeristic lifeworld.

Even in poetry, Stephane Mallarme's "Un Coup de Des" ("A Throw of the Dice"), first printed as it was in the review Cosmopolis in 1898, remains to this day an exemplary expression of the playful spirit of randomness, of fragmentation (that the world has no meaning, but the mind arbitrarily imposes order on it), in its rejection of grammatical and syntactical structures (since decisions about word choice were made by flipping a coin or rolling dice), as in the English
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Just as Mallarme used dice and coin (random strategies familiar to Dada), so did Oulipo ("Ouvroir de Litterature Potentialle" --, Workshop of Potential Literature) appeal to complex algorithms (O.Hardison 1989:199,200,204), if only to flee from the need to make sense and from the predictable dullness of language structure, into the realm of fun and discovery where the play impulse verges on madness. Likewise did John Cage in music and Merce Cunningham (1995) in dance play with the I Ching (and sometimes dice and coin as well) (O.Hardison 1989:171)

But what price is there to pay? Is this a search for freedom or an escape from it, as Erich Fromm well put it in Escape from Freedom, a human condition which is spiritually sterile produces "a sick person and a sick
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society."(S.Gablik 1984:78) This is not, however, to endorse the Marxian imperative of social usefulness in artistic production, but rather to elucidate the inner world of artistic autonomy with a decadent face: "like the freedom of madmen and the insane; they can do what they like."(S.Gablik 1984:31) But now what? Is this the aesthetic's crowning glory which awaits an artist in his inner world of the self and which is to be ruined as soon as realized, solipsistic to itself, and meaningless (stressing form over content)? (T.Eagleton 1990:110)

Or is this instead a last consolating, wishful thought that the other half of human potentiality (whose existence is often more passionately assumed than soberly argued) can be somehow realised, while the outside world is falling apart into a secular abyss? Nietzsche's insight is worth repeating: that life in the art world cannot be sustained, since an artist will eventually grow weary of the "eternal unreality" and falsity of his inner existence, while more pressing socio-cultural activities are dangerously neglected.(A.Megill 1985:62-66,102)

What then is the alternative -- a return to political engagement through art? Adorno had a point, in light of his disillusion in the thirties with the proletariat as a historical liberating agent: that those who still dream of social liberation through art must be challenged to offer a social agency which permits social progress to be conceived of and to be successfully carried out.(J.Schulte-Sasse 1984:xxiv-xxv) But Benjamin could not disagree more with this: that an isolated, autonomous artist cannot be the recipient of culture, and whatever he ends up thinking of, because of his solipistic isolation, turns out to be nothing worthy to have.(S.Radnoti 1989:148)

But this debate between Adorno and Benjamin is still relevant to our postmodern times and is only to repeat how intensely ambivalent postmodern life has become in the art scene: there exist no universal aesthetic norm and value for what art is to be -- resulting in a godless artworld where the only rule is close to anything-goes, from each according to his preference to each according to his interest. "Artists, gallery owners, critics, and the public," Jean Lyotard (1986:76) thus confirms, "wallow together in the 'anything goes,' and the epoch
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is one of slackening" -- in a space where, Jean Baudrillard concurs, "art is said to be ‘everywhere’ and ‘dead.’” (M. Rose 1991:28)

Or "there is no guarantee of any corpus of works or canon in art criticism or literary criticism. These discourses, too, are the historically specific product of social relations and practices, and hence as partial and contingent as art and literature themselves," as Janet Wolff (1983:15,17) well describes the spirit of this disenchanted artworld, "To put this rather simply, the task of discovering the essential common feature of a Beethoven, Middlemarch, Vermeer’s Music Lesson and Chartres Cathedral (so far, as it happens, never achieved) now appears as both ideological and misguided, for why should they have anything at all in common?" And rather allegorically put, when Judith Williamson (1984:102) asks in her analysis of Cindy Sherman’s photographic art, What is femininity?, her answer is, "it isn’t any one thing at all...since each seems to be it, that there can be no such thing." Art in the postmodern scene seems to be not any one thing at all, since each seems to be it, that there can be no such thing -- and in fact can be anything.

With the death of God in aesthetic norms, infinite little gods in various styles thrive, without adding up to anything.

4.5 The Break with the Metanarrative of Harmony in the Other

The death of God in arts is taking hold in the Others as well. The fate of falling into ruins awaiting (1)Sacral and (2)Courtly Arts in the modern Sinitic world is a telling story --, in special relation to (3)Early Modern Art, (4)Socialist Art, and (5)Contemporary Avant-Garde Art in this Other.

(1)Sacral Art. In the older days --, in Sacral Art of this Other, the Taoist theme of natural harmony repeated the forever message that humans were not to master nature (as in landscape paintings depicting untrammeled nature of mountains, gorges, waterfalls, streams and lakes), nor the latter was to control
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over the former, for that matter (as in the absence of depiction of neither
natural disasters nor gruesome swamps and neither desolate places nor harsh
deserts). (G. Rowley 1959:9, 15, 20) The mysticalness of this natural harmony, often
through the technique of using empty space (G. Rowley 1959:71), could only
supposedly be grasped, without the pitfalls of reason (as in the Greek beauty of
mathematical proportions), within an intuitive appeal, through the medium of
poetic overtones and analogical imagery from life experience, to something higher
than what is accessible in the sensible world as such. (G. Rowley 1959:3, 26-7, 31)
The function of Sacral Art in this Other was thus most mystical-metaphysical,
forever recurring to the theme of the Way of Heaven qua natural harmony as the
underlying ethos, as in Hsia Kuei's *A Pure and Remote View of Streams and
Mountains* (Plate 22, early 13th century) in its depiction of hidden caves as
symbolizing a powerfully structured nature in the human heart (a mysterious union
of nature and humans), and Ma Lin's *Dark Fragrance and Scattered Shadows* (1254),
in its yearning for love of natural beauty (an angled branch, the spears of
bamboo, the rosettes of plumblossom, and their shapes as reflected from the
water). (H. Shih 1976:38-9) The motto here cannot be more opposed to Rousseau's
spirit of "I think, therefore I am", namely, with its most striking counterpart,
"I experience, therefore I create." The relative poverty of epistemology in this
Other (Chapter 3), in light of its obsession with intuitive, mystic thoughts, was
obvious enough from this perspective.

(2) Courtly Art. Likewise in Courtly Art of this Other, the Confucian
imperative of social harmony became an omnipresent theme, in its stress of life
meaning within a framework of moral goodness, as in Ku Kai-chih's *The Admonitions
Scroll* (Plate 3), in its portrayal of two characters making up in front of the
mirror, with poem by Chang Hua (232-300 AD) which read, "People all know how to
improve their visage, but not refine their characters," supposedly so written to
ridicule the Chin Dynasty Empress Chia at a time when the rise of her clan
destablized the throne. (H. Shih 1976:10, 14) This moral-earnest theme was rested
on a worship of historical permanence as a source of human dignity in venerating
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ancestors and their continuity to the present within an extremely rigidly defined hierarchical mindset of social relationships encompassing every imaginable category, ultimately tied with the cosmic world as such. (G.Rowley 1959:11,12) In many traditional paintings, for instance, the imagery of the emperor and the nobility was as much idealized and exaggerately depicted in their size, by contrast with smaller ordinary subjects nearby.

The function of Courtly Art therefore could not be more individual-suppressive in its celebration, that is, in leaving neither room for an assertive ego nor freedom for a living personality, neither expression of emotional intensity nor desire for extraordinary human triumph, and, not the least, no escape to an intoxicated sensuality. (G.Rowley 1959:17,22,56.77) --, as best illustrated in the technique of stressing simplicity in painting style, as opposed to the brilliant expression of human emotion in European Romanticist form. An equivalent Titian, Raphael, or Rembrandt (G.Rowley 1959:15) in this Other was in-conceivable, since this Other was among the most un-romantic humans there has ever lived on this planet Earth.

This artistic traditionalism, be it Taoist or Confucian in orientation, had never died out in this Other for millennia since the early Qing period (C.Tang 1989:16) -- and, so was likewise for Western Sacral and Courtly Arts, was more preoccupied with copying past masters than with either originality in form or new thinking in content, which, quite understandably, was never a prime value in art of this Other. (L.Lim 1985:29) Artwork, both in reception and production, was similarly collective, in suppressing any individual element before the sacredness of the larger unit qua the family and the state. (M.Sullivan 1984:262)

And their function was theo-political as such, in its inseparability from the legitimation of the Way of Heaven (read 'natural and social harmony') as an oriental ideology. Painting, for instance, began in this Other in the service of ceremonial rituals, that is, in the celebration of the sacred through careful decoration of celestial patterns and symbols (the sun, moon, stars) and evolved into a full-blown glorification of the ideal conduct and thought reducible to the
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Way of Heaven. (M.Prodan 1958:21; M.Sze 1959:8) This Way of Heaven was neither a suprasensible being known as God in the Western sense nor a heavenly evil spirit writ large but rather expressed an eternal process unfolding effortlessly, always in an orderly, patterned universe, in which everything was to follow the guidance of from each to its function to each to its place. (M.Sze 1959:18) The same logic was applied to architectural design (the use of trench for isolation of higher social strata from the lower) and to gardening (objects harmonized in spite of diverse sizes, and embellished with birds, fish, flowers, and swarms). (F.Chang 1989:154-7)

As an ideology, this artistic traditionalism (be it in poetry, calligraphy, or painting), known as the Orthodox School in the art history of this Other, was in service of the higher social strata as much of the learned (M.Prodan 1958:24) as of the officialdom. (J.Rawson 1992:27) Paintings, for instance, often became a medium to forge socio-political ties, in being commissioned by higher officials as much to record appointments and other important career occasions as to receive inscriptions and praise by significant others --, inevitably within the context of the Confucian moral ideal. (L.Lim 1985:13) On other occasions, music and dance (as in melodic music and more rhythmic dance quite peculiarly to this Other) were performed solely to entertain officials and foreign emissaries, and even the practice of calligraphy was a favourite indoor pastime for the aristocracy. (SAOEC 1994)

But with the collapse of this ancient Other and the rise of its modern successor (Section 1.5), the very institution of art received a new face --, thousand thanks to no one other than the hegemonic Europeans most forcefully banging at the former’s imperial door in the century before.

(3) Early Modern Art. As a first step towards the emancipation from Sacral and Courtly Arts, Early Modern Art in this Other had the good fortune to receive shock therapy from Western artistic perspectives (with the spirit of Realism and the Romanticist emotive expression in Western painting as exemplars), as a device to create new styles in the transformation of their traditionalist
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The Shanghai School in the early modernism of this Other, for instance, broke with the artistic orthodoxy of their forebears (as in Sacral and Courtly Arts) and started experimenting with bold and unconventional techniques (mostly Realism, Impressionism, and Post-Impressionism from the same qua the modern West). (M.Sullivan 1984:254) A sense of l'art pour l'art autonomy, for the first time, was entertained, though not without its naivety and comic flavour, that is, not yet totally liberating itself from the orthodox bondage. But their striving to mix Occidental and Oriental elements into a unifying product is well expressed by Qi Baishi’s Fruit and Wine (1920’s), with colorful imagery of baskets of fruit and a jug of wine, benefited as it was from Western coloring and depth techniques --, and by Ren Xiong’s Pheasants on a Rock (1850), with brushstrokes of opaque colour tightly packed, modeled as it was on European gouache. (J.Cahill 1988:61,69)

And the Lingnan School, in its obsession with Japonisme (which also influenced European Impressionism and Post-Impressionism), took a step further in allowing for emotional intensity and individual sentiment, though still espousing a backward-looking yearning to save artistic traditionalism from falling into oblivion through adapting to modern themes. (M.Sullivan 1984:254; C.Tam 1988:128) Such masters as Gao Jianfu, Gao Qifong, and Chan Shuren emphasized the Western and Japanese techniques of perspectives and chiaroscuro and advocated two unorthodox themes: as much (i) that there should be no confines to what was acceptable as the subject matter of a painting (so as to allow a continuous search for something new) as (ii) that paintings should be intellectually accessible to the people, not be detached from reality.

Exemplary paintings of this type include Gao Jianfu’s Autumn Melon, with its imitation of a method commonly used by European painters, that is, painting a view from the perspective of a camera; Ju Lian’s Flowers and Butterflies (1896)

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4. From an exhibition on modern Chinese art in Hong Kong Museum of Art, Hong Kong (01/02/94).
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and *Flowers and Mecopoda* (1884), with the brilliant colouring effect to enrich the tonal gradation and texture of leaves and flower pedals; and Ju Chao’s *Lotus*, with a delicate arrangement of flowers, fruit, and leaves as set against the background of the green leaf and thus symbolizing the theme of purity, of serenity. (C.Tam 1988:111,114-5,117)

A more aggressive allowance for decorative texture and expression of realistic, revolutionary content as this constituted, they were still not totally outside the traditionalist bondage. Why? The essential limit of the bold experiments in this Other’s Early Modern Art was enormous, and the reason was not hard to see, in a twofold sense, namely, (a) the powerful bondage of traditionalism and (b) the intense urgency of national salvation.

(a) The spectre of traditionalism still powerfully haunted artists in this Other in these early days of their modernism, when the very social stratum mostly responsible for its success was lacking — namely, the bourgeoisie. This Other had never experienced an industrial, scientific revolution under the helmsmanship of capitalism (and even in our own time is still backward by virtue of its agriculture-based economy). Laurence Binyon, for one, attributed the reason for the peculiar nature of this Other’s painting, as different from the Same’s, to the lack of a modern scientific/industrial ethos at the time. (T.Hsiang 1976:177)

In any event, the orthodox legacy, in the absence of a modern institutional setting for a social subsystem of art, proved too strong for these artists to break their chains from it. Their tendency of superstition and ancestral veneration, their lack of a vigorous analytical mind (something peculiarly this-Other in their obsession with intuitive, mystic thoughts), and their nostalgic quest for the metanarrative of a sage life became an immense stumbling block to any full development of individual artistic creation and deep self exploration so much familiar in the history of European modernism. (Y.He 1993:58)

Perhaps such a chain of orthodoxy is best revealed in a treatise on Western painting by an earlier painter Tsou I-Kuei, when he thus wrote, with an unmistakably Sinocentric prejudice of his time (T.Hsiang 1976:175-6),

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Western artists excel in sketching and drawing, thus when they depict light and shade and distance they are exact to the last detail. All human figures, houses, and trees in their painting have shadows trailing behind them. The colours and brushes which they use are completely different from those used in China. When they paint a scene, the perspective is presented as from broad to narrow, calculated in the dimensions of a triangle. Their mural pictures depicting palaces look so real that people are almost tempted to walk into them. Students of art may benefit somewhat if they learn a few such knacks. However, being completely lacking in the mastery of the brush, such painting, though elaborate, is after all nothing but craftsmanship, and is not recognized as painting of quality.

(b) Besides, the urgency of the day was emotionally charged with the socio-political imperative of national salvation from external hegemony to a striving for national wealth and power (Sections 1.5 & 5.5; L. Leo 1995), in a historical epoch full of violence from within as in warlordism and civil war and from without as in foreign imperialism on this Other's own soil. An artistic autonomy in its strict sense, consequently, had never been established in the early modern days of this Other. Even for those like the "literary" new-youths moderns who experimented some form of artistic autonomy fused with artistic realism, history was not as receptive to them as to the revolutionaries. The reasons are not hard to find (as discussed before in Section 1.5). They were too untimely "Westernized" (hard to soothe a deep resentment as embodied in a context of patriotic fervor against foreign imperial powers), too slow-paced (lagging behind the urgent needs of an epoch full of violence from within and from without), and, in the end, too romantic (often indulged into a dream world of wishing thinking). (J. Grieder 1972:95; V. Schwarcz 1986:96, 138-40; L. Lee 1972:75)

Surely, this is not to deny, by the time of the New Art Movement in the new Republic, some courageous souls, who, responding to the call of a radical critique of tradition by the new-youth moderns, determined to search for new departures from past traditions. Pang Xunqin was a good specimen of this category, always yearning for what a modern was to be, as in Sons of Earth
Chapter 4. The Ideal of Artistic Autonomy, and Its Disillusion (1934), with its depiction of human bodies in an elongated and simplified form, reduced as they were to large flat areas of colour --, as a direct, subjective expression of individuality. (M.Kao 1988:155) Li Shutong's Head of a Girl revealed an Impressionist brushwork tinged with detailed naturalism, attributable to the painter's influence by Japonisme. (M.Kao 1988:132-3) So was Xu Beihong's Horses in Landscape (1919), with its striving for realist form, modelled on the animals and trees in dramatic light and shade, yet only to be betrayed by an exaggeration in the gnarled branches and empty space as background which illustrated how hard it was to escape from roots in the native tradition. (M.Kao 1988:137)

(4) Socialist Art. But as the revolutionaries, the favorite son of this Other's early modern time, triumphed in Red China, the artists's misfortune was intensified. With Socialism reigning supremely after 1949, the little there remained in artistic autonomy was dashed into pieces, when the Socialist School emerging in the mainland put the arts firmly in the service of politics and the state. (M.Sullivan 1984:258) And no one said this more frankly than Mao Tsetung himself (I.Golomstock 1990a:123),

In actual fact there is no such thing as "art for art's sake", an art that stands above the classes, which stands aside from politics or is independent of it. Proletarian literature and art are only parts of the single whole of the proletarian revolution: as Lenin said, they play the part of cogs and wheels in the general revolutionary machine. What we demand is the unity of politics and art, the unity of form and content.

With such revolutionary slogans as "Serving the People" and "Follow the Mass Line", artists quit the ivory tower of art academies and were sent to farms and factories to "learn from peasants and workers", since "the thoughts and feelings of our writers and artists", Mao continued, "must fuse with the thoughts and feelings of workers, peasants, and soldiers." (I.Golomstock 1990a:123) Such anonymous, collective paintings as Peasants in the Fields (1958) and Industrialization on the Banks of the Yang-Tse were exemplars. Modernism in this Other, short-lived in its history as it was already suffering from, fell prey to
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political intrusion, this time not as Courtly Art but as Socialist Art.

The function of Socialist Art was to serve the revolutionary cause as espoused by the state, in reducing art into an ideological tool against "feudal" forces from within and "imperialist" power from without (I.Golomstock 1990a:122; A.Liu 1966:319-324): to paint a heroic PLA man, a corrupt GMD official, a leering American capitalist, a happy ethnic minority (in silencing the issue of the Hans' oppression of the marginalized). (L.Lim 1985:14,30) To this end, a cultural megamachine in this Other was set up, as in the creation of the All-Chinese Association of Workers in Literature and Art (I.Golomstock 1990a:124) --, which adopted an Asiatic despotic tactics of terror (the slogan of "let a hundred flowers bloom" as mostly rhetorical) to those deviant from the official guideline concerning what constituted an acceptable piece of artwork: namely, "it should strengthen the unity of Chinese nation of many peoples, aid socialist construction, reinforce the popular democratic dictatorship, reinforce democratic centralism, reinforce the leadership of the Communist Party, and help to bring about international socialist solidarity and the solidarity of the peace-loving peoples of the whole world." (I.Golomstock 1990a:125)

Art so ideologized followed the Soviet Socialist Realist tradition. This move was not surprising. For millennia in this Other, the only art which came into existence was neither oil painting nor sculpture as familiar in the Same qua the European world (whose artistic influences on this Other began, in its strict sense, only at the turn of this century) but the traditional method (known as go-hua) of drawing in ink on rolls of silk or paper. (I.Golomstock 1990a:126-7) Mao could not found anything desirable both in the traditionalism of go-hua, as a legacy of the "feudal scum", and in the European perspective, as a reminder of its imperialist oppression. In the absence of any other model, this Other turned to this northern "Big Brother" for a new artistic tradition: imitating the canvases of Aleksandr Gerasimov, the monuments of Evgenii Vuchetich, and the drawings of Boris Prorokov for nothing less than the glorification of whatever it be for ideological politics (as in the anonymous, collective painting, Mao
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With Peasants in Kwantung). Everything else was banned: nudes, still lifes, natural landscapes. (I. Golomstock 1990a:128) The main genre was of course the portrait. For what? For huge portraits of Mao installed in public markets and squares. Li Chang-ching’s famous painting, The East Grows Crimson, for instance, was an exact copy of Feodore Shurpin’s The Morning of Our Fatherland, except that "Mao held his cloak in his left hand and Stalin in his right."

(5) Contemporary Art. If the post-Mao years have the good sense of taking a drastic turnaround and thus giving some free air for artists to breathe (that is, in the absence of conspicuous propagandist intrusion), various avant-gardes emerge from nowhere in the art scene, to such an intensity of enthusiasm for Western art currents and with such a diversity of artistic styles that it is not a matter of passionate statement to talk of a new era for modernism in this Other not seen in all these turbulent decades of revolutionary politics. The forbidden, the shocking, the unorthodox, the sensual, the erotic, and in brief, whatever was not tolerated before is now permitted, within the constraint set up by the notoriously censorious cultural authority, needless to say: the nude, colorful woodcuts, romantic imagery, abstract-expressionist style, or else. (M. Sullivan 1984:262)

If this Other’s artists in our times are ostensibly amateurish by Western yardsticks, it is well understandably so, in light of their lack of opportunity nor knowledge to express their spontaneous, inner feelings in an once police state where one’s worst enemy was one’s inner thoughts and sentiments. From Picasso to Jackson Pollock, from Cubistic form to colorful expression, from happening shock effect to installation abstraction, from underground Rock music to experimental fiction —, the artistic heroism of modern life in this Other is none other than the very eternal recurrence of the theme of artistic autonomy as much from political dictation as from commercial intrusion. (L. Lim 1985:20.33)

The American artist Andrew Wyeth receives a triumphant welcome here in showing this Other how to paint without being restrained by pictorial conventions nor distorted by political ideology. Or consider Yu Hua’s experimental fiction,
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with its iconoclast darings of memory fragmentation, nonlinear time, anti-
humanist ethos (no hero, no construction of a coherent social agenda for social
utopia). (A. Jones 1995; Y. Hua 1994) Or think of such 5th-generation cinematic
pathbreaking works as Zhang Yimou's Red Sorghum (1987) and Raise the Red Lantern
(1991), Chen Kaige's Yellow Earth (1984) and Farewell to My Concubine (1993), and
Tian Zhuangzhuang's Horse Chief (1986) -- all strive for a decisive break with
the bondage of Socialist Art, as much a critique of the Cultural Revolution as
the oppressive past, as much yearning for fresh air as searching for artistic
autonomy: scenes of empty skies, rural folk superstition, homosexual love, river
basins, weatherroughened faces, ceremonial processions, male chauvinism, or

Or an avant-garde artist known as Wang Deshun in Beijing once wears only
a coat of bronze paint and a makeshift fig leaf and artfully poses next to the
life-sized lookalikes of Rodin sculptors. (K. Huus 1994a:86) When asked "Is the man
in the cage good or bad?", Wang has this to say, "I tell them that's not what's
important -- that the sketch is about the spirit in its struggle to be free." But
in a society not yet used to the shock effect of avant-gardiste individualism
(even when paintings of nude figures become more commonplace), freedom of this
type has yet to be accepted by the extant, ossified, Communist cultural
authority. But an artist like Wang exemplifies the untimely yearning for a free
spirit in artistic expression for the future of this Other.

And Cui Jian, a singer who mixes Western rock/rap music with Chinese themes
(A. Jones 1995), is no less desirous to break from Socialist Art. In "I Have
Nothing," the first verse of the Maoist "Internatiale" ("Don't say we have
nothing! We will be the masters of the world!") is turned upside down so as to
say farewell to a decadent, oppressive past, to the point that, as in his latest
song "Egg Under the Red Flag," a disillusion with the Communist legacy is even
more intensely expressed. In the song "Made in China" by another band known as

10. As broadcasted in Headline News on Channel 14 in the states (07/26/95).
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Softhard Wizards, the same iconoclast spirit is celebrated.

Yet, a formative phase as these diverse, illustrative cases might convey, this modernist turn in this Other for artistic autonomy already shows some decadent signs well familiar in the art history of the modern Same: (a) the kitschification of culture and (b) the solipsistic, semantic atrophy --, as hereafter explained.

(a) The increasing maturity of the avant-gardes in this Other is by no means an accidental historical occurrence. With the institutionalization of market reforms (Sections 1.5 & 2.5), the process of social differentiation facilitates the development of a social subsystem of art, within a more pluralistic social structure (yet to be completed for sure) rapidly populated by an emerging business class. The brave new world which treats being rich as glorious already drives many to better their livelihood, often with increasing expectations over time, by any means necessary. To fall behind the Joneses is simply too painful to endure. Artists are no gods, after all, and succumb too to the necessity and temptation of money.

There is what Josie Brennan (1994:16) terms "Cynical Realists" in this Other of our time who celebrate irreverent art to exploit the spiritual emptiness in this exciting new age when only money speaks the loudest. Yang Shaobin and Yue Minjun are two exemplars. In Yue's painting, Red Boat, the personages bring to mind B-grade cloning horror movies and are just laughing men in identical dress code and wearing nightmarish grins -- reflecting an age of consumerism with no higher ideal than a sense of superficiality, a feeling of falsity. Yang's works further perfect this trait of fake smiles in a new breed of characters qua idiots that confront the viewer with a senseless, infectious laughter that for sure leads to smiling in the viewer as well.

If art works of Cynical Realists sell well, this is due to their brilliant interpretation and absorption of absurdist elements into marketable commodities -- which thus reflects the triumph of a consumerism at the expense of both the declining Socialist ethics and, even more disturbingly, the new found
individualism itself. Cynical Realism in this sense takes a step beyond Pop Art. They believe in nothing and just live in the present provocatively, while enjoying it. The phenomenon of kitsch so understood seduces whatever it touches, ranging from hard rock and rap music (Chinese version) in Shenzhen through irreverent art to mini art-portraits of Mao the semi-God.

Clement Greenberg’s insightful observation (1961:22,24) on modern art history in the Same is worth repeating here: in the absence of traditional aristocratic elites who used to be the major source of financial support, many avant-gardes are forced to remain attached to bourgeois society precisely because they need its money, since "[n]o culture can develop without a social basis, without a source of stable income." (C. Greenberg 1961:24-5) The same fate awaits many artists in this Other of our time -- if not more desperately. "You paint what the market needs", so summarizes Chen Xiangyang an oil-painting artist on this commercial spirit of the day.

As another illustration, Deng Yuan an movie director in Guangzhou reveals his sorrow in an interview, in that, besides the concern to satisfy the state’s propagandistic needs, cinematic production often has to devote a lot of time in advertising and marketing to lure both external fundings from business enterprises (foreign especially) and public response -- often at the expense of high artistic qualities (meaningful story, nice music, rich background setting, good technique). A similar complaint is made by Tang Zhan Ke a movie producing chief. Andrew Jones’s point (1995) is therefore well-taken: many avant gardists in this Other are pushed into extinction in a commercial era where money is everything, in the absence of state subsidy and lack of a market demand, and the lucky few who have survived are at the mercy of outside investors (Taiwanese, Hongkongese, Japanese, and Western).

(b) Other artists, however, possess the rare virtue of courage and accept artistic pursuit as a vocation in itself at the cost of living dangerously and poorly, as if chanting the Weberian ethos along the Lutheran line, "In spite of all, here I stand. I cannot do otherwise." Unlike their predecessors in Early
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Modern Art, they have the dual good fortune to be less bound within the traditionalist orthodoxy (after all of these years of internalizing the Maoist iconoclastic repudiation of the past as "feudal scum" and of being exposed to Western art currents) and, as a late comer, to leapfrog in the learning curve of artistic development.

An underdeveloped society as this Other still is, these artists already benefit from the historical hindsights of Western avant-garde movements and leapfrog into postmodern themes without neccessarily passing through the different phases of Aestheticism, Historical Avant-gardism, or else, nor, for that matter, understanding what these alien concepts are to be. Their yearnings for (i) diversity, (ii) eclecticism, and (iii) instinctual celebration sound too postmodern in tone (Section 4.4) and are a case in point on the aftermath of the death of God in aesthetics (qua the break with the metanarrative of Harmony) in this Other as well. Yet, in closer examination, the postmodernist touch of theirs is most superficial, unsubstantive, misleading, faulty, and simply non-existent, as will become clear shortly. Let me explain what I mean.

(i) Huang Zhuan, an oil painter in Guangzhou, is not unreasonable to say: "I cannot think of any main art current to talk about. Everyone is doing different things." Installation Art, Body Art, Pop Art, Surrealism, Cubism, Abstract Expressionism, Cynical Realism, Happening Art, Neo-Conceptual Art (J. Hwang 1994:57), Socialist Art, go-hua, Magical Realism, Nude Art, or else -- the result of stylistic pluralism is no less deconstructive of the possibility of aesthetic universality in this Other, than is the case in the Same qua the inventor of postmodernism.

In a world like this, the very ethos of the Way of Heaven which once enjoyed its dominant presence now falls on deaf ears, and everything is up for grabs. A go-hua artist has no more privilege to tell Tan Tian a Surrealist to suppress sexual themes in his artworks, any more than a Socialist artist has the right to tell Mr. Leung a photography installation artist to delete the rebellious, abstract elements in his works. When asked why, Mr. Leung had this
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story to tell: "I used to think of Picasso who, when once asked by some people to draw something of a bird, he simply draw a line on it. The message was that he did not care about what others expected from him -- including any artistic norms." And Tan likewise replied, "All perspectives are equally good and right -- no one is superior than any others."

(ii) And their eclecticism is no less intense. Chu Tan, an oil-painting artist, regards himself as an avant-gardist who, influenced by postmodern art currents in the Same, rejects as well the very Kantian distinction between the aesthetic and the non-aesthetic. Why? "I think the boundary has been blurred, as a well known German art scholar put it, 'Everything can be an artwork'.", responded he, "So even this dirty newspaper on the table or the Maoist little red book can be art as well."

In what he calls "the Gang of Three", he and his two art colleagues believe in nothing and celebrate absurdity: "I want destruction. I accept contradiction, absurdity", his colleague Chen Xiangyang proclaims in a good spirit, "I reject everything existing -- and accept nothing as truth." It is not an unsympathetic point of view to repeat in this juncture something Baudelaire (H.Janson 1995:888) said on the vice peculiar to the eclectics: are they equally feeble humans, with neither ideal nor love, with neither star nor compass, with neither passion nor redemption?

(iii) Finally, and consequently, the only thing left is a liberation of the sensual, of the instinctual, of the erotic, and of the unfettered -- at the expense of content, of meaning, of sublimation. The triumphant spread of underground nude body art (modelling after Western nude happenings) in this Other is a good exemplar. This is most shocking, if one remembers this Other's forebears as among the most suppressive humans ever on Earth -- the most unromantic, unsensual humans there ever was. Huang Zhuan, for instance, showed me collections of artworks on nudity and on sex, as well as photographs on nude happenings -- something a traditionalist artist in this Other could not dare doing, even within the farthest stretch of his artistic imagination. Yet,
paintings on nudity become ever more commonplace. And Deng Jianjin devotes his work to something playful, sexual, violent -- nothing serious, nothing meaningful.

The underside of this all is no less alienating, in that a human condition which is spiritually sterile, Erich Fromm well reminds us, produces "a sick person and a sick society" (S.Gablik 1984:78), tied as they are to no moral nor religious values, concerned as they are with no quest for truth nor redemption, preoccupied as they are with neither content nor meaning --, within an axiological relativism which market reforms, in elevating money-making as virtuous and celebrating it as glorious, need for its success. The spirit best capturing the essence of xun-gen (root searching) in this Other of our times is none other than what Leo Lee (1995) quotes from someone he recently met in this Oriental continent: "I met a widespread crisis of faith."

Yet their leapfrogging into postmodernism has an enormous limit, just as it is misleading to thus speak (that is, it simply does not exist in closer examination), in a four-fold sense. Firstly, as a fundamental stumbling block, they lack the very social structure and stratum for its full success: that is, an institutionalized pluralistic society and a dominant bourgeoisie --, backward as this Other still is by virtue of its agriculture-based economy, within an authoritarian, police state always on the lookout for subversive elements. Art as a social subsystem in Peter Burger's usage (Section 4.1) has yet to exist in this Other -- and won't be forthcoming until decades later in the 21st century (if not in the 22nd).

Secondly, their postmodernism is superficial, without depth, without authenticity, since the themes are used either as a polemic critique of the extant cultural order or as a medium to explore the unknown and experiment something new, as Deng Jianjin puts it, without believing, understanding and valuing the origins and meanings of these alien concepts and values per se. (Y.He 1993:58-9) Few of them understand clearly what 'modernism' means, let alone 'postmodernism' --, though not surprisingly in the context of an extremely poor
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educational system with totally inadequate art facilities (museums, libraries, master pieces, personnels, language barriers, or else), a point Lin Yilin, another artist, repetitively stressed in an interview.

Thirdly, for a society as this oriental Other still struggling for transcending the Malthusian cycle of poverty and for national revival to mend the deeply humiliating wound inflicted by the hegemonic Same qua the European/Japanese challenge for the two centenaries before, the spiritual obsession in this Other has yet to liberate itself into something more autonomous, less reducible to the themes of national salvation and social transformation. Postmodernist striving is something not affordable for a backward, underdeveloped society as this Other, much humiliated as it has been by the Same and extremely enchained as its ethos is still within a nationalist, cultural parochicalism of what is known as xun-gen, that is, searching root for a new China -- as opposed to a truly individual-orientated, self-exploring mindset which has the misfortune to be lacking in this stage of parochical concerns for the collective in this Other.

For this reason and lastly, they lack the radically individualist, conceptual-vigorous touch so foreign to this Other's mind for millennia, obsessed as they had always been with the intuitive-mystical, suppressive, collectivist mode of thought. (X.Liu 1993:29) Their postmodern outlook is always so underdeveloped, conservative, immature -- by Western yardsticks. Many simply do not understand what they are imitating, as Lin Yilin admits, and consequently know not what to do with these alien concepts and techniques --, except often transforming them into a nostalgic return to an oriental mindset of some sort (Y.He 1993:56), into something still immature, old-fashioned, backward.

Or less diplomatically put, this Other has yet to experience a full-blown modernism of its own, much less a postmodernism in its strict sense to entertain --, if not for the simple reason that it is still in the early phase of a transition to a modern society. A postmodernism of this Other in this historical epoch is as much a misnomer as a most preposterious idea there ever be, as much
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misleading as nonexistent, and as much a shabby use of concept and a misunderstanding of its meaning. Or simply put, there is no such a thing as a postmodernism here. Yet they are on the right track in celebrating the critical spirit as embodied in the imitation of Western concepts and techniques, even if to be eventually exploited as a critique of the extant order and as a tool to explore the unknown for a new social imagery.

But the important point here is, That the nascent decaying signs of the kitschification of culture and the solipsistic, semantic atrophy aforedepicted are an ongoing process to be further completed, once this Other is fully advanced to what the Same already is. This is only to repeat, consequently, how much the Other has its future modelled after the imagery of the Same in hegemonic modernity -- local cultural distinctiveness notwithstanding. At the end of the tunnel some dim light can already be detected --, which constitutes its coming future, that is, its own full-blown modernism and, in due time, postmodernism as well (modelling on the experiences of the Same, of course).

In the end, this critical mindset is further exploited with a potentially more explosive socio-political consequence: the subversion of the existing political order as oppressive, as absurd -- something to be replaced with a democratic restructuring. Does anyone still remember Yang Shao Bin's Cynical Realist artworks in its poisoning of socialist ideals, with the oppressive police and political leaders often as the victims in his art personages? But how successful this striving will be is an exceedingly fascinating question whose answer can be shed some light on by first understanding the fate awaiting this political ideal in the Same (qua the Western experience and its inventor in the first place) -- whose issue I now turn to discuss in the chapter as follows.
Chapter 5. Moral Universalism & Localism for a Just Society, And Their Incredibility

The ideals of the herd should rule in the herd....Let hundred schools of thought flourish -- the noble code, the heroic existenz, the Dionysian spirit, the free spirits....

-- Friedrich Nietzsche (1969b:309)

What is the politics of postmodernism? Nihilistic skirmishing on the sidelines, self-imposed exile from collective discourse, the solipsism of tending one's own little narrative.

-- Stuart Sim (1992:98)

[Ne]ver before have so many people in so many countries -- even educated and supposedly sophisticated people, been so intellectually helpless, drowning, as it were, in a maelstrom of conflicting, confusing, and cacophonous ideas.

-- Allan Toffler (1980:274)

[We] have not yet found a 'reasonable' solution here [in the politics of multiculturalism], and...perhaps such a solution cannot be found."

-- Benjamin Schwarz (1995:67)

We have a prospect of insuperable moral difficulty, a nightmare of justice in which the assertion of any right involves a further wrong, in which fate is set against fate in a...necessary sequence of violence.

-- William Arrowsmith (G.Calabresi 1978:18)

Only a God can save us.

-- Martin Heidegger (S.White 1991:63)
Chapter 5. Moral Universalism and Localism for a Just Society, and Their Incredibility

This chapter treats the last element in the bitter struggle within free-spirited modernity, that is, that which concerns the Good and the Just --, and how this has been spreading to the Others through hegemonic modernity.

(1) After an introduction in Section 5.1 to the historical context within which the search for moral universalism for a just society became fashionable, I first argue in Section 5.2 that the four justifications for the liberal vision of a just society (in its favour for toleration and plurality of diverse notions of the good) is problematic for various reasons. And the four justifications take the form of (i) skepticism, (ii) experimentation, (iii) autonomy, and (iv) the modus vivendi view. My main concern, however, is with (iv), since it is gaining increasing currency in contemporary talk on liberalism, and my argument against modus vivendi liberalism is four-fold (though some of the arguments can be used against the other three justifications as well).

(a) Firstly, modus vivendi liberalism is morally disorientating. It tends to elevate rational conversation to the status of a new public virtue, which reason, however, cannot fulfill, since moral-political questions cannot be answered rationally unless diverse minds are stringently shaped by authority and custom which are now repudiated in modern (and now postmodern) times.

(b) Secondly, it marginalizes circumstantially disadvantaged others. Especially when contextualized within a capitalist modernity, it tends to benefit more the business-professional and upper social strata by nature of a minimalist, non-intervening state so much congenial to liberal political neutrality, at the expense of marginalized groups of women, minorities, and the lower class (whose members have never enjoyed adequate voice nor receive sufficient hearing in liberal society).

(c) Thirdly, it is hegemonic to its enemies. The liberals are exemplary creatures of the soft, of the weak --, and the victims (of the liberal superego, that is, its stringent imperative of critical, rational conversation) are none other than, as in the Nietzschean categories, the strong, the noble, the
Chapter 5. Moral Universalism and Localism for a Just Society, and Their Incredibility

aristocratic, the willful, the instinctual, who are now excluded from acquiring political power in the liberal public realm.

(4) And lastly, it is in-efficacious in achieving justice under modern (and now postmodern, especially) conditions. In post-industrial society, for instance, myriad power strata representing different interest groups push for their parochial demands with no (or little) sense of the common good, such that a politics of dissensus is on the rise. At best, the social outcome is often one in which laws and policies are made on the basis of those groups which are the most organized, most vocal, most interested, and most influential, at the expense of the majority of the less so.

(2) I then argue, in Section 5.3, that the political romanticists (both the communitarians and the anarchists), in their battle with this four-fold liberal malaise, have also failed to offer a moral universality for a just society. Indeed, their visions, when carried into practice, more often than not bring institutional terror, social dysfunction, or inadequate regard of individual freedom.

(3) Nor do I spare the postmodern alternative, that is, the postmodern moral localism for a just society (that is, its politics of difference). The postmodern politics is, I claim in Section 5.4, impotent for a major reason, in that what is justice for some groups becomes injustice for others in post-industrial society (of our postmodern time). The main reason is that in post-industrial society, the increasing process of professional specialization into more and more diverse roles and occupations creates a problem of social tension in which the members of this remarkably diverse community find it hard to achieve consensus on social issues (ranging from abortion and gun control through gay rights and women's rights to environmental protection and nuclear power). Maybe the brutal fact is that there is no justice in the end, and such fanciful terms as 'local justice' and 'particular justice' are postmodern oxymorons.

And this disquieting phenomenon has been spreading, I argue in Section 5.5,
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for a Just Society, and Their Incredibility 

to the Others as well through hegemonic modernity (as is increasingly so in the 
Sinitic Other), as they become modernized -- and, in due time, post-modernized, 
for that matter.

5.1 Moral Particularism in the Old Days

Honour --, in this name many pre-moderns could risk death to do what ought 
to be done. In a heroic society (be it in Homeric Greece, Saga Iceland or pagan 
Ireland), a form of moral particularism reigned supreme, in which being virtuous 
presupposed a duty to do what one’s social role (in relation to one’s station of 
life and tradition) required, within a human condition where fate and death were 
accepted as inevitable, embodied as this was in a narrative form of epic or saga 
(A.MacIntyre 1984:117,121), or a metanarrative explaining who humans were, where 
they came from, what their place was in history, and what their future was to be. 
(S.Seidman 1990:218; T.Gitlin 1989:349) Kinship, friendship, fidelity, the 
household, fate, and death -- virtues as interconnected as these structured a 
moral outlook in which my friend’s courage assured me of his aid when needed 
(even with the risk of death), just as my brother’s fidelity guaranteed me of his 
good will. (A.MacIntyre 1984:116) Neither cunning nor strength could help one 
escape fate and death, since it was defeat and not victory that lied at the end 
of each heroic life, however memorable as it might be. To understand this was 
itself a virtue. And whoever failed to live up to it was shamed by his peers, and 
whoever without honour like this was worth no more than a slave who, being 
outside the heroic community, could be killed at any minute. (A.MacIntyre 
1984:120)

Morality as a distinct belief system did not yet exist, since evaluative 
questions were treated as ones of social fact. The pre-modern moral compass can 
best be captured in this form: "I belong to this tribe, this clan, this nation. 
Hence what is good for me has to be the good for one who inhabits these roles.
As such, I inherit from the past of my family, my city, my tribe, my nation, a variety of debts, inheritances, rightful expectations and obligations. These constitute the given of my life, my moral starting point. (S. Holmes 1993:101)

Homer, for instance, did not ask why he ought to do this or that, but what. To question a moral foundation was to fail knowing who one was; such a person was bound to suffer the misery of no recognition and response from others. (A. MacIntyre 1984:116) The modern dream of moral universalism for a just society, as in the detachment of oneself from any particularistic standpoint (away from tradition and social role), is something incomprehensible to many pre-moderns. (A. MacIntyre 1984:119) This is not to suggest, of course, that these pre-moderns never questioned things (which is preposterous); the point, however, is that the comparison is historically relative.

The same fate awaited Christian morals in medieval times, in light of the specific context of the Good (supernatural) within the exegical hermeneutics of the Bible and the ecclesiastic tradition. Surely, this is not to suggest a similar conception of the virtues in both heroic and Christian societies; after all, a heroic virtue was a quality the achievement of which allowed one to fulfill what one's station of life required, whereas a Christian counterpart was a quality the exercise of which led to the achievement of the human telos whose goodness was supernatural in redeeming and completing human nature. (A. MacIntyre 1984:171-2) Yet in both instances, the very conception of the good life for humans determined how the concept of a virtue was to be understood -- and was institutional-hegemonic. (A. MacIntyre 1984:173)

After all, a good Christian was not to question the validity of biblical claims, other than their exegical interpretiveness --, any more than Achilles was to question whether to owe Patroclus his death should the latter be killed by a stranger, other than who really did the killing of his friend. A strict particularistic line separating a Christian from a pagan in Christendom was no less severe in condemnation than the equivalent distinction between a friend and
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a stranger in a heroic society (and for that matter between a Muslim and an infidel in the Islamic world). "When Odysseus encounters the Cyclopes the question as to whether they possess themis (the Homeric concept of themis is the concept of customary law shared by all civilized peoples) is to be answered by discovering how they treat strangers", MacIntrye (1984:117,173) thus told us a Homeric Greek tale, "In fact they eat them -- that is; for them strangers have no recognized human identity." By the same logic, "for Aristotle the barbarians stand condemned because they lack the polis and are therefore incapable of politics. For New Testament Christians there is no salvation outside the apostolic church." And for the Muslims, outside the House of Islam (DarEl) lies the damned infidels in the House of the Sword (Harb).(D.Landes 1994)

In this absence of a detached self-critique --, an institution of moral particularism as embodied in the Catholic Church easily degenerated into an obsession with absolutist rights and privileges which led Lord Acton, in an immemorial passage, that "power corrupts, and absolute power corrupts absolutely", with special reference to the corruptive nature of the Catholic Church in early and late Middle Ages. The Cistercian reform movement (first led by St.Bernard of Clairvaux) in the 12th century (well before the Protestant Reformation in the 16th century) was precisely to crack down on various forms of corruption within the church, once it got too wealthy and powerful.(R.Collins 1994)

The more so was this moral particularism during the ancien regime, where monarchical absolutism dictated preferential treatments and hierarchical distinctions in relation to social inequalities, whose spirit the very institution of honor best exemplified after all.(C.Taylor 1992a:26-7) There was neither universalist, egalitarian understanding, nor talk of "human dignity" ("citizen dignity"). The institution of honor was essentially hierachical, particularistic -- or, evaluatively put, hegemonic, at the expense of the lower orders.(C.Taylor 1992a:46) The fact that certain members of the privileged,
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Aristocratic stratum enjoyed the honorable titles of "Lord" and "Lady", instead of "Mr." and "Mrs.", only proved the point. Surely, there was some institutional delimitation of the extent of monarchical absolutism, insofar as the mutually countervailing forces of the established Church, local organized peasant communities, the King, the nobility, and city associations could not be ignored. (T. Ertman 1995)

Moral particularism, exemplary as it was in a traditional kin and communal ethos and were it in a heroic society, in Christendom, in the House of Islam, or in absolutist monarchy, celebrated what Ferdinand Toennies called the expressive (gemeinschaft) rationality, what Talcott Parsons understood as the particularistic action-schema, or what Emile Durkheim referred to as the mechanical solidarity of the old days -- in brief, that which was to be diffuse, affective-partial, particularistic, and ascriptive in thought and behavior (Section 3.1).

By the 18th century, a growing commercial class known as the capitalist stratum penetrated into European politics and shook in the process the foundation of moral particularism so understood (Section 1.3), at the expense of the declining nobility, the clergy, the peasantry, and the feudal world (the manor, the village, the craft guild). (J. Schumpeter 1947:135) The old restrictions which so much hindered business enterprise, and the old aristocratic privileges which so much burdened the bourgeois with many taxes, were now under attack, not without the blessing of the bourgeoisie, by a new yet revolutionary intellectual class with their liberal inclination, that is, the philosophes in the Enlightenment (to cite a few exemplary figures, Hume, Adam Smith, and Bentham in England; Kant, Herder, Lessing, and Goethe in Germany; Thomas Jefferson and Benjamin Franklin in America; Vico and Beccaria in Italy; and Voltaire, Rousseau, Montesquieu, Diderot, and Condorcet in France). (S. Schapiro 1934:24-6) Best

As a reminder, this term so used here refers to Enlightenment thinkers in Europe and America, not just to those in France -- as already so indicated back in Section 5.1.
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represent as they did the irreverent spirit towards the past, towards tradition, in that, as John Locke wrote in Treatise of Civil Government, "an argument from what has been to what should of right be has no great force", only thereby confirming the suspicion that wherever tradition ruled, narrowness and provincialism resulted and thus perpetuated the tyranny of hereditary rule, absolutist rights and privileges so much characterized by the aristocracy and the Catholic Church as their now condemned predecessors. (P. Patton 1986:128) As Condorcet denouncingly declared, "The old laws of nearly all the nations are only a collection of attacks on justice by force, and of violations of the rights of all in favor of the interests of a few." (S. Schapiro 1934:59)

The utopian search for moral universalism for a just society, detached as a moral outlook must be from tradition and status, heralded a new political beginning. Heroic endeavor, knightly honor, purity and chastity, poverty and pestilence, "the fine distinctions of theology," kin obligations --, noble virtues of this old type become as much distant as irrelevant to the philosophes. (S. Hughes 1961:144) Unlike the premoderns, idealize as they did the virtue of duty or obligation, or in Ernest Fortin's parlance (1994:21), "on what human beings owe to other human beings or to society at large" (as was true with the Bible in Christendom which promulgated not a Bill of Rights but the Ten Commandments, or with the Code of Honor in heroic societies which called for a fulfillment of what one's social role requires in relation to one's life station), the moderns (as among the philosophes) often championed instead the claim of rights which were to be absolute, inalienable, not contingent on the fulfillment of prior duties nor obligations (of the pre-moderns). For the moderns, the claim of rights thus took priority over the claims of duties or obligations.

"Inalienable rights", "Rights of Man and of the Citizen", "separation of church and state", "the will of the people" (S. Schapiro 1934:46; E. B. 1994a:281) --, or in short, a democratic conception of political authority quickly gained currency in the public realm, as in the American Revolution of 1776 and the
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French Revolution of 1789. A story was sometimes told about the French Revolution of 1789, in terms of a conversation between two individuals belonging to the Third Estate. One asked the other, "What is the Third Estate?" The answer was, "Nothing" -- which then led the former to further ask, "So what should it be?" Now the reply was, "Everything."(B.Mazlish 1995)

Even such tyrants as Napoleon III in France and Adolf Hitler in Germany later claimed their dictatorial reign on the legitimation of democratic and constitutional justification, however propagandistic though these claims were. The appeal of the Enlightenment ideas was no accidental matter of fact, since "the philosophes were propagandists, first and foremost. Their importance was due 'not so much for the answers which they gave as for the questions which they asked; their real originality lay not in their thought, but in their spirit. They were the first great popularizers." (S.Shapiro 1934:39)

But how can this moral universalism for a just society be understood? What lied behind the call for a detached self-critique of moral particularism of the old was a critical spirit qua the product of modern science, of the Enlightenment (C.Guignon 1990:361), shared as it was by the philosophes as the only medium to true knowledge there was --, which promised to discover axiomatic principles resistant to doubt and thus to universally distinguish right from wrong, good from bad, and true from false. (C.Lasch 1991:124) The task here, with the use of reason and sense experience as synthesized by the philosophes (Section 1.2), was to come up with a moral foundation for a just society, that is, with a universal basis for moral principles which is not institutional-hegemonic, not at the expense of deviant conceptions of the good life, as was familiar enough in the practice of the Catholic Church and absolutist monarchy. As Tocqueville nicely put it, "they all agreed...to substitute simple and elementary rules, deduced from reason and natural law, for the complicated traditional customs which governed the society of their time." (S.Schapiro 1934:36)

And this natural law, discoverable as it is from human reason (but was
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often modeled on the myth of the noble savage, on the unquestioned narrative of the "primitive Man" in "the state of nature"), derives from the very nature of what humans are, and thus, so they thought, is eternal, inviolable, universal, to the effect that the chief purpose of social institutions is to maintain and protect the principles of rights so understood. (S.Schapiro 1934:46-7,54) In B.Croce's words, "All feel and say that they have emerged, not only from darkness, but from the twilight before dawn, that the sun of reason is high in the horizon, illuminating the intellect and irradiating it with most vivid light." (S.Schapiro 1934:48) The Age of Reason was thus held with great expectations.

Naive their euphorious tone appears today, yet the very prophecy of the emancipatory power of reason the philosophes did not doubt. But innocent they were not, as Schapiro (1934:60-1) best clarified in a concise passage,

None of the philosophes were republicans....For the masses, la canaille, the philosophes had the most withering scorn and the utmost contempt. According to Voltaire they were cattle, and all that they required were a joke, a goad, and fodder. The communistic Mably was no less severe in his hatred of democracy than was the bourgeois Voltaire....D'Holbach hated the masses as "an imbecile populace who, having no intelligence and no common sense, is always ready to be the instrument and the accomplice of turbulent demagogues who wish to trouble society." At best, even the most advanced of the philosophes, like Diderot and Condorcet, favored a parliamentary system controlled by property owners, such as existed in England before the Reform Bill of 1832. Montesquieu did, indeed, believe that the English government, in his day, was the best of all possible governments, but it is an error to assume that he wanted to see it established in France.

Even Thomas Jefferson, whose pluralist vision for religious and political tolerance Americans still so much aspire, yet "was convinced that blacks were alien, inferior and dangerous" (B.Schwarz 1995:65), and the proper solution is
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nothing other than racial cleansing which "required that they be... expelled from the country," beyond "the reach of mixture."

Nor did the philosophes, in their blind obsession with abolishing the ancien regime, fail to reject anything of the prior as "dogmatic," "superstitious," or "prejudiced" if not justified by reason, to the effect that their sympathies, most humane as they at times were, and their imagination, most sparkling as it often was, yet were dulled by a blind faith on reason which lacked "a psychological insight into human motives and conduct" (as in the treatment of religious devotion as nothing but dogma and ritual) and which ignored the historicist nature of their own thoughts as well. (S. Schapiro 1934:62-4) As Morley keenly observed, "Consequently they laid down the truths which they discovered as absolute and fixed, when they were no more than conditional and relative" -- and their natural laws which, as Bertrand Russell suggested, "have turned out to be in some cases human conventions, in others mere statistical averages." (R. Seidenberg 1951:71)

As Salwyn Schapiro concurred, "The philosophes contracted the vice of false clarity.... Oversimplification, by means of general ideas, became almost a disease.... Paradoxically, the method of reasoning, pursued by the philosophes, was the same as that of the theologians whom they so bitterly reviled; the theologians, too, came to logical conclusions from assumed premises.... For God, the philosophes substituted nature; for divine will, natural law; for revelation, enlightenment; and for preaching, propaganda. They did not seem to be aware of the influence of the social, political, and economic forces in society on opinion, because their eyes were glued to the thin veneer of reason that covered the vasty deep of human irrationality."

This critique with the benefit of historical hindsight aside --, both liberalism and political romanticism promised to provide just this sort of moral universalism for a new yet just society. But are their respective arguments convincing? The answer, as should be expected by now, is no, I claim. Consider
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first the liberal problematic in Section 5.2, and then that of political romanticism in Section 5.3

5.2 Liberal Moral Universalism, & Its Incredibility

At the heart of liberal theory stands what Charles Larmore (1987:xii-xiii) calls pluralism and toleration. Pluralism is the idea that there are many different, equally valuable conceptions of the good life which cannot be reduced to a hierarchical ranking, whereas toleration refers to a realistic view that reasonable persons can disagree about what constitutes the good life. This thus challenges, thanks to Jean Bodin and John Locke, the axiom that reason tends naturally towards unanimity of opinion (which partially led to centuries of religious civil war). And the state should therefore remain neutral towards competing conceptions of the good life. Any endorsement of a particular conception of the good life is deemed necessarily hegemonic, oppressive --, at the expense of the deviant ones.

The most fundamental question, for sure, is what justifications there are for the liberals to hold this position, fairly persuasive though it seems. Traditionally, four major arguments (C.Larmore 1987:50-1) are offered, in appeal to (1)skepticism, (2)experimentation, (3)autonomy, and (4)the modus vivendi view --, with the last two (the fourth especially) as my focal analysis. Let me quickly dispose the first two.

(1)Skeptical Liberalism.

French liberal thinkers like Voltaire (and for that matter, Diderot and Montesquieu) appealed to the virtue of skepticism, in that when ideals clash, there is then no reason to prefer one over the others, and therefore no government should seek to institutionalize any as the preferred one. (C.Larmore 1987:51;P.Mehta 1995) The exemplary dispute involved here concerns the issue of religious toleration. Voltaire argued for the political importance of religious
toleration in that it preserves individual freedom, that is, the freedom to seek one’s own happiness, to express one’s own opinion and will (J. Witte 1987:494), as was usual in his sarcastic style, "If there had been in England only one religion, its despotism would have been fearful. If there had been two religions they would have cut each other’s throat. But as there are thirty they live peacefully and happily." (S. Schapiro 1934:51)

But this begs the question of the critics, since those who do not accept skepticism as a proper response to deep disagreement will find liberal justification so understood unacceptable. (C. Larmore 1987:52) The fact that one’s belief is rejected on the basis of others’ skepticism does not constitute a sufficient reason to suspend it, insofar as it still makes sense to oneself, any more that a government should not endorse one’s conception of the good life simply because others are somehow skeptical to its virtue. And a skeptical state so constructed is bound to be thereby entrapped into inaction, something peculiarly distinctive of the skeptics, than anything else. (Besides, Voltaire’s consequentialist concern with individual freedom, for instance, further undermines his neutral stand.)

(2) Experimental Liberalism.

The experimental justification, on the other hand, of liberal theory, as in the works of John Stuart Mill (with his utilitarian bent), asks instead the participation in a number of different lifestyles, compare them and then choose the one that gives one a sense of most fulfillment. (C. Larmore 1987:50-1)

Mill in On Liberty (1975:18), in a spirit comparable to Locke’s view that to defend one’s opinion by suppressing someone else’s already presupposes one’s infallibility, eloquently argued that when all minus one hold an opinion to the contrary of one’s, the former has no right to silent the latter, any more than it is right to do the reverse. In the case of religious beliefs, Locke showed how little certainty could there be, since religion rests primarily upon faith, not on knowledge. (J. Higgens-Biddle 1987:5-6) By "faith", Locke meant an assent to
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revelation, which is essentially a judgement of probability, however great an assurance or confidence it carries. In so doing, he forcefully attacked the theory of "innate principles", charging that its proponents (Hobbesians, Enthusiasts, and Roman Catholics) use it to impose their opinions on others as infallible, and consequently suppress the dissenters by demanding from them unquestioning faith in the former's judgements.

Consequently, Locke's critical epistemology supports his claim, with regard to religious toleration, that the state has no basis for imposing religion on its subjects, and that each individual could therefore determine what is essential to each own salvation and moral life (that is, to treat it very much as a matter of personal psychology). (J. Higgins-Biddle 1987:5-6) As soon as the state transcended this limit (e.g., setting up an official church, passing laws that prefer one religion over another, forcing a person to attend or to stay away from church, punishing anyone for entertaining or professing religious beliefs, or participating in the affairs of any religious organization) --, it would degenerate into an oppressive situation where liberty of some groups is championed at the expense of others' (in which case the life, health, and safety of individuals are put in jeopardy). (L. Pfeffer 1987:476) The U.S. Supreme Court's decision in Everson Vs. Board of Education (1947) has this constitutional guarantee in mind. (L. Pfeffer 1987:483)

A controversial issue arises as to what implications of the view supporting religious toleration has for the toleration of those views that do not themselves endorse the toleration of religious diversity. Locke, in light of his warning of the danger of pretending one's opinion as infallible in religious matter, found it dangerous therefore to suppress those who do not themselves endorse religious toleration. Mill, however, favored a stricter standard of interpreting whether or not a dissenting belief and act on a given occasion are "dangerous" to society qua the vast majority (A. Hacker 1961:589) before the question of intervention for suppression is deemed necessary. Mill thus regarded dissent as an "inconvenience"
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of social life that democratic citizens need learn to live with, since society can afford this inconvenience more than an individual can endure suppression: "the inconvenience is one which society can afford to bear, for the sake of the greater good of human freedom." (A. Hacker 1961:594)

But this experimental approach is no less problematic for the same reason: that is, liberal argument so delineated only convinces those who already accept the importance of the experimental spirit or believe something of a minimal state that others do not, yet not without good reason --, and its consequentialist interest in an experimental life which gives a sense of most fulfillment (as in the Millian concern with truth and mental flourishing) already undermines its own neutral stand towards any conception of the good life. (A. Sen 1982:5-13) The fact that an experimental spirit, Larmore claims, may be alien or destructive to religious orthodoxies is no good reason to suspend it or to have it not institutionalized simply because the latter's adherents hold contrary viewpoints in light of different experimental histories, that is, their being brought up from infancy in a different way or their acquiring habits and expectations over time differently (C. Larmore 1987:52), any more than the reverse is right.

A similar critique was made by Robert Wolff (1968:14), when he wrote, "as soon as I see even a glimmer of a case for any religion, I ought on [Mill's] utilitarian grounds to commit myself to it unquestioningly and become completely dogmatic in my rejection of competing faiths. On Mill's own principles, then, men who have no religious beliefs should favour religious toleration, while men who have any faith at all, however tentative, should be dogmatic, illiberal, and exclusionary. In short, religious liberty is a principle for agnostics, not for true believers. So far is Mill from having a convincing argument against religious bigotry, that his own principles actually encourage it in all those who have religious beliefs!"

(3) Autonomy Liberalism.

Kant, however, made use of the notion of autonomy as the highest ideal of
human flourishing in his defense of liberalism. The exemplary spirit of being a moral agent is to keep a certain distance from any substantial ideal of the good, as much for personal life as for the state --, such that no human self-understanding is so constituted by any vision of the good life that any liberation from it (to even imagine alternative lifeforms) is no longer possible in the moral agent. (C. Larmore 1987:77-81) In "What Is Enlightenment?", the Kantian axiom is quite clear: never take for granted any opinion as laid down by tradition or any trusting authority, in pain of being inflicted with a "self-imposed immaturity." The reason is that there exists no a priori conception of human happiness and perfection, which, however, is always a product contingent on human experience. And since experience can yield as many conceptions of the good life as there are different life histories, any moral law so grounded is empirically contingent --, that is, not universalistic as required by the categorical status of the moral law. Consequently, the moral law must be what is right, independently of any substantive conception of the good life, and thus make the right prior to the good. And this requirement holds true, be the entity in question a person or the state.

Yet what good reasons are there to carry out what the moral law requires one to do? Or differently put, is reason alone motivational-efficacious in moral practice? Unlike Kant, Aristotle never thought of morality independently of the nature of one's life experience (personal and social circumstances, previous training and socialization, character formation and habits). But Kant had the misfortune to presume a moral freedom (as in a noumenal self) which transcends empirical antecedents and circumstances, only in order to make his argument coherent: "Though freedom is certainly the ratio essendi of the moral law, the latter is the ratio cognoscendi of freedom." And it is precisely this problematic on motivational basis which constitutes, Larmore (1987:84) argues, the main trouble with Kant's defense of liberalism, since what lies behind the presupposition of an empirically unconditioned motivational basis in a noumenal
self is a very strong version of the principle of "ought implies can" in moral theory which does away with the requirement of moral training and socialization, depend as it does exclusively on the understanding of moral rightness. It is no wonder that Kant confronted the most messy difficulty of how to explain that humans can be at one and the same time immersed in a causally determined phenomenal world and yet free in a noumenal one, as they must in their moral lives. (G. Martin 1989:204)

The fact that some individuals are more quickly trained than others and more easily see moral distinctions tells us something of the unfortunate fact that moral worth depends also on moral luck -- something Kant denied, due to his relative neglect of moral psychology. (C. Larmore 1987:87) The powers of moral reasoning, Philippa Foot (1978:162) argued in a classic passage against Kantian's ethics, are much weaker than they are more often assumed than explained, since this talk of "binding force," even if it makes sense, simply reflects the feelings (resulting from the stringency of moral teachings which has imposed on the moral agent since childhood), not a justified true belief, however. This should not be surprising for someone (Kant) who was brought up under the deep influence of duty-obsessed, pietistic Protestantism, and thus his philosophical reflections owed much to a hidden religious source. (D. Crosby 1988:267-8)

This problematic, nevertheless, does not prevent someone like John Rawls in our times, especially in his work A Theory of Justice, from reviving the Kantian ideal of autonomy in his theory of justice and assigns to the state an abstract role of distributing political and economic benefits through principles (concerning, say, the greatest benefit of the least advantaged) which, as made possible behind a veil of ignorance, do not appeal to any conception of the good life. (C. Larmore 1987:118-123; J. Rawls 1971) In this sense, Rawls surely belongs to the liberal tradition, and his may be said as a contemporary liberalism with a Kantian face.

Yet the problem with Rawls, Michael Sandel in Liberalism and the Limits of
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Justice argues, lies precisely in his attempt to offer a justification of this primacy of the right prior to the good by appealing to an ideal of the self which, unfettered from social and personal circumstances as it is, is empty of all content, and thus Rawls in the end suffers from the same problematic of the metaphysics of transcendental idealism that Kant did. The Rawlsian drastic informational constraint in the original position behind a veil of ignorance (of status and ascription, or of any preferred conception of the good life) only renders a self, Sandel charges, with neither "character" nor "moral depth," which however are "inseparable from understanding ourselves as the particular persons we are." And F.H. Bradley spoke with the same spirit: that Rawls tried to abstract from a human all those features which are part of his social context and thus cannot be isolated. (S. Lukes 1977:189) The Rawlsian self only exists in a moral fantasia.

But Rawls in his recent work Political Liberalism (1993:intro.) shifted from this metaphysical conception of the self to a political one, in which insofar as individual diversity and difference in advanced societies cannot agree on what the conception of the good is to be and as they still want to live together, a reasonable thing to do is to accept each other as free and equal persons and to be sensitive to reciprocity, to the effect that no one is allowed to impose his conception of the good on anyone else by force in the public sphere. But how can this moral imperative in a public discourse (a kind of public reason) which requires the dual principle of free, equal persons and reciprocity be grounded?

If, on the one hand, this moral stipulation is definitional of practical reason, then it is true merely by virtue of its being nothing but a tautology. On the other hand, if it is grounded on a widespread acceptance among those living in a liberal democracy, then, as his critics are quick to point out (P. Mehta 1995), this is no more than just saying that liberalism is legitimate because it is accepted in a liberal democracy. Joseph Raz’s point (1990:127) is
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well taken: "Moral and religious disagreements are seen as endemic to a democratic society, and the validity of the Rawlsian conception of justice is limited to such a society." Perhaps the remark as made by Steven Lukes (1977:189-90) decades before is worth repeating here,

the motivation, beliefs, and indeed the very rationality of Rawls’s "individuals" are recognizably those of some modern, Western, liberal, individualistic men. They are committed to different conceptions of the good, they put forward competing claims and are not prepared to abandon their interests, they tend to love, cherish and support whatever affirms their own good, they demand equality of opportunity, but regard unequal rewards as necessary incentives, and their rationality consists in acquiring the means to further their ends, and, importantly, in a safety-first policy of planning for the worst possible income. They allegedly understand political affairs and the principles of economic theory -- but are these not merely culturally specific beliefs?

Or if it is to be understood that such a liberal conception of free, equal persons and reciprocity is deeply rooted in Western culture, then it does not explain its inhumane legacy of anti-Semitism (as exemplified in the Holocaust), racism, colonialism, imperialism, concentration camps (as for Japanese Americans), Amerindian reservation camps, the oppression of women, black slavery, religious intolerance (as in the holy crusade against the pagans, and centuries of religious civil wars in Europe), or else. To say, as Rorty (1990:283) did in a pragmatic tone that liberalism needs no philosophical justification does not yet confront this Western legacy.

A problematic in Rawls’s position, therefore, consists of a false dilemma of either accepting others as free and equal as a moral imperative in a liberal political discourse or risking its degeneration into the resort of force (and thus an outbreak of civil war). But other options are left unexplored, to the effect that a political discourse need not be coercive and yet can do without accepting others as free and equal in his sense, if one is allowed to impose one’s conception of the good on others neither by force nor by conviction but by
a mixture of persuasion and give-and-take negotiation, with which Rawls is uncomfortable, since it would leave open to the possibility of a communitarian politics with a conception of the good embodying the community. As Raz (1990:128) critically puts it, the Rawlsian’s exclusion of a conception of the good is problematic, in a three-fold sense, in that, firstly, various conceptions of the good can share common elements, that, secondly, these conceptions can be evaluated in accordance to certain modes of reasoning as widely agreed upon, and that, lastly, a more realistic social role of a theory of justice is to be fulfilled in the form of a second best (in the absence of an ideal constitution), with the allowance for compromise, for persuasion, for give-and-take manoeuvre within a social-institutional structure (but not to be grounded on the basis of practical reason).

Or as Cornell West (HDS 1995) amusingly yet sarcastically puts it, one can be so easily seduced into the Rawlsian liberal universe that one is indulged enough to stay there for so long as to let the real world pass by without even noticing it. This is all the more tempting, in light of Rawls’s insistence (HDS 1995) that his conception of public discourse still stands, even if only 1% of humans, presumably those with like minds of his, are inclined towards it. Rawls, as it is not totally unreasonable to suggest, is a die-hard romantic, dreamy liberal.

(4) Procedural Liberalism.

The three ways as aforediscussed make up an important part of Bruce Ackerman’s defense of political neutrality. (B.Ackerman 1980) What is left then is a modus vivendi, or procedural (C.Guignon 1990:350-1), defense of liberalism. Consider the works of (a) Charles Larmore and (b) Jurgen Habermas --, in that order.

(a) Charles Larmore’s solution (1987:59-68) is a case in point, in that a modus vivendi conception of political neutrality appeals to a norm of rational conversation in which, wherever deep disagreement occurs, the conversation can
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still be kept going through the appeal to a sense of community and a desire for civil peace (which, substantive commitments as they are, go beyond the commitment to reason and yet are harmless towards any ideal of the good life -- , but Ackerman disagrees because of its nonneutral stand). (W. Galston 1992:107-8) When deep disagreement persists, those wishing to continue the conversation should withdraw to neutral ground in order either to resolve the dispute or to bypass it (if that cannot be done rationally) -- something Ackerman likewise asks us to do. (B. Ackerman 1980; W. Galston 1992:103) And if disagreement further persists, a sense of equal respect for persons will then be needed, just as Ronald Dworkin before him (Larmore) asks us to do. (W. Galston 1992:109)

To respect someone as a person is to recognize him as being capable of coherently working out his own view of the world. This is so, whether or not he exercises this capacity on his own, or through the uncritical acceptance of traditions and forms of life. But even when this ideal of equal respect for persons is compatible with a very great variety of ideals of the good life, there will still be people like the Nazis and racists who must reject the obligation of equal respect for persons in order to remain consistent. But since such people seem little interested in rational argument, Larmore continues, liberals need not have an argument to convince them but only safeguards for preventing them from acquiring political power.

But the problematic here is the substantive commitment beyond the neutral commitment to reason in Larmore’s conception of equal respect for persons, such that a conception of the good life qua equal respect for persons is already secretly slipped in through the back door, and that his conception of equal respect seems arbitrary and implausible, since, William Galston (1992:109) rebutes, "we show others respect when we offer them, as explanation, what we take to be our true and best reasons for acting as we do", neither on the basis of their beliefs nor merely recognizing them as being capable of coherent reasoning when in deep disagreement.
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This put aside --, a more serious problematic is Larmore’s neglect of the issues concerning power relations and ideological infiltration. Alternatively put, there is an ahistorical, hyper-rationalistic tendency in liberal procedural defense, in its dual presumption of the powers of reason (P.Foot 1978) to adjudicate disagreements as found in human conditions which, unfortunately under many circumstances, reason does not have --, and of its marginalizing other voices, other lifeforms, other groups. This is so with a good reason in a four-fold sense (as will be further illuminated in Sections 5.3 & 5.4).

(i) Morally Disorientating. Firstly, procedural liberalism is morally disorientating in its peculiar way --, in light of its elevation of rational conversation to the status of a new public virtue, which reason, however, cannot fulfill, since moral-political questions cannot be answered rationally unless diverse minds are stringently shaped by authority and custom which are now repudiated in modern times. (S.Holmes 1993:260)

The Foucaultian idea of the spread of normalization in modernity is useful here: that it penetrates deeply into how modern beings think of themselves as subjects. (S.White 1991:18-9) This normalization is not power in the repressive, prohibitive sense as conventionally understood, but in the constraining sense of how to normally carry out activities as accorded with some sort of scientific-rational status (some norm of critical, rational conversation), to the extent that other voices, other realities, or other perspectives are violently marginalized, forcibly homogenized. Even in a liberal society, this consciousness constitutes a new tyranny in which each citizen holds certain attitudes by which he believes he has come rationally and personally, not knowing how much the public mind, in Alexis de Tocqueville’s parlance, has penetrated its influence into the public one: “the body is left free, and the soul is enslaved.” (A.Hacker 1961:482)

Liberalism thus serves as an explanatory rhetoric for the dominance of formal rationality in modern times, since its liberal tolerance, by the appeal
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of critical, rational conversation (or however called), stands for what Carl Schmitt and Christopher Lasch understand as the political embodiment of modern science's moral disorientation, since once the substantive rationality of the old is superceded by its modern formal (instrumental) counterpart which champions critical, scientific, calculative modes of thought and marginalizing all alternative modes into the private sphere (as exemplified by religious, ontological concerns which, not resolvable in a rational conversation of the formal type as they are, are therefore no longer accepted as legitimate for discussion in the public realm). (S. Holmes 1993:123-5) This is not to say, of course, that liberalism invents formal rationality; nothing could be farther from the truth. The point is, it succumbs too to the dominant power of the social-rationalized ethos of modernity.

Liberalism thus legitimizes a public life which becomes too skeptical, too rational, or too soft, too comfortable --, intimately tied up with bureaucratic organization of power, the Foucaultian normalization of everyday life, and the dominion over nature. Liberal tolerance and its rational conversation are ideological of the formal (instrumental) rational dominance in modern times, and if this new ideology is "amoral," as Lasch thus charges, it is by virtue of its "inane, debased ambition" (for everyday life normalization and dominion over nature) and its consequent contribution to "moral chaos," "spiritual torpor," "spiritual disrepair," or "the loss of moral purpose" in the public sphere, by virtue of liberal toleration.

Liberal toleration means moral disorientation, in its elevation of critical-rational conversation as the new virtue in the public realm (away from the substantive-rational discourse of the old, which is now taken as too dogmatic, too subjective, too unscientific, too superstitious). In Howard Gardner's parlance (1993:8-9, 35), modern culture puts linguistic and mathematical-logical intelligences on a pedestal, while neglecting, not without great social costs, such other intelligences as the interpersonal and
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intrapersonal ones which are precisely the very abilities that desperately need institutional sanction for recognition and development. Or figuratively put, liberalism triumphs, now that God (qua substantive rationality of the old) is dead, replaced as it is by a new God (qua critical, formal rationality) which degenerates into a breakdown of spiritual discipline and rule as so often seen in the older days of unquestioned authority and custom. The result is a liberal society which has little common good, little sense of community, in a platform, as MacIntyre rightly complains, "in which individuals seek and secure what is useful or agreeable to them." (S.Holmes 1993:91-4)

This should not be surprising, in light of the liberal elevation of critical, rational conversation to the status of a new public virtue to the effect that reason is made to answer moral-political questions that cannot be answered consensually unless diverse minds are stringently shaped by authority and custom which however have lost their sacredness in modern times, now that the latter's main pillar qua substantive rationality is gone; secular humanism, as Alexandar Solzhenitsyn once said, is the root of the liberal disease. (S.Holmes 1993:260) Or as Bertrand Russell long ago argued, "what science cannot discover, mankind cannot know," but since it is not the vocation of science to answer moral-political questions (as concurred by Weber) which, however, cannot be rationally resolved either, they are radically undecidable --, which constitutes Russell's moral nihilism. (D.Crosby 1988:12-4)

Nevertheless, Richard Rorty (1990:290,294) suggests that "communal and public disenchantment is the price we pay for individual and private spiritual liberation, the kind of liberation that Emerson thought characteristically American." Yet at what price? Is the price too high indeed? Even the promise of "individual and private spiritual liberation" so understood is revoked as an empty check, as T.J.Jackson Lears (1981:4-5) keenly observes, "Haltingly, half-consciously, Europeans and Americans alike began to recognize that the triumph of modern culture had not produced greater autonomy (which was the official
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claim) but rather had promoted a spreading sense of moral impotence and spiritual sterility." And thus emerge communitarian visions, posed as they are as a solution, allegedly of course, to this liberal disease (as will be discussed in Section 5.3).

(ii) Marginalizing. Neither does procedural liberalism, secondly, fail to marginalize circumstantially disadvantaged others. This is not to deny, however, the historical circumstances, in conjunction with the emergence of capitalist modernity, which gave rise to the idea of liberal toleration, and thus constitutes its redemptive value: namely, religious civil wars, ecclesiastic persecution and censorship, arbitrary taxation and confiscations, succession wars, cruel punishments, or else. (S. Holmes 1993:153) Yet in the process, liberal toleration falls into the problematic of being ideological of the formal (instrumental) rational dominance which, when contextualized within a capitalist modernity, benefits more the business-professional and upper social strata by nature of a minimalist, non-intervening state so much congenial to liberal political neutrality, consequent on the loss of any possibility of reaching rational consensus on moral-political issues in formal (instrumental) rationality, at the expense of marginalized groups like women, minorities, and the lower class (whose members never enjoy adequate voice nor receive sufficient hearing in a liberal society).

Pitirim Sorokin's critical comment (1956:196-7) on "the discrepancy between the lofty ideal" of "liberty", "equality," and "the rights of man", on the one hand, and "its actual perversion," on the other hand, is worth citing: "A rich and privileged party could hire the best lawyers, whereas a poor could not. Consequently the court's decision was repeatedly in favour of the rich party, in spite of the superior merits of the claims of the poor party." The recent trial of O.J. Simpson in America is exemplary, which thus leads Elizabeth Gleick (1995:40-1) to make a sensible point: that it reminds us strongly enough that money makes all the difference -- both in the trial and in the verdict (besides
the race factor as an important issue, to be sure), to the effect that justice for the rich differs from justice for the poor. Rich justice gives the big guy the best of everything, and poor justice treats the little one with the worst of everything -- often regardless of guilt or innocence. Similar findings are shown in the works of Jill Smolowe (1995:44-5) and Adam Cohen (1995:43). Or in a similar critical tone, Benjamin Schwarz (1995:57-67) reminds us of how much liberal tolerance and pluralism in American history, in spite of its seductive rhetoric, has actually been hegemonic to alternative groups different from the dominant Anglo-Saxons --, or in Martha Minow's parlance, liberalism has a different face, its "exclusionary history." (HDS 1995)

To the question, Whose interests does liberalism best serve?, the answer can now be thus put. On the one hand, the formal rational ethos in the name of critical, rational conversation (which pushes aside all alternative discourses, as exemplified by religious, ontological concerns, into the marginalized private realm), and on the other hand, the dominant business-professional and upper social strata in a state which, by virtue of liberal neutrality, adopts a minimalist, laissez-faire stand towards the circumstantial disadvantages of marginalized groups as exemplified by the plight of minorities, women, and the lower class who have for so long never received adequate hearing nor enjoy adequate voice in a liberal society. C.Wright Mills (1968:538) was sensible enough in treating liberalism as an "ideology" for "the political rhetoric of the middle class." And the postmodern politics of difference and some communitarian politics (as of Charles Taylor's politics of recognition) are thus a critical response to this liberal malaise. (Sections 5.4 & 5.3, respectively.)

(iii) Hegemonic. Nor is procedural liberalism, thirdly, any less hegemonic towards its enemies. The neglected lifeforms of the otherness in liberalism is precisely something Foucault determined to elucidate, in what William Connolly calls "an ontology of discord" (S.White 1991:19) --, showing how much violence has already been introduced to the cognitive machinery of the Same (political,
Psychological, philosophical), with its metanarrational unity and epistemic scheme. The liberal practical reason is just one of them. Freud had a point, in that our false human pride is so ready to disavow what underlies the deeper stratum of the human psyche (its aggressive and death instincts), to the effect that their renunciation in face of the overpowering Ideal Ego/Superego produces the subsequent unhappiness of humans in the name of civilization. (S. Freud 1966b:111; P. Ricoeur 1970:305) And Nietzsche thus concurred: "Men need play and danger. Civilization gives them work and safety." (L. McCaffery 1992:44) Or Brian Gysin once said that humans are a bad animal, in that wherever they go, they destroy everything, including the environment. (L. McCaffery 1992:50)

Perhaps Joseph de Maistre made the most direct point: that liberalism's greatest weakness is its inability to face the cruel fact that the individual is not as much a rational actor as false human pride makes us so believe, and thus its failure to confront the brutality and violence of the other side of human existence: that "there is nothing but violence in the universe," as every page of history book is red with blood (S. Holmes 1993:27-8), or in what Fredric Jameson's words (1991:5), that "the underside of culture, throughout class history, is blood, torture, death, and terror." Provocative Maistre's point (and Jameson's, for that matter) are for sure, yet is there something to be learnt here, as Isaiah Berlin praised Maistre for his "armoury of weapons" against liberalism as "the most effective ever assembled" (S. Holmes 1993:35)?

A question therefore concerns how much an ideal communicative discourse (as in Larmore's liberalism) already violently assumes some form of suppression of instinctual desires (Freud) and violent nature (Maistre). After all, even when an agreement in an ideal communicative discourse could be reached, it might well reflect the general principles of conduct (or community norms, both social and moral) which are already power-originated in ways as mentioned before. Thus, the very requirement that, in an ideal communicative situation, one could admit beliefs that either are the least central to anyone's idea of the good life or
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the least number of people do not hold has yet to confront both the power-embeddedness of an agreement so reached and a certain price to pay (be it Freud’s or Maistre’s) for such a rationalistic moral ideal.

In the eyes of their enemies, the liberals are exemplary creatures of the soft, of the weak --, and the victims (of the liberal superego, that is, its stringent imperative of critical, rational conversation) are none other than, as in the Nietzschean categories, the strong, the noble, the aristocratic, the willful, the instinctual, who are now excluded, in liberalism (of Larmore’s type or in general), from acquiring political power. Humans in a liberal democracy become "tamer," "less threatening," -- and mediocre, thus lowering their worth (in no longer being capable of going to the limit, of wanting rank distinction, of ruling with power and instinct). (R.Eden 1983:47,64-5,127) "What counts as rational or as fanatical," Rorty (1990:281) rightly puts in a relativist perspective, "is relative to the group to which we think it necessary to justify ourselves -- to the body of shared belief that determines the reference of the word ‘we.’" Liberal rational conversation is not exempt from being hegemonic in excluding other lifeforms, other realities, other voices. Some communitarian visions are precisely to address this liberal hegemony. (Section 5.3)

This critique of procedural liberalism as morally disorientating, marginalizing, and hegemonic constitutes a self critique (in the same sense as discussed in Section 4.2), as opposed to an immanent critique, of liberalism, that is, to historicize liberalism within its epochal social structure and institutions. Perhaps no one says this better than Marx did long before: that the ruling idea of a historical epoch is the idea of its dominant social strata, at the expense of other voices, other realities, or other lifeforms. Ironically, it is the liberal elevation of a critical spirit as embodied in its championing of formal (instrumental) rationality which leads to its own self critique so understood in the name of this very critical mindset.

(iv) Inefficacious. Neither is, fourthly yet not less importantly,
procedural liberalism efficacious in achieving justice under modern conditions. The alternative form of competitive power-wrestling among different social strata can make it highly problematic to apply political neutrality as a procedural requirement in a modern setting of social differentiation. Pluralistic toleration in a modern state, Theodore Lowi argues in The End of Liberalism (1979), often results in making the latter harder to govern and to achieve justice, as different power strata representing different interest groups push for their parochial demands with no (or little) sense of the common good --, as Rawls, after all, is not completely unreasonable to reject modus vivendi liberalism, in its obsession with procedural issues, for inadequate consideration of substantive justice. (HDS 1995) A political-neutral state often ends up in a gridlock when no power groups emerge as the victors in a competitive process. Even when they do emerge, it often creates laws and makes policies on the basis of those groups which are the most organized, most vocal, most interested, and most influential, at the expense of the majority of the less so.

In this sense, any version of liberalism is plagued with the historical problematic of its existence only in abstraction, in a socio-structural, socio-psychological vaccum. But this is to give some evidence that political neutrality as a procedural device is just another way to hide the inherent conflict between pluralism and toleration. Some groups are to be left out, in one way or another. The postmoderns, after all, and the multiculturalists especially, are quick to reject liberal toleration and its political neutrality as, either explicitly or implicitly, suppressing or marginalizing difference (women, minorities, the poor, and the Others of the non-West), whose groups never receive adequate hearing or voice in a liberal society, as indicated before. (N.Birnbaum 1986:29) The Marxian indictment of liberal justice is to precisely raise issues with any naive conception of liberal state neutrality, often privileging the dominant business-professional strata and their ruling instrumental rational ethos, even if only as a byproduct of its political neutrality. Even if the state could be neutral
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at no expense of external forces, it would still develop into a distinct bureaucratic stratum seeking for its power interest, be it in the Weberian sense of an emerging administrative stratum or in the Michelsian form of an organizational oligarchy. The case of the American government is instructive, as Herman Kahn soberly remarked, it has grown so big that the last thing one would like to dream of is to have it under control, without somehow seeing it fiercely fighting for its own interest: "The only thing that appears to be under control is the ability of the government to clobber somebody it wants to clobber." (H. Stine 1985:222)

Pluralist theory, Lowi argues, often hiddenly assumes a kind of invisible hand, that is, of a self-corrective mechanism which promises to bridge the gap among diverse social strata and to converge them into a sort of equilibrium. (T. Lowi 1979:73, 294) Political neutrality as a concept can be criticised as hiddenly presupposing a kind of magic hand which, somehow mysteriously, bridges the gap between toleration and pluralism in politics. But this raises the question of whether 'political neutrality' as a conceptual construct is useful, since it diverges from historical facts concerning the highly hierarchical stratification of modern society (both in micro- and macro-levels) -- and therefore does not help us better understand how a modern society functions. Larmore's political neutrality in an ideal rational discussion can thus be criticised as a liberal fantasy, by virtue of nothing other than the very critical mindset which liberalism so much cherishes in its elevation of formal rationality as the new public virtue, now that the substantive rationality of the old is dead in the liberal public space.

(b) And Jurgen Habermas’s ideal of a universalist, discursive, and procedural approach towards liberalism is not less fanatic, by comparison. Embodied in any ideally rational conversation, Habermas argues, are some norms which require any claim, if it is to gain the assent of others, to be backed up by good reasons, and a speaker's expression is expected to be sincere, true,
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comprehensible, and appropriate. (T. McCarthy 1978:288; J. Habermas 1990a: 72-3, 123-34) In a power-free environment, the notion of truth is inherent in any ideally rational conversation so understood, and the condition for true statements appears in "the potential agreement of all others." (T. McCarthy 1978: 273, 299) In this sense, the Habermasian consensus theory of truth possesses a strong Kantian accent of the logic of categorical imperative, though in a revised form: "rather than ascribing as valid to all others any maxim that I can will to be a universal law, I must submit any maxim to all others for purposes of discursively testing its claim to univerality." (T. McCarthy 1978: 326)

Such a notion of truth, however, seems dangerously circular enough, since it takes whatever the participants consent upon as truth (C. Larmore 1987: 56) -- which, however, might well be conventional in nature. (T. McCarthy 1973: 149-53) Hans-Georg Gadamer refused, for instance, to grant Habermas the "privileged exemption from the hermeneutical circle affecting all communication." (K. Colburn 1986: 368-70) 'The hermeneutical circle' here refers to the unfortunate situation that to interpret a linguistic or conceptual entity for better understanding already presupposes the understanding of what is to be interpreted. The improvement of understanding through interpretation depends, on its foundational level, on the preliminary, tradition-bounded understanding of the entity to be interpreted for better understanding. Precisely here lies the ultimate residue of "prejudice, tradition, and authority" in all forms of communication.

Gadamer raised four specific criticisms (T. McCarthy 1978: 190), in (i) that a speaker's reflection is always partial, limited, and prejudiced, (ii) that a speaker cannot "get 'behind' language to the 'real' conditions which it historically develops," as it serves as a medium in all domains of social life, (iii) that only through an intersubjective understanding on the different structures of inevitable prejudices can reflection be possible, and (iv) that understanding presupposes both the rejection of unjustifiable prejudices and the acceptance of justifiable ones. In response, Habermas replies (i) that
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Hermeneutics is not the sole basis of social inquiry, (ii) that it is possible to transcend the context-dependency of hermeneutics through the introduction of theoretical elements in the process of reflection, (iii) that there is to be progress in social evolution towards a reduction of the context-dependent distortion of tradition-bounded communication, and (iv) the point is not to always look back at the superiority of authority in tradition but to long for the "future state of freedom". (T. McCarthy 1978:192-3)

It is in this juncture that Habermas, in his dream to complete the unfinished project of the Enlightenment, already implies a metanarrative of reason and progress (that there is to be progress in social evolution with the eventual emergence of a social structure more conducive to the use of reason) so much distrusted by his critics, the postmoderns included (Lyotard especially). (S. White 1991:140-1) This optimism is hard to be justified, in light of the pervasive extent of formal rationality (Section 5.4) penetrated into all domains of modern social life and institutions aforediscussed, as James Coleman (1990:40, 53, 63) makes no apology to soberly remark that, however ingenious philosophers and theorists come up with any rationally motivated, intersubjective communicative process (J. Habermas 1990a:72-3, 123-34) upon which moral authority for a just society is grounded, their efforts prove naive (and they "are searching for the pot of gold at the end of the rainbow"), since they fail to understand how much the source of rights in the real world ultimately rests in interest and power, within a social base of resources involving in socio-economic and political exchange.

Barry Smith's criticism (1988:17) is instructive, in that "to imagine speech-situations in which all such differences were eradicated or equalized and thus 'free' of all so-called 'distortions' of communication is to imagine a superlunary universe -- and even there, it seems, the conditions of perfection will always call forth someone, an archangel perhaps, who will introduce difference into the company." The rationale is not unreasonable, however, since,
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Smith (1988:9) continues, "there is no such thing as an honest opinion, no judgement, that is, totally unaffected by the particular social, institutional and other conditions of its production and totally immune to the assumed interests and desires of its assumed audience. Its dynamics operate on, out of, and through disparities of resources (material property, information, skills, influence, position, etc.)." A critique of this type is all the more shocking, to be sure, as it is directed against someone (Habermas) who, a critical theorist as he is, is not unaware of the problematic of power-distorted communication, which, however, his solution is so impotent in addressing in real life.

Besides, the Habermasian distinction between communicative action (where background knowledge is allowed) and communicative discourse (where only problematized claims are relevant) creates a great dilemma which his critics do not fail to notice. (C. Larmore 1987:57-8) On the one hand, if under a communicative action speakers are allowed to hold their general views of the world and self (background knowledge), they cannot expect their substantive claims, different as they are from each other, to reach any consensus. But if in a communicative discourse the speakers are required to detach from any general view so understood, it is no longer clear what sense there would be in a rational conversation so understood, or what would occur, if anything.

Anyway, for reasons aforepresented, Habermas's ideal communicative discourse as a universal, discursive, procedural justification of liberalism constitutes, for his critics, a "technocratic fantasy" (D. LaCapra 1977:263) or just "another form of that logocentric desire for perfect presence which dominated Western metaphysics for millennia." (M. Jay 1982:104)

Another way to take issues with the liberal defense of moral universalism for a just society is to consider what political romanticism has to offer, which liberalism does not --, and in the process this helps us understand why the political-romantic solution is equally fanatic, not less worse than the liberal one.
5.3 Romanticist Moral Universalism, & Its Infeasibility

Political romanticism, instead of making the right prior to the good as in liberalism, reverses the order and searches for a conception of the good life to be fostered (1) by the state (as in communitarianism) or (2) by members of a community, with no need of the state (as in anarchism).

(1) Communitarianism. Consider first communitarianism.

(a) Johann Gottfried Herder was an exemplary figure in the German Romanticist movement. (C. Larmore 1987:94-98) There is no humanness, Herder argued, outside participation in society and tradition, and the talk of a critical distance towards the extant order as in liberalism (with Kant’s notion of autonomy as an exemplar) is essentially limited in its value, since some shared customs and outlooks in life which are peculiar to a community are not a matter of decision, but a matter of conviction which gives its members life meaning and significance. “The blurred heart of the indolent cosmopolitan is a shelter for no one,” Herder passionately argued, “Do we not then see, my brothers, that nature has done everything she could, not to broaden, but to limit us and to accustom us to the circumference of our life.” Tolerant pluralism in liberalism only destroys the harmony as needed for the wholistic integration of different elements in a totality qua society --, fascinated as he was with the Aristotelian organic conception of society. Consequently, the alternative to a society tied together by a shared form of the good life is one which easily collapses into an anarchic set of antagonistic fragments.

And precisely this Herderian rigid dichotomy which prevents him from seeing why a pluralistic society need not collapse into anarchic fragments and yet remains non-organic as in a highly social-differentiated modern society constitutes the main problematic in his line of thought. That qualified, his insight on the paramount need of communal belonging so crucial to a fully satisfying human life is an exceedingly important reminder to modern humans when
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the very sense of community was long gone --, which Durkheim lamented as the degeneration of modern moral individualism into an anomic state. (S. Lukes 1977:80-3)

(b) Romanticist thought of this type influenced Friedrich Schiller in his critique of French Revolutionary ideals, in light of the terror of 1793 which he attributed to the inevitable result of the division of labour, as the revolutionary junta could not avoid being stamped by their own class and were unable to contribute to the furtherance of humanity in its totality. (P. Burger 1992:55-6) Just as he ridiculed the Kantian notion of a pleasure of purified pleasure in aesthetic disinterested pleasure and imposed a social usefulness on artistic autonomy to the furtherance of humanity (Section 4.1), he did likewise to the state in assigning to it the enobling function of overcoming the division of labour, synthesizing work and enjoyment, and unifying morality and human fulfillment --, something a liberal is not willing to let the state do.

The Romanticist resentment towards the liberal tendency to separate citoyen in political society from homme in civic sphere (due to the latter’s conception of political neutrality) is more intense in many of Herder’s successors: “the whole man”, Adam Muller wrote, “would give himself over to the state, not just his worldly possessions.” (C. Larmore 1987:98) Or listen to Novalis: “A great failure of our states is that we see the state too seldom. The state should be visible everywhere, every man should be obviously a citizen.”

(c) Friedrich Hegel continued this Romanticist line of thought -- as an important legacy to the emergence of Marxism in modern times. (C. Larmore 1987:100-6) In opposition to the Kantian neglect of the moral role of institutions in its conception of an autonomous moral agent mysteriously equipped with an empirically unconditioned sense of duty, Hegel stressed the importance of the family, the church, guilds, and, most importantly of all, the state in their role of fostering moral development through such Aristotelian imperatives as vigorous training and socialization, without which any moral conviction can as much easily
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come as freely go.

Yet a good Romanticist as he was, he too succumbed to the temptation of conceiving an anarchic atomism as the sole alternative to the full state and of therefore calling for an empowering of the state not just to sustain moral conviction of its members and to protect property and personal freedoms but equally to foster a full conception of the good life for all, in pain of being alienated in a social setting. So carried away as he was with the dialectic of alienation and reconciliation, of difference and identity, and with the nostalgic return to the Greek polis (where the state was to express a conception of the good life) under modern condition, he ended up venerating the state as a God upon earth, in light of his thesis on sittlichkeit (that moral conviction cannot be sustained without training and socialization through institutions into extant lifeforms that embody moral values). For a thinker who indulges in a dialectic metaphysics as that of the Spirit qua the driving force of history as he did, this elevation of the state's role is hard to avoid. Hegel then had the misfortune to not grasp the essential danger of any espousal of the state so delineated. Larmore critically remarks (1987:104), in its vulnerability to a terrorist deterioration into something like the terror of 1793 which is precisely the very thing he criticized.

(d) Neither did Nietzsche, in his most euphorious moment, see the inherent decadence in his romanticist thought on Zarathustran politics. In denouncing liberal toleration as too "soft", too "self-indulgent", too "undisciplined," he found refuge within the yearning for a higher politics, in which a superior species of humans, "a new, tremendous aristocracy, based on the several self-legislation", "thanks to their superiority in will, knowledge, riches and influence" "for getting hold of the destinies of the earth" (F. Nietzsche 1968:504), are to rule, in accordance to the Zarathustran wisdom. The new philosophy is to transvaluate all values for the cultivation of a new leadership, for "the new masters" -- so as to turn what is now undisciplined and self-
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indulgent into something harder, more ascetic and demanding, for better purposes than comfortable living and reasonable judgement. (K. Jaspers 1965:269; R. Eden 1983:54,106)

Great leaders of this specimen to rule, not by a logos, but by strong will and instincts, with appeal to neither tradition nor natural law nor divine right (all of which are merely moral-minded with no other bad conscience than to level-down the strong, the noble, the great). (R. Eden 1983:116-8,225) Great leaders thus possess "pathos of distance", to confront realities with inner concentration and calm, require external enemies and slaves against which they can exercise their courage and maintain their will to fight, and disarm themselves while being the best armed, from an intensity of feeling. (K. Jaspers 1965:257; R. Eden 1983:117,195)

"I am strong enough for that" -- thus is the true meaning of "real peace."

Needless to say, such a romanticist solution of the communitarian type to the liberal problematic is what Max Weber rightly regards as a "fancified escapism." (R. Eden 1983:142) Or in a harsher tone -- Jacques Derrida spares no leniency in saying, "One may wonder why the only teaching institution or the only beginning of a teaching institution that ever succeeded in taking as its model the teaching of Nietzsche on teaching will have been a Nazi one." (J. Derrida 1984:24)

(e) Yet ironically, Max Weber committed a fancified escapism of his own. Influenced as he was by the Nietzschean line of thought, which also inspired Carl Schmidt (1976) who, when confronted by his Nuremberg interrogator for crime against humanity under the Nazi regime, good-humouredly said, "I am an intellectual adventurer" (S. Holmes 1993:39) --, Weber rightly criticized the bourgeois way of life in liberal culture as so materialistic as to become banal and so comfortable as to become soft (R. Eden 1983:47), in which live no other philistines than "specialists without spirit, sensualists without heart; this nullity imagines that it has attained a level of civilization never before achieved." (M. Weber 1958:182) Or for Ortega y Gasset, "liberalism announces the
determination to share existence with the enemy; more than that, with an enemy who is weak," in the name of plurality and toleration; nothing appalls Schmitt most than mushy, soft humanitarianism of this type. (S.Holmes 1993:45) In glorifying social virtues, work ethics and moral goodness, modern humans (of the liberal type especially) become mediocre, less threatening -- no longer willing to commit cruelty and inhumanity which had inspired fear and respect in humans of earlier times -- or in Freud's parlance, the sublimation of death instincts for more productive purposes in modern culture. (H.Marcuse 1966:35; D.Held 1980:137)

What is problematic in Weber's thought, and Hannah Arendt's (1959:38,254-7; G.Kateb 1983:66-7) as well as Schmitt's for that matter, lies not in the critique of the modern liberal state as too preoccupied with materialist-hedonistic concerns: that is, the ascending hegemony of political economy (economic and administrative concerns) over what is genuinely political (questions concerning the constitutional character of a regime and the constitutional order), though it is he who pioneered the conception of rational-legal authority as the most efficient mode of administration in applying scientific knowledge and method in modern times. (R.Eden 1983:20,181,219)

Rather the Weberian foul play consists of his call for a cultivation of "what is humanly great and noble in our nature," which, echo the Nietzschean aspiration of a higher human type as it does, is to recover the "heroic age of the European bourgeoisie", a life-ideal which is hard, ascetic, disciplined, cruel, dominating (not least towards the bourgeoisie itself). (R.Eden 1983:23,53) Only then can a modern state, under the guiding reason of this prior rankings of life-forms which moulds the "natural political instincts" into something great and noble, render politics as a vocation once more, in which this new species of great leaders, even when the world is too stupid, too base, too groundless, or else, will still be able to say, "In spite of all!* (R.Eden 1983:24; M.Weber 1946a) This in spite of all-ness is to affirm politics as one's vocation, as
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one's personal fate, as one's demon, from an "ultimate stance" towards life -- a politics of direct rule, not through the (Woodrow) Wilsonian statespersonship liberalism of sober deliberation and public reasoning but by virtue of their extraordinary qualities. (R.Eden 1983:15,149,207,183)

At one stroke, the Weberian politics as a vocation engaged into a polemic against as much liberal universalism as traditional political thought: it is because, firstly, the democratic-liberal method cannot cope with the Marxian and Nietzschean challenge (class oppression and base, petty life-form), and secondly, reason, Weber argued, so did David Hume (1949:459-60) and Nietzsche (1968), can only point to inconsistencies between life-goals and choice-means but has no say over the choice of ultimate commitment which reflects our passions (Hume), our instincts and will (Nietzsche), or what is humanly great and noble in our nature (Weber). (R.Eden 1983:177,277)

Robert Eden's point (1983:53,194,210) is well taken: that the Weberian rediscovery of the asectic heroism helps no human cause in practice but a fabrication, a noble lie -- which only fosters moral relativism and relaxes strict standards of public morality. Nor is there any principle inherent in vocational politics that can bind great leaders to limited government, insofar as their "great" and "noble" cause comes not from reason, but from their own breast, from their dominating, cruel will and instincts, from their own "demons" -- and only degenerates, in the end, into a "frankly nihilistic politics." The Weberian political romanticism is not less fanatic-escapist than the Nietzschean one.

(f) Contemporary Romanticists of the communitarian type like Michael Sandel avoid this fanatic escapism for sure. If Sandel's critique of Rawls the great 20th-century liberal is valid enough as aforediscussed, his favoured communitarian alternative succumbs to a different mistake familiar in the political-romantic tradition. To assume, as Sandel does, a personhood which cannot be constituted without a commitment to some conception of the good life

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(which are "inseparable from the understanding ourselves as the particular persons as we are") easily tempts him to propound a subordination of justice in the state to a higher, more substantive ideal (sentiments of general benevolence or fraternity in an ideal society qua a family or a club of friends).(C.Larmore 1987:122-29) The liberal counterpoint, for sure, is that Sandel is romantic enough to fantasize a society so idealized, as "nonliberal societies, past and present," Larmore reminds us, "have scarcely been an idyll of fellow-feeling."

Take the case of Sandel's communitarian critique of Rawls's difference principle (social and economic inequalities to be rearranged to the greatest benefit of the least advantaged). The Rawlsian justification lies in the reasoning that since people's naturally and socially conditioned capacities and talents are not quite under their control (as a matter of contingency and luck), these assets cannot belong intrinsically to their selves and therefore the benefits derived from them should be available for common use which benefits all. As a dissenter, Sandel appeals to Robert Nozick's argument that from the premise that people do not automatically deserve the benefits of their capacities and talents does not logically follow that the benefits should therefore belong to the common good.

But Sandel does not stop there, since, faithful to communitarianism as he is, people should not distinguish so sharply among themselves solely on the basis of naturally and socially conditioned assets but should relate among themselves more on the basis of encumbered selves with character and moral depth which make them members of a community in the first place. To this extent, the good is prior to the right, and the availability of individual assets for common use can be thus justified communitarianly. But precisely here Sandel is romanticist enough, in failing to grasp the essential feature of modern society as highly socially-differentiated, such that the deepest group allegiances do not extend across the whole society but only at best to a limited, small subcultural group. "His argument might suffice to defend the taxation of some Catholics for the benefit
of other Catholics," Larmore (1987:128) rebukes, "or of some blacks for the benefit of other blacks. But how could it justify, for example, redistributing income from Scarsdale to Harlem?"

(g) In this juncture Charles Taylor offers an ingenious way to solve the problematic. Unlike Sandel, Taylor has no need of any appeal to sentiments of general benevolence (or a fraternity in an ideal society) and argues for a politics of public recognition which allows the state to foster and preserve the survival of subcultures (as of the Quebeckers) which would not flourish in liberal societies. (C. Taylor 1992a:58-9; A. Gutmann 1992:10) The politics of public recognition should not be confused with the Rousseau's version, in which a free polity, so Rousseau romantically thought, can only be possible when freedom exists in a homogeneous social structure (free of differentiated roles qua the origins of power and domination) with a very tight common purpose (as in "the general will"). (C. Taylor 1992a:48-51) "This has been the formula for the most terrible forms of homogenizing tyranny," Taylor rightly remarks, "starting with the Jacobins and extending to the totalitarian regimes of our century." The fault of Rousseau consists of his failure to recognize that people are unique, self-creating, and creative individuals not to be homogenized into a comprehensive universal identity (as in the general will) and that as culture-bearers, they incorporate different cultures in accordance to their past and present identifications, again not to be homogenized into a comprehensive cultural identity. (A. Gutman 1992:6-7)

Instead, human identity is created dialogically, that is, in response to intersubjective relations and dialogues. The state, Taylor argues, is for sure to leave room for individuals qua citizens to decide what identity they want to share with others. But since members of some specific subcultural groups (the Quebeckers, for instance) have some special needs due to historically unfavourable circumstances which would make their culture hard to flourish if left alone in liberal societies with a politically neutral state, there is the
danger here of a homogenizing cultural identity of the majority at the expense of the disadvantaged minorities who are threatened by the spread of bigotry or else. (W. Kymlicka 1989:82) The state therefore should permit public institutions to foster particular cultural values as embodied in these groups, not so much as a policy of diversity for its own sake but as a recognition of equal respect, of equal dignity for its enhancement of the quality of life and meaning, subject to the constraints that the basic rights of all be protected, that no one be manipulated or coerced in the process, and that the public officials and institutions in question be democratically accountable in practice. (C. Taylor 1992a:58-61; A. Gutman 1992:10-11) In other words, these disadvantaged subgroups have to be given, not just toleration as in a liberal democracy, but more power to define and practice what promotes their ends. (W. Kymlicka 1989:86)

But Taylor runs into trouble in a three-fold sense. Firstly, as Steven Rockefeller (1992:88-9) puts it, a person’s universal human identity and potential, not his ethnic identity, is the foundation of recognition of equal respect in liberal societies, and any attempt to go beyond this is to open the door to intolerance, in a matter of time:

It is one thing to support on the basis of the right to self-determination the political autonomy of a historically distinct and autonomous group such as a Stone Age tribal people in New Guinea or Tibetan Buddhist culture in China. The situation gets more complicated when one is considering creation of an autonomous state within a democratic nation as in the case of the Quebeckers or establishment of a separate public school system with its own curriculum for a particular group in the United States....I am uneasy about the danger of an erosion over time of fundamental human rights growing out of a separatist mentality that elevates ethnic identity over universal human identity.

Secondly, Michael Walzer’s qualification (1992:101) has good merit, in that what may work in Canada cannot necessarily be applied elsewhere, especially in such truly diverse immigrant societies like America which "isn’t, after all, a nation-state, but a nation of nationalities, as Horace Kallen wrote in the second debate
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of our century, or a social union of social unions, in John Rawls's more recent formulation." And when applied to this "nation of all nationalites," Walzer (1992:102-3) then asks,

What would the state have to do to guarantee or even to begin to guarantee the survival of all the minorities that make up American society? It would surely have to move beyond official recognition of the equal value of the different ways of life. The various minority groups would need control over public monies, segregated or partially segregated schools, employment quotas that encouraged people to register with this or that group, and so on....I think that immigrants to societies like this one have already made the same choice. They intended (and still intend), were prepared (and still are prepared), to take cultural risks when they came here....No doubt, there are moments of sorrow and regret....We would have to curtail these rights in crucial ways, far beyond anything required in Norway or even Quebec, if we were to treat our minorities as endangered species in need of official sponsorship and protection.

And lastly, any empowering of the marginalized, Taylor’s critics argue (W.Kymlicka 1989:86-9), tends to produce an opposite effect of further alienating them, insofar as a communitarian way of life is already defined at the outset in order to provide a justification of the empowering without, however, the consent of the very marginalized (gays, blacks, asians, women) who have no say (of what this community’s way of life is to be) prior to the empowerment when they were still disempowered. This critique was previously used against Sandel’s proposal to regulate pornography by local communities on the ground of its offensive male view of female sexuality; yet this only reduces a set of male-defined view of female sexuality (the pornographers') into another set (the "way of life" of the community), neither of which the victims in question (women) did shape prior to the ban.

In the end, what underlies the fundamental problematic in Taylor’s politics
of public recognition is its tendency to go along with the political current of the time, without adequate self-critique or without what Ronald Beiner understands as "radical social criticism" (1995:5), as Beiner (1995:7) continues: "It strikes me that what governs Taylor's work as a whole is the 'historicist' presumption that if we make a sufficiently generous effort to understand why modern selves have come to be what they are and why modern moral aspirations have evolved in the direction that they have, these moral aspirations, and the selves that they constitute, would show themselves as perfectly reasonable and worthy of aspiration."

(2) **Anarchism.** The political romanticists of the anarchic type, by contrast, are more idealistic than what Taylor has to offer. Unlike the liberals and the communitarians, the anarchists in their search for moral universalism for a just society do away with the state and supercede it with local organizations of various sorts, be they farmers associations, communal groups, guilds, or else. (W. Watson 1995) Their concern is not whether or not the right is prior to the good; theirs is more of a question of human freedom and less of an enquiry about justice.

(a) Mikhail Bakunin, the Russian anarchist who competed with Marx for leadership of the First International, was known for his radical critique of the state apparatus as unjust, as coercive in its nature -- counter to what he thought was the fundamental human spirit: namely, human freedom through the use of reason uncorrupted by social institutions. "The liberty of man", he wrote in *God and the State* (1970:30), "consists solely in this: that he obeys natural laws because he has himself recognized them as such, and not because they have been externally imposed upon him by any extrinsic will whatever, divine or human, collective or individual." And the natural laws to be discovered concerning humans are best exemplified by the use of human reason as a guidance for action, corrupted neither by quackery nor by force as pervasive in political society and
extant social institutions.

Just contrast Bakunin's notion of human freedom with that of Sigmund Freud (S.Freud 1966b:111; P.Ricoeur 1970:305),

The element of truth behind all this, which people are so ready to disavow, is that men are not gentle creatures who want to be loved, and who at the most can defend themselves if they are attacked; they are, on the contrary, creatures among whose instinctual endowments is to be reckoned a powerful share of aggressiveness. As a result, their neighbour is for them...someone who tempts them to satisfy their aggressiveness on him, to exploit his capacity for work without compensation, to use him sexually without his consent, to seize his possessions, to humiliate him, to cause him pain, to torture and to kill him. *Homo homini.*

The contrast could not be sharper. Influenced as Bakunin was by the great optimism on the role of reason in human emancipation at his times (as common enough among the philosophes, whose naive and dogmatic mode of thought was already analyzed in Section 5.1 and is not repeated here), he more often passionately made claims than soberly defended them, to the extent that no systematic justification was offered, as Paul Avrich rightly criticized him, as to why such a hyper-rationalistic view of human nature fused with an anarchic politics is warranted, other than passionate, speculative statements by a highly energetic man (as the German music giant Richard Wagner commented on his friend), who considered himself as a man of action, not as a thinker and spent most of his waking hours in radical politics. (M.Bakunin 1970:intro.; W.Watson 1995) Any hyper-rationalistic ego psychology of this type is precisely what Jacques Lacan, in his Freudian critique, strongly rejected as "necessarily a hopeless and misguided endeavour." (C.Norris 1990:51)

(b) His rival, Marx, followed a similar anarchistic path but with an entirely different approach. Marx's dream of a communist utopia where the state withers away is an exemplary case. His attack of the liberal conception of justice is two-fold, namely, unnecessary and undesirable. (C.Larmore 1987:112-17)
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The dispensability of liberal justice stems from the circumstances of justice (as Hume thus referred to scarcity of resources and conflicting claims of the good life in human existence) in capitalist society where the state is called upon, through an ideological filtering for the ruling capitalist class's interest as the common good, to resolve conflicting interests representative of different classes. But in a communistic stage where the realm of necessity is transcended (or largely so), the very system of justice (liberal one especially) is therefore no longer necessary.

Marx had the naivety, however, to base a conception of the circumstances of justice too much on false consciousness and egoistic dispositions, so that when they supposably disappear in the communist stage, justice becomes dispensable as well. This naivety his critics waste no time to ridicule: "Even if in a classless society all people genuinely pursue the general interest, with their minds clear of ideological distortion by particularistic interests, their ideas of the general interest will probably not coincide. We can imagine that in a classless society rival groups could form around different disinterested conceptions of the general good," Larmore writes, "Thus the circumstances of justice are not exhausted by ignorance and limited altruism. A classless society...will have need of a state and of conceptions of justice to adjudicate these disputes."

That qualified, Marx's notion of liberal justice as incapable of realizing human full-potentiality, or of the "whole man" in Romanticist language, and thus undesirable is not without merit --, truthful, though, as it is to the spirit of political Romanticism with its long history from the works of Herder through Schiller's to Rousseau's, for instance. The liberal minimal state (a political neutrality for negative freedom qua freedom from) Marx most intensely despised and regarded as a capitalist ruse to separate what is political from what is not: a sort of institutionalized myopia which systematically neglects the other side of humanness, the full development of human potentiality in its totality and
diversity, in the name of Liberal Justice. The communist recipe for justice, through the means of Louis Blanc’s principle of “from each according to his ability, to each according to his needs”, is to eliminate this undesirability of liberal justice.

But carried away by the Romanticist rhetoric as Marx was, he failed to see how much this very communist standard of equality does not escape the differentiating effect of the individual, not unifying him into the "whole man" as falsely assumed. The reason is that the very standard of, say, treating each according to his ability still requires a standard which treats, Larmore argues (1987:116-7), individual workers as equal in one respect (the criterion of work performance, say) while ignoring other attributes. The Romanticist wholeness is nowhere to be found in this communist standard.

This qualified, Marx’s ideal for a full freedom in the communist stage is not without its virtue. In rejecting the Hegelian nostalgia for the Greek polis, he blamed Robespierre and St. Just in The Holy Family for trying to put Greek political ideal in practice under modern condition during the French Revolution and instead proposed a realization of full freedom, as opposed to the narrow horizon of the Greek polis in Grundrisse: "The absolute working out of his creative potentialities, with no presupposition other than the previous historic development, which makes this totality of development, i.e., the development of all human powers as such, the end in itself, not as measured on a predetermined yardstick." (C.Larmore 1987:108) Many modern Marxist revolutionaries, in the name of this Romantic utopia of full freedom, had conquered and torn apart ancien regimes here and there and yet rewarded many who laboured hard and long for the revolution with such totalitarian terrors so unprecedented in all hitherto existing human histories as Stalin’s Terror, Mao’s Cultural Revolution, and Pol Pot’s Killing Fields, just to cite some classic instances.

Marx’s ideal of the withering away with the state is too high a price to pay when put in practice, his valid critique of liberal justice notwithstanding.
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-- even if, for sure, he would distance himself from the revolutionary junta in all Communist regimes of our times ranging from Soviet Russia through the former Eastern European Communist bloc to Red China. "I am not a Marxist", thus spoke Marx near the end of his life, in light of his discontent with contemporaneous revolutionary organizations based on his works.

In the end, many political romanticists, be they communitarian or anarchist, suffer from a similar delimitation, that is, to be poetic in their political sensibility, or, in Rorty's parlance, "to aestheticize politics and, so, to turn anti-democratic." (R.Rorty 1990:305)

5.4 Postmodern Moral Localism, & Its Impotence

Both liberal and political-romanticist problematic justifications for moral universalism for a just society (constitute as they do conflicting versions of free-spirited modernity, two incompatible forms of a part of the ideal of the modern self) fall, in most cases (though not all), within what postmodern political thinkers regard as different metanarratives of the same logocentric tradition which dominates Western thought for millennia. The liberal and political-romanticist metanarratives await the fate of being deconstructed as well. But then what is left for a political ideal to be? Here lies the postmodern appeal, that is, their postmodern politics of difference (a kind of moral localism for a just society, as opposed to moral universalism of the moderns).

Two issues are therefore of interest. (1) Is the postmodern alternative promising? And (2) if not, what implications are there for how justice is to be understood in post-industrial society? Let me first examine the issue in (1) -- and then that in (2).

(1) The Promise of the Postmodern Alternative. To understand the postmodern conception of the politics of difference, a brief recount of the views of Martin Heidegger, Jacques Derrida, Jean Lyotard, Michael Foucault, Richard Rorty, and
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some "difference" feminists on ethical-political responsibility is deemed useful.

(a) The central problematic of modernity, Heidegger argued, is the question concerning technology qua the spread of rational, logocentric, instrumental ethos as the dominant mode of responsibility to act in modern everyday lifeform, where lies the disease of subjectivity qua calculating, claiming, wanting, desiring, or willing --, at the expense of forgetting the more authentic side of humans, something more distant in origin. (S. White 1991:34-7) The early Heidegger, that is, the rather immature one with an authoritarian (fascist) bent, sought for a return to "destiny", to "earth", or to "rootedness to the soil" through a great politics in which the individual will is to surrender itself to the Fuhrer, a great leader of extraordinary will to lead and will as much heroically as resolutely in the face of human finitude and mortality, with inevitable violence and uncertainty that attend such a supreme moment in history: "As a world opens itself, it submits to the decision of an historical humanity the question of victory and defeat, blessing and curse, mastery and slavery. The dawning world brings out what is as yet undecided and measureless." Within the context of this euphorious line of thought, he made the worst blunder in his life by virtue of his support of Nazi politics during his short tenure as rector of the University of Freiburg in 1933-4. The Nietzschean legacy of Zarathustran great politics of willing which Jacques Derrida (1984:24) criticized as Nazi-prone clearly had its mark on his thought here, a great admirer of Nietzsche as he was.

Surely, this is not the Heidegger which history will remember for his contribution to the postmodern politics of difference. Rather the later Heidegger (in the post-WWII period), the one who shyed away from elevating political leaders to the status of "poets" and "thinkers" as creators and distanced himself more from his master Nietzsche, confronted this unauthenticity of everyday lifeform, its fallenness, its finitude, its mortality, with a call for the need for an "other thinking", away from any systematic formulation of a new ethics nor politics. (S. White 1991:39-40, 43-5) This thinking of otherness, stem as it does
from Heidegger's critique, following in Nietzsche's footsteps, of all metaphysics from Plato to his times, is to allow the moderns to think and act in a new way, away from any rational, logocentric, instrumental orientation, or what Reiner Schurmann characterizes as "an-archic praxis": that is, action without any metaphysics of arche (principle) as its guidance. This an-archic action and thought are "the play of a flux in practice, without stabilization and presumably carried to the point of an incessant fluctuation in institutions, is an end in itself" -- something without why, without for, without because, except the endless process of unmasking all metanarratives, all logocentric regimes (S. White 1991:52), in repeating the Nietzschean call for an unlearning of what the moderns have learnt.

The thinking of otherness, if there is anything political to be said here, is a politics of difference: meaning always in a position of deconstructing any presence of an origin, of a history, of an unity, of a narrative with its opposite, its absence. In other words, any history of being is to await the fate of being deconstructed, since it is always momentary and a product of the prevailing economy of presence. The politics of difference is therefore a celebration of plurality, instability, mobility, and unhierarchicalness -- as opposed to any vision of action guided by rational principle and sustained by the will, as is pervasive in modern technological society and technocratic politics. (S. White 1991:45)

But the postmodern critics are quick to warn us of the emptiness of this Heideggerian politics of difference, insofar as this an-archic praxis, because of its rejection of any economy of principle, preclude any possibility of collective action as required for an effective politics and therefore, Stephen White (1991:48-9) argues, has no or little effect on the extant order of instrumental rationality. His thinking of otherness, as a politics of difference in a deliberately unconventional fashion, is impotent --, not surprising as this is for a thinker who had no good feeling towards average everydayness, a life not
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worthy enough, so he thinks, for those who, like himself, enjoy being in deep thought, thinking of Being.

This said, there exists a reconstructive face in the Heideggerian thinking of otherness: that is, its reflexiveness. The thinking of otherness is to ask for an attention to an opening, to a revealing, to a disclosing of something long forgotten, of something long shoved aside in average everydayness dominated as it is by logocentric, instrumental thought and behavior, through a medium which best helps one escape from it, namely, the world-disclosing quality in poetic language. (S. White 1991: 61-72) Poetic thinking here does not mean to merely imagine an artist’s thought as conveyed in a poem but to confront human finitude and mortality by allowing some distance towards one’s lifeworld, by letting it go, by experiencing anew the world in a different way; only then do we realize how much we are related to each other as a community of beings -- so indispensable at a time when the threat of nuclear winter and planetary destruction remains a possibility in modern technological age. Heidegger’s politics of difference teaches the moderns how to be at home in homelessness, to be joyful in an alienating world.

(b) Nice as this sounds, poetic thinking so understood, the critics rightly observe, easily degenerates into irrational mysticism and solipsistic aestheticism --, as "[f]rom/after this laughter and this dance," Jacques Derrida playfully writes, "what I will call Heidggerian hope, comes into question. I am not unaware how shocking this word might seem here." (S. White 1991: 76-7) Yet does Derrida offer any hope in return? The themes of founding and friendship are distinctive in Derrida’s handling the issue of ethical-political responsibility.

His deconstruction of legitimacy as founded in the American Declaration of Independence is an illustrative tale. Here is a document which appeals to such metanarratives of God and Nature to ground the political legitimacy of the colonists, in creating a new people and their rights. In other words, the performative utterances of the document provides the authorization as needed, not
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by the people and their representatives as democratically assumed. (S. White 1991:78-80) This unsettling of a standard mode of legitimizing discourse is to destroy a foundational site and replace it with a new one --, not without having to come to terms, however, "with inherited tradition", to "negotiate a compromise with traditional right and law." As is familiar in postmodern literature, this Derridian playfulness of shifting foundational sites in deconstruction is not less ineffectual in changing the status quo, as he himself once admits, all this is nothing but a "negative wisdom" about ethics and politics.

His "politics of friendship" fairs no better either. (S. White 1991:81-4) Friendship as a minimal community always presupposes certain responsibility, derive as it does from being a performative character as in every utterance, every interpretation in an ongoing interaction. But since friendship is particularistic in its moral responsibility, its political implication is to disrupt, to destabilize, to challenge the extant order of moral universalism in the public sphere, as is "before the law, a tribunal, a jury authorized to represent the Other legitimately, in the form of a moral, legal, or political community." The politics of difference in friendship is to problematize the universalizing, abstract discourse on justice in modern political thought, without however necessarily endorsing its particularistic value. The virtue of Derrida's politics of friendship (as is likewise the case of foundational resituating) thus lies in its search for a sense of sublimity (a sentiment often present when faced with the abyss, the gigantic, the monstrous) which, however, is used here to shock, to provoke, to disrupt, to problematize. Needless to say, his politics of friendship, White concludes, is as impotent as the one of foundational resituating in changing the dominant socio-political order.

(c)It is Lyotard who tries to make this politics of difference with a sublime touch more effectively. (S. White 1991:85-90) Going along the line of Kant's aesthetics of sublimity, Lyotard structures sublimity into an ambivalent feature: both painful and pleasurable. To confront the sublime as in the abyss,
the gigantic, the monstrous, and the terrifying is painful, because of the self's experience of its finitude, its limitations, its terror of privation, its confrontation with death. Yet the experience is pleasurable, since the self can thereby conceive the infinite, the extraordinary beyond nature, beyond the phenomenal realm into the noumenal -- even if not precisely understanding what is confronted. Lyotard’s intention is to bring this Kantian notion of the sublime into everyday life so as to escape from the instrumental-rational genre of discourse so conspicuous in modern lifeworld whose hegemony thrives at the expense of alternative genres, of alternative rules for linking phrases in a discourse (be it political, aesthetic, ethical, technical, or else) which are forced to the sideline, forgotten, neglected, or repressed. (J. Lyotard 1986:16-8,46; R. Rorty 1982:203) These "losing" alternative genres are "wronged", since conflicts among genres (incompatible as they often are to each other) cannot be resolved impartially. Whichever is hegemonic tends to impose its own rules on the others --, not on the basis of human will or intention, since they "are strategies -- of no one", and there is only the occurrence of phrases and the conflicts between genres.

The politics of difference with a sublime touch for everyday life is to resist the increasing dominance of the instrumental-rational genre of discourse, to confront the "differend" qua being wronged so understood by celebrating the heterogeneity of different genres, by fighting against any foundational metanarrative, while understanding that at the end of heterogeneity of genres, at the abyss that separates them is nothing.

The problematic of Lyotard’s politics of difference so understood is three-fold, in that, firstly, the very hyper-juridication of the heterogeneity and autonomy of different phrases (words, sentences, or else), phrase regimens (reasoning, knowing, describing, recounting, or else) and genres of discourse (aesthetics, politics, ethics, science, technical matters, or else) cannot be so immaculately made, that, secondly, it still clings to the Kantian’s noumenal
realm which is precisely the very metanarrative the postmoderns spend so much
time and energy to deconstruct, on which White thus adds, "his dependence on Kant
raises as many problems as it is intended to solve," and that, thirdly, it does
not really "make a political program", as Lyotard himself admits. (S. White
1991:88-90)

(d) Foucault and Rorty, on the other hand, offer a politics of difference
through the association of curiosity with care. (S. White 1991:91-94) "Curiosity",
Foucault wrote in an explanation of his dream of a new age of curiosity, "I like
the word." Why so, Mr. Foucault? "It evokes 'care'," thus replied he, "it evokes
the care one takes of what exists and what might exist; a sharpened sense of
reality, but one that is never immobilized before it; a readiness to find what
surrounds us strange and odd; a certain determination to throw off familiar ways
of thought and to look at the the same things in a different way." Worrying about
Heidegger's notion of care in its overbearing tendency (which likewise bothers
Derrida), Foucault stressed instead its more positive aspect of sensitive
attention to the others' lives, and the association of curiosity with care is to
foster a sense of interest in and care about others.

This is a far improvement from an earlier Foucault who, much influenced as
he was by the Nietzschean idea of the prison-house of language ("an independent
world that, through its metaphors, metonymies, and anthropomorphisms, create
truth"), treated the world as nothing but a discourse. (A. Megill 1985:95,239) Each
extant order, so he thought, is to be discursively attacked, and just as soon as
it is overturned, the subversive replacer is in turn to be subversed --, in an
endless play of archaeology of knowledge. Mark Poster (1982:146-8) rightly asks
therefore, "For what possible reason would one go to the trouble of going over
masses of obscure, long forgotten texts and, after great pains, reveal the
discourse within them?...Without connecting us to our traditions and with a
prospect of improving our future, the archaeology of discourses appears to be
much like digging the proverbial trench only to be able to fill it up again." The
sober Nietzsche, when his sense was bound to reason, recognized the danger of
treating the world as nothing but an artwork, since the value-creator qua the
artist will in due time get tired and sick of the "eternal 'unreality' and
falsity" of this "innermost existence." (A. Megill 1985:63, 66, 102) Archaeologically
discoursing a la early Foucault only dangerously distracts from more pressing and
important socio-cultural needs for the larger society. As Nietzsche admitted, "We
cannot live in the aesthetic world."

The appeal to care in a more mature Foucault who now concerned more with
"praxis" (social practices) than with language and archaeology, in that a kind
of political activism is to interactively link discourse with socio-political
reality. (A. Megill 1985:233-6) One most illustrative instance consists of his
caring sensitivity to the plight of the Vietnamese refugees in the early 1980's,
to the extent that such suffering, he thought, required some action on his part,
as direct citizen response to passive injustice. (S. White 1991:125) Yet the
Nietzschean genealogical influence (Section 4.2) on him did not fade away
entirely, and he still denied any end of repression, suggested thus a permanent
political struggle, but offered no theory of justice nor any image of an ideal

(e) Neither does Rorty. The opposite of care, Rorty argues, is cruelty,
"incuriosity", so much that one pays no attention to the sufferings of others,
nor desire to pay attention to the details of others' lives. This is the most
vicious vice in Rorty's moral universe. The sort of curiosity with care in his
world, however, is twisted towards an aesthetic sensitivity of the novelist:
taste for narrative, detail, diversity, contingency, intercultural perspective.
It is not coincidental, consequently, for him to advocate a retuning of
sensitivity towards one another by reading more novels and seeing more docudramas
on TV.

Rorty is thus no friend of revolutionary politics, nor radical democracy,
neither is Foucault --, since, in elevating Charles Dickens as the positive
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archetype of aesthetic sensitivity so understood, he admires Dickens's political moderation, with the rationale that social ills in liberal democracy are not to be solved through revolutionary programme (in light of his critique of philosophical metanarratives) nor radical "other" politics as in some postmodern politics, but have "merely to be noticed to be remedied." This neoconservatism in his thought on contemporary politics is best summarized by White's critique (1991:93): "The problem is that Rorty, in his eagerness to distance himself from all those who launch strong critiques of modern social life, comes close to implying that we now live in something like the best of all possible social worlds. He reduces our possible practical stances toward contemporary society to two: Either persist in seeking some misbegotten image of a totally 'other' politics or seat yourself on the sofa and tune into docudrama."

But this notion of care takes a special role in feminist politics of difference. (S. White 1991:98-101) Carol Gilligan and Sara Ruddick propose a feminist notion of care which requires a strong "injunction to listen" to the other in an intersubjective communication, not with a desire to control nor with a goal to reach consensus but with a willingness to recognize the fragility of the concrete other and to preserve and repair relationships. Care so understood is not to become "selfless", which in the phallocentric extant order is embedded within an institution of domination-subordination and cannot be a virtue in a postmodern moral maturity.

This thinking of otherness surely has its historical origins in the works of thinkers aforediscussed (as in Heidegger's notions of care and grieving joy - an ambiguous feeling of attraction and repulsion) and takes the forms of "humour" and "humility" in feminist politics of difference. Humour and humility are to foster an attitude of looking at the uncontrollable, seeing the particular, being sensitive to the grief and melancholy of the concrete other as much as sharing the joy and happiness. The feminist alternative is not confined within the narrowness of a women's sensitivity and its morality, but constitutes
a postmodern critique of moral universalism in modern thought, in its call for an ethics towards otherness as a counterpoint to modern morality (be it in liberal or romanticist moral universalism).

(g) Seyla Benhabib’s difference feminism, while benefiting from Habermas’s communicative ethics, is instructive here, in its rejection of any disembodied, decontextualized "generalized other" (as under the Rawlsian veil of ignorance) to carry out any moral universalizability test, since without the consideration of the different, concrete, particular other, such a test will yield only either an empty standpoint or a logical leap from the experience of a small group of subjects to the human totality as such. (S. White 1991:102--5) One must pay due regard, as is typical in intimate relationships between lovers and friends, to the other’s "concrete history, identity, and affective-emotional constitution", to the other’s difference, not commonality per se.

But the problematic with Benhabib’s view (and difference feminism in a larger sense) is its tendency to envision an utopian community whose bonds are so tight, intimate, caring, and sensitive that it would easily degenerate, White critically remarks, into precluding the very commitment to diversity and difference which the feminists so much cherish at the outset, in spite of Benhabib’s denial that a feminist conception of the good life "either can or should be universalized."

(h) In light of this problematic in Benhabib’s view, Nancy Fraser proposes instead a different version of difference feminism, in that, since no politics can be feasible in the modern world with a particularistic concern for the concrete other as in Benhabib’s universe of intimate relationships, an alternative theme of the "collective concrete other" which is to situate between the extreme polarities of moral universalism and moral particularism is proposed. (S. White 1991:105-9) This different feminism with a touch of the collective concrete other is particularly suited for the politics of social movements which use their own resources and narratives to struggle for their own
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needs within a modern informational and communication structure of domination and empowerment. But Fraser’s approach suffers from a different problematic, namely, her ethic of solidarity holds only within a specific social group, against which others are to confront --, and thus the very virtue of care and particularity is sacrificed too quickly. The Fraserian universe of ethic of solidarity easily becomes a battleground among different ideals of collectivity struggling against each other --, in spite of her appeal to a notion of tolerance.

To summarize --, precisely because of this persistent problematic in any version of postmodern politics of difference as discussed hitherto, a sense of frustration and pessimism haunts those who still want to search for a postmodern politics to supersede liberal and romanticist politics. Or figurately put, the death of God (understood here as the loss of the metarrative of the Good and the Just) in modern times leads to a flourishing of infinite little gods (myriad voices of justice, each with its littleness and parochialism) -- not adding up to much of anything.

(2) A Disquieting Implication for Justice. A disquieting question to ask is therefore, If even the postmoderns are unable to offer a workable alternative of ‘local’ (not ‘universal’) justice (now that they have deconstructed the project of moral universalism for a just society), is there justice in the end? Are such fanciful terms used these days as ‘local justice’ (now that the project of moral universalism for a just society has failed miserably) postmodern oxymorons instead?

Judith Shklar’s skepticism is highly instructive here: “we simply cannot know enough about men or events to fulfill the demands of justice.” (S. White 1991:123) The point she made in "Giving Injustice Its Due", Yale Law Journal (1988) is to reject the tradition in moral-political philosophy of focusing on what is just, at the expense of what is unjust without reducing it to a derivative of the former,
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Why should we not think of those experiences that we call unjust directly, as independent phenomena in their own right? Common sense and history surely tell us that these are primary experiences and have an immediate claim on our attention. Indeed, most of us in all likelihood have said, "this is unfair or unjust", a lot more often than "this is just." Is there nothing much to be said about the sense of injustice that we know so well when we feel it? Why then do most philosophers refuse to think about injustice as deeply or as subtly as about justice?

Her sense of a permanence of injustice in human affairs and the absence of adequate knowledge about the world to formulate what justice is shift the attention to passive injustice (to stand passively in face of a public wrong) so much neglected in liberal politics (Section 5.2).(S.White 1991:123-5) But the dark side of this call for attention to passive injustice is its potential license to abuse the right of rectifying it as so much celebrated in Cicero’s classical republicanism: the promotion of the common good, the protection of communal bonds, as this easily fits into political romanticism of the communitarian type (Section 5.3).

But the virtue of Shklar’s thought is its relevance to the postmodern perspective of care in relation to passive injustice: to be attentive to the sufferings of others, even in the absence of a systemic formulation of what a just solution for all is to be.(S.White 1991:126-31) At least one tries to alleviate the particular pain, to give a sympathetic ear to the victim. In this sense, the postmoderns call for the need for fostering a sense of caring for others, as opposed to the liberal sense of toleration (be it expressed in Locke’s "Letter on Toleration" or in Mill’s "On Liberty") -- without, however, offering an alternative formulation of what justice is to be.

The postmoderns, after all, and the multiculturalists especially, are quick to reject liberal toleration as, explicitly or implicitly, suppressing or marginalizing difference (women, minorities, the poor, other cultural groups),
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whose members never receive adequate hearing or voice in liberal society. Andreas Huyssen’s argument (1986:291-2) is worth repeating: that the virtue of the postmodern thinking on politics consists of its resituating our awareness of the culture of enlightened modernity to its inner-imperialistic face (in marginalizing women, the poor, and the minorities), just as well to its outer-imperialistic facet (in trivializing non-European cultures). An awakening solidarity with the Third World (the Vietnam War legacy as an exemplar), a fostering sensitivity towards the plight of women, the poor, and other minorities -- this constitutes the brighter side of the postmodern politics of difference.

Yet this fostering of care, compassionate as it is, is only politically ineffectual without some principle as guidance for conflict resolution. (S. White 1991:133-36) Lyotard falls precisely in this difficulty, in the form of a global principle of pluralist justice: "One must maximize as much as possible the multiplicity of small narratives," within the constraint of prohibiting any narrative to dominate any others. In light of a peculiar weakness of the postmoderns in their tendency to indulge in "anything goes" mentality, an attempt to provide a restraint as in Lyotard’s attempt is heroic enough. Yet who does the enforcing under what institutional change as required -- a strong state? Or none at all, in which case how is it to work? At the endpoints of Lyotard’s celebration of small narratives, Stuart Sim (1992:89,115) critically observes, lie tyranny at one end and anarchism at another.

Even Michael Walzer’s alternative in Spheres of Justice (1983), that is, to recognize and respect cultural creations of others (as in different social spheres) does not fare any better. His normative guidance provides, White argues, no clear instruction to deal with conflicts in concrete, specific situations, other than, as in Walzer’s recent essay "The Communitarian Critique of Liberalism", Political Theory (1990), an obligation of the state to foster, not merely tolerate, "voluntary association, pluralism, toleration, separation, privacy, free speech, career open to talents, and so on." (S. White 1991:144) What
happens if, in Walzer's moral universe, different cultural communities disagree in a dispute? His answer is to appeal to the state qua political community for adjudication, "and its precise character will depend upon understandings shared among the citizens about the value of cultural diversity, local autonomy, and so on. It is to these understandings that we must appeal when we make our arguments." (W. Kymlicka 1989: 222-3) But Kymlicka's point is well taken: since the reason which brings the political community into the scene is precisely because of incompatible sensibilities shared by different cultural communities, the only adjudication possible must be by appeal to the shared meanings of the majority culture -- which renders Walzer's theory of justice problematic in its inadequate protection of minority rights, shocking though this may be.

This increasing postmodern frustration with the project of social justice cannot be clearly understood without a historicist reading of the increasing trend in advanced societies towards (a) social differentiation and (b) social rationalization (the spread of formal rationality).

(a) Social Differentiation. The very evolution of modern social structure into a highly socially differentiated one (as is the case in post-industrial society of our postmodern time) lays down the social basis on which the very talk of multiculturalism (as is in postmodern politics of difference) becomes fashionable (something totally inconceivable in medieval Christendom, in the 18th-century Islamic world, or in Ming China). The loss of the possibility of moral universalism for a just society has a lot to do with the collapse of what Durkheim referred to as the mechanical solidarity of the old, in its confrontation with the still ongoing professional specialization. Modern social structure is thus broken up into heterogeneous fragments, and this is all the more so in post-industrial society.

Unlike many other historical social structures, the post-industrial one in our time (also known as post-modern) is most marked by what is now known in social theory as social cleavage consequent on the centuries-long process of
social differentiation. The term ‘social differentiation’ refers to the increasing professional specialization into more and more diverse roles and occupations. And by ‘social cleavage,’ I therefore mean the problem of social tension which results from this amazing diversity of roles and occupations whose members therefore find it hard to achieve consensus on social issues (ranging from abortion and gun control through gay rights and women’s rights to environmental protection and nuclear power).

To be sure, social differentiation is not historically a new phenomenon, since it has been well familiar to us especially since the industrial revolution. But in post-industrial society (of our post-modern time), something new is happening, in that the process of social differentiation intensifies all the more, as its social structure becomes more and more divided, as never had before, into myriad social strata, groups, categories, and layers -- that is, more and more “pluralistic." More than any other historical epoch (be it ancient, medieval, or modern), our post-modern time is experiencing an unprecedented collapse of social consensus to a high degree of intensity, so that the modern institution of "majoritarian" politics becomes increasingly obsolete.

"Thus when a team of political scientists investigated Washington, D.C. recently to find out ‘who runs this place?’ they came up with a simple, crushing answer," Toffler (1980:375-9,387) argues, "'No one. Nobody is in charge here.'" And G.Harry Stine (1985:222) further added, "Basically, if you haven’t already noticed, nobody is really in charge of anything any more." Exaggerating for sure this may be --, yet from this historicist perspective, the postmodern pessimism is not unwarranted, and their neoconservatism, when present, is a historical byproduct. Such themes as multiculturalism and multi-civilizationalism (Chapter 6) in postmodern politics become the new ideology in postmodern time, and the question concerning postmodern moral-political responsibility is to be contextualized within this historicist framework. Old-fashioned liberalism and political romanticism are facing their historical obsolescence, not by virtue of
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any brilliant thinker who comes up with a devastating critique against either --, quite on the contrary.

This is not to suggest, however, that an alternative cultural voice of the otherness has henceforth equal presence side-by-side with the dominant Same --, but simply that the hegemony of the Same can no longer take for granted its dominant presence without accepting the difference of the otherness in a more fostering (not merely tolerant) way, which liberalism used to neglect. The old institution of "majoritarian" politics becomes obsolete in this light, and "a fusion of majority rule with minority power" (A. Toffler 1980:405) is deemed more politically correct in postmodern politics of difference.

There is something to be learnt, in this juncture, from sociologists (J. Coleman 1990), in that moral principles cannot be understood apart from concrete, historical conditions of power relations among various groups. 'Power' here means the control of resources and events by certain groups, and actions by some over others, as a result of market exchanges, coercion (not always nor necessary), social interactions, shared interests, or other means. In a postmodern social setting, the power structure is to be understood in terms of diverse social strata and organizations which proliferate to the extent that, often conflicting interests as each represents, each fights for its own sectorial demands (S. Eisenstadt 1966:3-4; M. Janowitz 1968,299) This helps to create an extremely complex social-stratification structure which is more and more pluralistic and divided into myriad strata, groups, categories, and layers --, and thus leads to the problematic of social cleavage (S. Lipset 1968:104; M. Schwartz 1990:20), all the more so in post-industrial societies of our postmodern time.

A new politics of dissensus is on the rise in post-modern time. The term 'dissensus' here refers to a politics of gridlock consequent on the collapse of social consensus as outlined before. And nothing exemplifies this politics of dissensus better than the "single-issue group" politics, that is, a politics in
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which "political organizations are springing up by the thousands, usually around what each perceives as a single burning issue: abortion, gun control, gay rights, school busing, nuclear power." (A.Toffler 1980:388) And this politics of dissensus "threatens to engulf us all." (P.Patton 1986:130), with its parochical concerns and cultural cleavages. (J.Pennock 1979:251,459-60)

Any search for a just society without excluding some groups (who do not share the principle in question) within it from certain benefits and rights as sanctioned by the principle (simple or complex) becomes practically impossible and most challenging (S.Eisenstadt 1966:32-5), since "never before have so many people in so many countries -- even educated and supposedly sophisticated people", Allan Toffler wrote (1980:274), "been so intellectually helpless, drowning, as it were, in a maelstrom of conflicting, confusing, and cacophonous ideas." The messy world of multicultural politics (as in post-modern America) reveals, in its darker side, an intensification of social tensions and conflicts, to the point that a challenge confronts the postmoderns with a face-to-face, defiant gaze: that is, as Benjamin Schwarz (1995:67) puts it, "we have not yet found a 'reasonable' solution here, and...perhaps such a solution cannot be found."

Karl Marx (1978:595) is right, in that "[m]en make their own history, but they do not make it just as they please. They do not make it under circumstances chosen by themselves, but under circumstances directly encountered, given and transmitted from the past." It is not up to anyone, therefore, to decide what an alternative moral-political responsibility is to be in our troubling postmodern time. The more decisive factor consists in the social condition at our postmodern epoch, whose social cleavage, however, is not friendly to any conception of a just society without some injustice to some groups within it.

My claim is therefore that what is justice for some is injustice for others in post-industrial society. Any principle of justice -- insofar as it is embodied in certain requirements (e.g., merit, need, seniority, and the ability to pay),
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in mechanisms (e.g., lotteries, queuing, and equal division), in ordinal rankings (e.g., welfare maximization over individual liberties/duties in utilitarianism, and political freedoms over distributive issues in the Rawlsian moral universe) or in any other criteria -- produces injustice to those individuals who do not share these embodiments in question (and therefore regard the principle as illegitimate to them). Injustice to these individuals (from their perspectives, to be sure) are bound to occur.

Now --, there can be as many reasons for this as there are individuals who do not share a given principle of justice. Maybe the reason is that they do not have the characteristics as stated in the principle (e.g., not talented enough, or not old enough) and therefore resent being excluded from the benefits and rights as sanctioned by it. Or maybe the reason is that they do not share the rationale behind the embodiment in question (e.g., the disagreement between the utilitarians and the Rawlsians in ordinal rankings concerning liberties and welfare maximization). The list of reasons can be longer for sure, but my point is that there can be many reasons for injustice to occur --, especially within the context of social cleavage in post-industrial society.

Obviously, what I have so far said is not totally path-breaking. For instance, Walzer's *Spheres of Justice* and Elster’s *Local Justice* all point to the coexistence of different principles of justice in different kinds of goods and issues (e.g., need for organ transplantation, merit for college admission, and seniority for selection of job layoffs) --, except that, while the former argues that this ought to be so allocated, the latter merely claims that they are regularly so arranged.

Harlan Lane (1992:48-9) in *The Mask of Benevolence* interestingly argue that what is taken as an act of benevolence by the hearing community to aim to mitigate the impairment of deaf people as far as possible (through hearing aids, speech therapy, rehabilitation, and else) can be looked at with suspicion by the deaf community as a mask of benevolence instead, an expression of paternalistic
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stereotypes with institutional interests. Guido Calabresi (1978:18,198) and Philip Bobbitt in Tragic Choices show how scarcity brings tragic choices, since the distribution of scarce goods has to decide which method(s) of allotment to use (e.g., market efficiency, political quotas, lotteries) and who shall get what (e.g., the poor vs. the rich, the needy vs. the not-needy) and in the process entails some suffering or wrong in one way or the other.

The passage by William Arrowsmith in "The Criticism of Greek Tragedy" which Calabresi (1978:18) and Bobbitt quoted is therefore worth repeating: "We have a prospect of insuperable moral difficulty, a nightmare of justice in which the assertion of any right involves a further wrong, in which fate is set against fate in an intolerable necessary sequence of violence." And Mona Harrington (1986:95,273) in The Dream of Deliverance in American Politics calls for a recognition of real loss for some groups and real gain for others in any policy in a world of limits, such that the dream of broad social justice (as illustrated by the promised goals of maximum freedom and maximum equality for all in American politics --, with the unquestioned, naive assumption that conflicts, however intense, can be resolved if the parties possess sufficient goodwill and rationality) has done more harm than good to the country (M.Harrington 1986:275),

What...must change if we are to escape from the cycle of self-delusion, misconception of problems, and seriously inadequate policies, is the way each group understands its purposes. And since the system of understanding held by each derives from the myth of deliverance, it is our attachment to the myth that must change. We must give it up. We have always asked how we can achieve a condition of mutual gain. We must now begin to ask how we can decently allocate the pain of unavoidable loss....[T]he limits are real. We cannot all come out ahead. There is no natural complementarity of interests....It is inevitable, no matter what the policy, that some will gain, others will clearly lose, not just in the short run but in the long run as well.
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But I want to add something more to the picture, that is, to accentuate this tension between some groups benefited from a principle of justice (be it simple or complex) and those (who do not share it) left out of it within the context of post-industrial society, with a disquieting implication that there is no justice in the end (as will be clear shortly).

Or to appropriate a phrase from William Connolly (1995), "immorality within morality" can now be restructured, in that justice is hard to be had without injustice, that each new configuration of justice is to hide what Nietzsche called a will to power representative of a new group at the expense of others, that is, in Nietzsche's metaphor, what is good for the sheep (the herd) is bad for the fox (the noble), but what is good for the fox is evil for the sheep. The good/evil and good/bad moralities illustrate the impossibility of justice without injustice: that is, injustice is inherent within justice (as in barring the fox from killing the sheep as just within the sheep's morality but unjust within the fox's), or by corollary, justice within injustice as well.

Or differently put, my claim is that what is justice for some becomes injustice for others in post-industrial society. The bottomline question is, Whose voice is speaking? The process of social differentiation institutionally accentuates this point all the more in post-industrial society of our postmodern time. And this has some disquieting implications (as will be discussed shortly) for whether or not there is justice at all in the end.

(b) Social Rationalization. But this is not the end of the postmodern problematic. The spread of formal rationality (the process of social rationalization) as embedded in the routine framework of modern life goes hand

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52. I can easily imagine that my argument could be abused by some groups to advance the claim that, since in postindustrial society there is no principle of justice for all, it is all right to indiscriminately oppress certain groups. But it is highly unclear how any principle of justice can be justified to license indiscriminate oppression, even if my claim is valid. Conversely, my finding could also be exploited (though with good intent) by other groups to argue that, since in postindustrial society there is no justice for all, those who suffer are to be compensated in some way for the resulting damage. But it is also highly unclear how this demand for compensation is to be determined or justified, even if my claim is valid.
in hand, under the auspices of the scientific and technological mindset, be it known as what Weber understands as "instrumental" (in contrast to "value rationality"), what Habermas calls "technical" (as different from "practical rationality"), or what Mannheim refers to as "functional" (as opposed to "substantive rationality"). (K. Mannheim 1935:58)

And when put within the capitalist context (be it early, modern, or late), this instrumental ethos is all the more revealed, since the capitalist value framework, as Lester Thurow (1995a:635) rightly argues, has no transcendental values but individual preferences. That is, it claims neither glorious destination nor noble future, neither collective interest nor long-tailed horizon, but its myopic fame that "no system can do better when it comes to maximizing individual personal preferences." It celebrates parochical myopia in its most blatant form, comparable to (though not exactly like) what the Harvard sociologist biologist Edward Wilson (1993:24,26) refers to as the human genetic behavioral code favouring family and tribal parochialism.

The end values are not asked; only the means to achieve them are important: "Capitalism...has no over-arching theories that allow it to change those individual values or preferences....All preferences are equally legitimate. Wherever preferences come from, and however they are formed, capitalism exists simply to satisfy them. Capitalism will maximize self-destructive preferences just as fast as it does any other and it does not in fact recognize 'noble' purposes." (L. Thurow 1995a:635)

And this instrumental ethos is not restricted solely to capitalism -- but to other socio-economic lifeforms as well. The triumph of formal rationality, Heidegger argues, represents a vision of modernity which elevates humans as the absolute center and measure of all beings, and as the heirs to God's power (after what Nietzsche calls the death of God in modern times), that is, the "lords of the earth" (D. Levin 1988:21) for mastering and dominating nature. But when rationality of this type becomes totally instrumental, solely as a function of
power (as the will to master and dominate), it helps to legitimize the construction of modern totalitarianism (Nazi, Fascist, and Communist) and to engineer a Holocaust. The legacy of the triumph of social rationalization in its extreme form is terror (D. Levin 1988:4) --, as is the most fundamental concern shared by such thinkers as Martin Heidegger, Michael Foucault, Erich Fromm, Herbert Marcuse, Max Horkheimer, Theodore Adorno, and Jurgen Habermas. Political romanticism, in this light, becomes an usual suspect among the postmoderns as well.

The Foucaultian analysis of micro-power network has this spread of social rationalization in mind. (S. White 1991:120) In going beyond the Weberian analysis of instrumental rationality in the institutional sphere, Foucault is a pessimist postmodern insofar as he understands how much social rationalization has penetrated into all domains of modern social life and institutions, such that all human subjectivity, all public meanings and social relationships are largely structured in its power image. This is not to therefore advocate, however, a fatalist stand towards the extant order of social rationalization, as no one says it better than what Durkheim warns his colleagues against: "the genetic fallacy of reducing the obligatory character of norms to the obedience shown by followers confronted with the power to command and the power to threaten sanctions." (J. Habermas 1990a:72-3) The point is merely that any alternative discourse and lifeform would surely confront the institutional intimidation of being shoved aside into the margins of existence more than ever, and thus emerges the postmodern pessisism.

In the end, this social-rationalized ethos reflects the modern critical spirit of science, as a sign of the hegemonic triumph of the scientific genre. It stands for what Nietzsche understands as the paradigmatic spirit of the Enlightenment in the intellectual history of modern Europe: "clear thinking of reason, rigorous thought, cautious judgement, logical conclusions" (A. Megill 1985:66), within the constraint of sense experience and observation. What makes
the search for a new social arrangement and for a new cultural worldview most untractable is a disturbing tendency in modern (and now postmodern as well) science (qua the critical spirit as embedded within scientific methods) which has come to challenge all groundings of human values hitherto existing -- though science does not engage into the business to construct, as Weber (1946) is known to thus speak in "Science As a Vocation," alternative life meaning and value. Harry Neumann's point (1991:3) is well taken: "All science is nihilist."

Consequently, it is not coincidental to hear, in postmodern humanistic-social intellectual circles, talks of cultural relativism, of political pluralism, of a centerless worldview, of endless deconstruction, of radical skepticism, of moral emotivism (A. MacIntyre 1994:29-33), -- and something of the nihilist sort. Friedrich Nietzsche, Fyodor Dostoevsky, Ivan Turgenev, Leo Tolstoy, Bernard Russell, Ludwig Wittgenstein, Jean-Paul Sartre, Martin Heidegger, Max Weber, Michael Foucault, Jacques Derrida, Karl Jaspers, Hannah Arendt, Albert Camus, H. Thielicke, Donald Crosby, Robert Eden, G. Martin -- different thinkers from earlier times to ours as they are, yet they take seriously the nihilistic challenge, in pondering how to overcome it. (H. Thielicke 1969; G. Martin 1989) Jaspers well summarized the disenchanting spirit: "Beyond question there is a widespread conviction that human activities are unavailing; everything has become questionable; nothing in human life holds good; that existence is no more than an unceasing maelstrom of reciprocal deception and self deceptions and ideologies" (K. Jaspers 1957:15; G. Martin 1989:327) --, in a culture of "specialists without spirit, sensualists without heart," in Weber's parlance. (M. Weber 1958:182)

"A denegation that is readily...perceptible in the widespread refusal, the suspension of historical will, and even in the obsession, in the apparently opposite compulsion to historicize everything, to document everything...Isn't this the symptom of a collective intuition, and that we must...confront the absence of a future and the glacial times ahead?", Jean Baudrillard (1986:25,26)
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reflexively wrote, "It is that everything happens as if we were continuing to manufacture history, whereas in accumulating signs of the social, signs of the political, signs of progress and change, we only contribute to the end of history." To this Julian Pefanis (1986:29) adds, "At the end of history transgressive laughs, the mad walk freely, the silent speak and the dead live."

What at first appears as the rather innocent phenomenon of social rationalization in modernization turns out, in closer examination, as a signification of something larger in the human community, something which constitutes the most troublesome crisis of our times. Any search for a moral authority in the public sphere as based upon a rationally motivated, intersubjective communicative process, be it liberal, political-romanticist, or postmodern in form, is an illusion without this historicist contextualization, as if "searching for the pot of gold at the end of rainbow." (J.Coleman 1990:53)

If the postmoderns are criticized as pessimistic (A.Huyssen 1986:281-2) or as "reactionary-neoconservative" in the absence of any "coherent politics" (B.Smart 1992:193), they rightly deserve this criticism. But the challenge to the optimists is for them to come up with a feasible alternative which must be neither romantic nor fanatic, neither nostalgic nor dreamful. MacIntyre's observation is worth repeating: that traditional societies were morally stable and robust precisely because of the absence of any need for justifying moral beliefs, based as they were on unquestioned custom and authority, which, starting with the moderns and now the postmoderns, however, are rejected with contempt (as not less exemplified by the liberals) in elevating the power of critical reason to a new public virtue for moral vindication which is no longer possible without this very authority and custom of the past already so denied. (S.Holmes 1993:93)

As Stuart Sim (1992:98) pertinently asks, "What is the politics of postmodernism? Nihilistic skirmishing on the sidelines, self-imposed exile from collective discourse, the solipsism of tending one's own little narrative."
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The postmodern pessimist spirit of abandoning the project of moral universalism for a just society and their misfortune of being unable to find a workable local justice as a potent alternative have some disquieting implications, if my critique of the postmoderns is carried to its logical conclusion, for what justice is to be understood. If my claim is valid, in that what is justice for some becomes injustice for others (which holds true as well in postmodern politics of difference) in post-industrial society (or that there is no justice without injustice there) --, then what is the point of using the term 'justice' any more, if my critique is carried to its logical conclusion? Such fanciful phrases used by the postmoderns as 'local justice' (or 'particular' justice) as opposed to 'universal justice' of the moderns are postmodern oxymorons, contradictions in terms as they are. These postmodern oxymorons give us some false consolation to think that there is still justice to be sought, even though it is applied only locally. The phrase 'local justice' is as much contradictory in meaning as 'cruel kindness."

Perhaps the brute fact we have yet to acknowledge, much that our anthropocentric inclination disallows us to avow, is that there is no justice in the end, that is, that there is no social justice which is not somehow at the expense of some groups, while benefiting some others --, and the postmodern politics of difference cannot escape this disquieting condition either. But then the word 'justice' will lose much of its former sense of awe or of respect which once so strongly captured the spirit of its adherents. As Charles Taylor (1982:136-8) rightly puts it, what marks off the moral from the non-moral is that in the former case we tend to unanimously react with awe and admiration to people who have higher goals and activities to pursue or does what is categorically imperative. But now, if justice is solely in the eyes of the beholders, what moral force, be it in terms of awe or respect of the old sense, does the term 'justice' command anymore? Everything seems to be boiled down to a politics of dissensus, where some will win and some will lose. It is time to acknowledge this
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brutal fact of human life: that there is no justice in the end.

I therefore find no better way of ending this section by repeating what Heidegger said yestertime, who, when interviewed by the German magazine Der Spiegel in 1966, suggested that the spiritual crisis in modernity (and now postmodernity as well) is so bad that "[o]nly a god can save us." (S. White 1991:63) But as Nietzsche had already said, "God is dead."

5.5 The Imperative of National Wealth and Power in the Other

Is this problematic in the public realm unique only to the modern Same, however? No and twice no --, it has spread to the Others as well. A didactic tale of an Other qua the Sinitic world is exemplary. The historicist conception of what is just in this Other can be analyzed in respect of (1) traditional moral particularism, (2) modern moral univeralism, and (3) a political silhouette of its coming future --, with a comparable fate as has awaited the Same as discussed before. Let me examine them, in that order.

(1) Traditional Moral Particularism. Moral particularism in the old days took a different form in this Other qua the Confucian ancien regime. The main institutional peculiarity in this Other, consist as it did of its Oriental-despotic conception of a just state on the basis of good statesmanship (no stateswomanship, however), instead of good laws, elevated the force of moral norms and rituals at the expense of its legal counterparts, for the interest of no other social stratum than the literatus-officialdom. (F. Teiwes 1984:55) This Other’s literatus-officialdom was firmly rooted in an Oriental despotic framework, where the relationship between the state and its populace was as much distant as hierarchical, thereby expressing a sharp distinction between superior officials to whom deference and unquestioned obedience were due and a populace that had no formal rights to influence the decisions of the mandarin stratum (G. White 1983:28), legitimized as this hierarchical distribution of power was
largely by virtue of the metanarrative of Confucian ritual ceremonialism qua the dominant political ideology (J.Wang 1992:3-4), whose ethics did not originate in individuals, but between people, or what Takeshi Umehara (1992a:10-1) calls mutualism, that is, an oriental ethics of interpersonal responsibility.

The metanarrative, appeal as it did to a particularistic relationship between an individual and society on the conceptual basis of humanness (jen), required as much fairness and benevolence on the part of superiors as devotion to duty on the part of inferiors. (W.Chan 1967:88; E.Balazs 1964:196) Should doubt arise, an appeal to moderation (chung-yung) could be used as a guide to human action, be it centrality (in not deviating from the mean) or harmony (in adhering to compliance). Only then would the individual behave correctly and society operate rightly, to the effect that the Way of Heaven (Tao) was to prevail. It was this metanarrative of the Way of Heaven -- understood as the moral law, which originated all things.

When applied to the relationships between an emperor and his subjects, on the first level, and between him and his literatus-officials, on the second level, a conception of the Mandate of Heaven was used, in accordance to the Way of Heaven so delineated. Thus, if an emperor ruled in a tyrannical manner (away from the imperatives of benevolence and moderation), his subjects had a duty to depose him (F.Teiwes 1984:59), just as much as when an emperor were to resist in serious error (away from the principle of righteousness) and refuse to listen to the remonstrations of his literatus-officials, they were then bound to disassociate themselves from the throne through resignation and withdrawal or, in extreme cases, to seek the monarch's overthrow -- though this was historically true largely in theory only, Oriental-despotic as the whole system was in practice. Surely, this talk of oriental despotism needs some qualification in its ignoring a more democratic, humanistic legacy as inherent in East Asian ethos (which, as advanced by Ivan Hall, John Fairbank, and Kim Dae Fung, will be addressed in Section 6.1), yet the overall picture still stands as it largely
This metanarrative, therefore, became a systematic moralizing force which served as much a moral code of proper behavior for the emperor and all literatus-officials (be they ministers or bureaucrats) as a presumption that once the ethical canon was mastered and internalized (through the passing of competitive examinations designed to test the mastery of the classics), a just and benevolent state would result. There was consequently really little need for either the promulgation of laws or the formal structuring of political institution (J. Wang 1992:2), to the effect that the whole bureaucratic apparatus was governed by virtuous men, who, through personal examplars and moral persuasion rather than legal decrees and punishment, would bring about the populace's welfare and social order in a virtuocracy (W. Chan 1967:87).

Yet hegemonic as this metanarrative was, it was not exempt from alternative challenge, that is, from an opponent by the name of Legalism, which placed its emphasis on statecraft trickery, geopolitik, and the enforcement of law supported by a penal code of the severest kind (as comparable to Machiavelli's view). (Y. Mei 1994:555; W. Chan 1967:89) The dispute between the two antagonists lied on the issue of what constituted human nature, in that while the Confucians regarded human nature as inherently good but corrupt by society (as congenial to Rousseau's line of thought), as Mencius put it, "By nature men are alike but through practice they have become far apart" (W. Chan 1967:87), the Legalists saw neither goodness nor intelligence in the ordinary humans (as much cynical a view as analogous to a Hobbesian ethos) and, since to consult the latter's will was to court disaster, the ruler must resolutely make all decisions by himself and exact from the populace unquestioning obedience -- supported by a penal code of the severest kind. (Y. Mei 1994:555) Precisely because of what Etienne Balazs called the "totalitarian" tendency in the latter, it is no wonder that among all philosophers in this Other, the Legalist metanarrative stood alone in its advocacy of the precedence of the state over the individual and of national honor.
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over the welfare of its populace.

By contrast, the dominant metanarrative, begin though it did by expressing the mentality of the feudal lords, ended up changing into a system that became the organizing power behind the literatus-officials in giving full expression to their interests, ideas, and ideals (E.Balazs 1964:7) --, and thus, in Marx's parlance, could be taken as an ideology of the ruling stratum of the literatus-officialdom. In relation to the peasantry, by illustration, it justified, firstly, the perpetuation of their manial labour (a least respectable, though indispensable, vocation) in the name of superiority/inferiority distinction, as in Mencius's blunt remark, "Great men have their proper business, and little men have their proper business....Some labour with their minds, and some labour with their strength" (E.Balazs 1984:17), secondly, the endless state intervention in the name of a Mandate of Heaven embodying the literatus-officials as the state itself, and thirdly, a hierarchical state in the name of respect, humility, docility, obedience, submission, and subordination to elders and betters (as between prince and minister in the "five bonds" --, besides those between father and son, between husband and wife, between older brother and younger brother, and between friends). (E.Balazs 1964:18; V.Schwarcz 1986:3)

Likewise, it justified as much, in relation to the merchants and craftsmen, their less respectable social role in the traditional social stratification structure, to the effect that "a gentleman is not a tool" (E.Balazs 1964:153; R.Kraus 1984:142), as, in relation to the lower social strata, cruel punishment in the name of the family as the main pillar of society and of collective responsibility, in that the family as a whole unit had to expiate for a crime committed by one of its members. (E.Balazs 1964:156)

So did it justify, in relation to the literatus-officials themselves, firstly, their relative immunity before the law in the name of a government, based as it was on good men (moralizing), not good laws (legalizing), in a society where the ordinary subject was deprived of all legal rights and at any
moment was in danger of being sentenced to deportation, banishment, or decapitation by judges who could only be described as guardians of the law in the interests of, and by virtue of, the literatus-officials (E.Balazs 1964:154), and secondly, the practice of nepotism within the literatus-officialdom in the name of family centrality, since the required attitude of obedience to superiors made it impossible for them to demand higher salaries, and in the absence of any control over their activities from below it was inevitable that they should purloin from society what the state failed to provide (E.Balazs 1964:10), as Balazs rightly observed, "according to the usual pattern, a Chinese official entered upon his duties only after spending long years in study and passing many examinations; he then established relations with protectors, incurred debts to get himself appointed, and then proceeded to extract the amount he had spent on preparing himself from the people he administered -- and extracted from them both principle and interest."

By contrast, the Legalist otherness found its adherents mostly on the margins of political structure, as among ambitious tyrants and retired or dismissed officials. It became, in relation to the latter, a rhetorical weapon against the extant establishment for those, be they retired petty officials or ones who were dismissed but had strong links with those engaged in practical affairs (military men, merchants, technicians), who were in daily contact with problems of administration, public works, and frontier defense. (E.Balazs 1964:198). These petty officials, often seek as they did alliance with ambitious tyrants interested in conquest of power, could be best exemplified by those who helped the Ch’in liquidate the feudal state, establish a new dynasty in 221 B.C., enforce the Legalists’ totalitarian ideology, and as much suppress other schools as burn their books. (W.Chan 1967:90)

The Weberian legal-rational authority, however, must not be confused with the Legalist totalitarian type, in that, firstly, while the Weberians conceive an ideal type of legal-rational authority in appointed bureaucracy, in which a
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Hierarchically organized administrative body is as much entrusted with clearly defined tasks and subject to detailed procedures as staffed by officials with specialized training (F. Teiwaes 1984:55), the Legalists were more interested in a penal code of the severest kind, to be implemented by literatus-officials who, like the Confucians, had no detailed, specialized knowledge. (E. Balazs 1964:9) Secondly, while within the Weberian legal-rational framework, any obedience to the holder of an office is strictly limited to the sphere of the office's jurisdiction as delimited by the rules (F. Teiwaes 1984:54), the Legalist norms allowed a discretion of their implementation by tyrants in the name of statecraft trickery and geopolitik. And finally, while the Weberian legal-rational legitimacy rests on the subordinates' belief in the "legality" of patterns of normative rules and the right of those elevated to authority under such rules to issue commands (that is, obedience is owed not to individuals but to the "law"), the Legalist legitimacy-type was often fused as much with "charismatic" quality of tyrants as with their Machiavellian power politics. (F. Teiwaes 1984:54) The Legalist norms, when compared with the Weberian ones, are always much more limited both in scope and in authenticity, as this should not be surprising in a land which never knew a formal and independent legal order, as so required in a Weberian legal-rational authority-framework. (H. Tai 1989:8)

This Other had the dual misfortune, therefore, to have this despotic, hierarchical distribution of power institutionalized, both in Confucian and Legalist forms (J. Wang 1992:3-4), though with the former enjoying the status of supremacy. The strengths of this bureaucratic tradition (which had long been regarded as this Other's pride of its system of government) were four-fold, in that firstly, it governed with an awesome moral force, without a system of rule by law, secondly, it ensured the proper conduct of its literatus-officials through a system of special censors designated by the emperor at various governmental levels installed to control the huge bureaucratic machine, thirdly, it provided its smooth functioning without dispute over ranks and privileges.
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through a systematic classification into ranks and grades which attributed to each a special set of privileges and a compensation scale -- to be reinforced by complex differentiations in modes of address, dress, rank, and other symbolic attributes (G. White 1983:28), and lastly, it facilitated the voluminous flow of official documents and memoranda moving up and down the hierarchical ladder with the establishment of a certain prescribed form and literary style.

Yet the price to pay for a rule without law by appeal to a metanarrative which tolerated as much no deviance from tradition and status as no immanent critique of its ascriptive and hierarchical rigidity was too high to pay, since firstly, the provincial head or the top officer in a branch of the huge bureaucratic machine often became a bottleneck in both policy initiation and implementation process. (J. Wang 1992:3-4) Secondly, at its other extreme as in its lowest level of administration (county-level or lower), all important decisions affecting the community were made by elites with the blessing of the magistrate often contrary to the wishes of the earthbound peasants who constituted the majority. Thirdly, the state/society relationship resulting from this authoritarian administrative apparatus was both distant and hierarchical, expressing a demand of unquestioned obedience and deference on the part of the populace to superior gentry-officials, as arbitrary decision making, unresponsive to the uneducated masses in the villages, remains to this day the basic problematic in the bureaucratic establishment of this Other. Fourthly, it was infected with various forms of factionalism, be they patron-client connection, ruler-vassal relation, provincialism, or independent-kingdom mentality. Nor was it, finally, spared the problematic of bureaucratic nepotism, a most degenerative aspect of this Oriental rule without law qua a most elaborated system of nepotism, a complex network of family linkages and corruption. (NPQ 1992:4)

Modern Moral Universalism. The 19th-century intrusion of the hegemonic Same qua the expansionist modern West into this Other (Section 1.5), as much exploitative by the conqueror as humiliating to the conquered, had the virtue of
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awakening this Other to a sober, cruel reality: that its moral particularism for a just society in the name of a rule without law had perpetuated (as was often denied by virtue of its false, Sinocentric pride) a most inefficient system of socio-political relations which was as much despotic and backward as no longer functional in a modern setting. Among such major intellectual and revolutionary elites as (a)Liang Ch’i-ch’ao, (b)Sun Yat-sen, (c)Lu Xun, and (d)Mao Tse-tung, it was recognized that a moral universalism for a new yet just society was badly needed, if not within the urgency of the days for national salvation from within as in the civil war and the feudal past and from without as in foreign hegemony on their very native soil. Let me explain what I mean.

(a) As the father of modern journalism in this Other (L.Leo 1995), Liang in his brief sojourn abroad around the end of yestercentury understood how much a new sense of value, a new consult with the people, a new form of consciousness, or in brief, a nationalist sentiment was needed as a new metanarrative to supercede the old in a historical epoch where this Other had its historical status shifted from the once dominant symbol qua the center of civilization in the Orient to a humiliating one of semi-feudal, semi-colonial inferiority. Yet as a literary figure, his vision was delimited within a narrow, eccentric horizon, in its naive espousal of a strong state (something congenial to Chiang Kai-shek’s Nationalist regime) modelling on Bismark’s Germany and Tsarist Russia for a search for national wealth and power, in conjunction with a systematic use of literature (the fictional genre especially) as a socio-political vehicle for nation-building through its propagandistic pedagogy of a new consciousness for the ignorant masses. After all, in the heyday of modern literature, this Other then experienced a vast array of culture in print, with novels and newspapers as the mass media for constructing a new "imagined community," in Benedict Anderson’s term, that is, to imagine a large group of people doing some shared activities, seeing some common visions, as so crucial for a modern nationalist mindset.
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If Liang was political-romanticist of the communitarian type (Section 5.3), this intellectual tendency was peculiar to many literary "new youths" moderns (Section 1.5) who, with the introduction of Western concepts ("freedom", "democracy", "science", "nationalism"), exploited them as a critical vantage point from which to provide an immanent attack of traditional moral particularism as backward, as despotic, as corrupt (V.Schwarz 1986:7,118,125; C.Furth 1972:62) -- while searching for a new imagined community as the new conception of the good to ground a moral universalism for a new yet just society. But their romanticness was faulted precisely in their literary twist of not feeling at home with revolutionary struggle --, arm-chair, literary writers as they were, not men of action.

(b) This romantic trait Sun Yat-sen saw quite clearly, in that a moral universalism for a new yet just society could not be grounded on the sole basis of a metanarrative of nationalism, but more of a revolutionary epic as well -- which thereby made him on both sides of the divided state in modern times a heroic, founding father of their modernness. In his Three Principles, a communitarian vision of a new imagined community set out a new conception of the good as prior to the right, as determinant to what a just state was to be conceived, in this ordinal priority: namely, firstly, getting rid of the Manchu ancien regime through a nationalist revolutionary struggle, secondly, democratic-restructuring its social institutions (largely along the American line), and lastly, providing common welfare to all. But it is not his theoretical sophistication as a political theorist (which he lacked, a doctor by training as he was, and whose absence made as much his vision often unsystematic, shallow, and speculative as his writings more like a political pamphlet), but rather his revolutionary epic in overthrowing the Manchu ancien regime (which marked, for many of his folks, the founding of a new society) that he became immortal in the modern memory of this Other. Yet he died a sad man (L.Lee 1995), since his vision was never institutionalized, partly due to his theoretical shoddiness (the
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ethnocentric nationalism in blaming the Manchu rule for this Other's decline, the uncritical modeling on American federalism, and the ordinal priority of democratic-restructuring over economic rebuilding) and partly due to an absence of a historical institutional maturity which he finally blamed for most of his failure.

(c)This pessimism was held by his contemporary, Lu Xun, who, a literary giant in his own right, was tormented in his psyche between this Other's cultural past from which he could not separate himself even in searching for a modern identity and the dark forces in this very past where lied the most inhumane, oppressive, backward, spirit-suffocating elements in what he painfully referred to as a cannibalistic culture (that this Other's tradition was nothing but man-eating, in its most gruesome Oriental-despotic form) --, something he beautifully yet sorrowfully depicted in "Diary of a Madman." (X.Lu 1990) This cannibalistic past so much haunted him and his folks that, however much a self-awareness and a critical distancing were called for (as so required for any moral universalism for a just society), a revolution in this Other could only be a prolonged process, to the point of being so overly pessimistic of its eventuality that, as in "The New Year Sacrifice", he could not but allegorically ask, Is there a soul after death? --, namely, Is there a liberating soul in a new republic? (L.Lee 1995) If he equally died a sad man (just as Sun did before), he sought for a spiritual redemption within the Christian notion of self-sacrifice for the Lord, that is, a fatalist, pessimist spirit which believed in no good ending of any revolution in this Other, as so vividly portrayed in a tale of how a man (qua any revolutionary movement) was crushed to death in his sleep by a nearby sleeping giant (qua the Chinese past). This was tragic, for sure, for the greatest 20th century literary figure in this Other who after all pioneered in revolutionary ideas and was ready to die for a society from which he was however so alienated.

(d)Mao, by contrast, lacked this pessimist spirit, wholeheartedly devoted as he was to nationalist revolution with no second thought for its historical
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inevitability for someone who was so convinced of Marxist historical dialectics. Unlike Sun, he was a political-romanticist of the anarchic type (Section 5.3), in his search for the holy grail of the utopian communes (Section 1.5), to the point that even the terror of the Cultural Revolution did not dampen its Messianic appeal in his political conviction. Yet the institutional legacy of his reign produced a society quite different in outcome, as much revolutionary in spirit yet as reactionary in practice that this Other in his times was at once as much political-romanticist of the communitarian type as moral particularistic of the imperial past. Why?

Consider the cadre system (in which numerous bureaucrats hold various degrees of authority, be it political, administrative, military, or technical), constituted as it has the backbone of political elitism in this revolutionary Other. (G.White 1983:42)

On one level, it etothes some bureaucratic tendencies in the pre-revolutionary epoch. Three illustrations will illuminate the point. It governs, firstly, with an awesome moral force. Both literatus-officials and cadres emphasize moral suasion as a ruling device preferable to fixed legislation in a virtuocracy where models are still propagated as political exemplars. Richard Kraus’s obversation (1984:142) is interesting enough: "while the lessons learned from Marx, Engels, Lenin, and Mao surely differ in content from those contained in Confucius, Mencius, and the dynastic histories, the assumption that wisdom may be derived from the judicious study of classic texts remain constant." A cadre, like his pre-revolutionary counterpart, is generalist in orientation, not technical-specialist. While a gentleman was not to be treated as "a tool" --, "redness" (ideology and politics) is likewise prior in significance to "expertise" (science and technology) for a cadre.

Secondly, the cadre system and its literatus counterpart are professional-classificatory in its complex hierarchy of ranks, decorations, and regulations, with a standardization of systems of pay and promotion. (G.White 1983:32) And
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Lastly, just as special censors were designated by the emperor to correct abuse and corruption, its modern successor has its own watchdogs for corruption check against violators, be they the use of persuasion through education and the dispatch of special work teams (J.Wang 1992:135), retification campaigns (involving education, reform, and purge), the "Downward Transfer" movement (temporary transfer of party cadres down to a lower-level assignment or to a rural village or factory), or the May Seventh cadre schools (working in the fields with commune production teams, performing duties required to run the school, and theoretical studies of works by Mao, Marx, and Lenin). (J.Wang 1992:136-7)

On another level, the cadre machine is equally inflicted with some problematics as familiar to traditional bureaucratism -- formal sanctions notwithstanding. Five illustrations will suffice. Firstly, bureaucratic nepotism abounds as much now as then in this Other. In the ancien regime, the required attitude of obedience to superiors made it impossible for literatus-officials to demand higher salaries, and in the absence of any control over their activities from below it was inevitable that they should purloin from society what the state failed to provide. (E.Balazs 1964:10) Nowadays, cadres, as if following this ancient propensity, usually retain a distinct proportion of economic surplus for their own personal advantage in such forms as high salaries, servants, the use of automobiles, or else. (R.Kraus 1984:137) The problematic worsens as, unlike members of the imperial ruling strata (mandarins, literati, gentry, or landlord bureaucrats), they are not allowed to private ownership of property. (R.Kraus 1984:141) Thus, the socialist institutional check against the acquisition of private fortunes only helps producing the side-effect of encouraging cadre corruption. The major ideological rationale behind the Cultural Revolution is Mao's suspicion, reaching epic proportions after the Great Leap, of a "bourgeois restoration", a "class of bureaucrats...sucking the blood of the workers". (E.Friedman 1984:158) The modern cadres as a bureaucratic stratum become
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entrenched, and a bureaucratic "state capitalism" is institutionalized. (E. Friedman 1984:156)

Secondly, just as feudal factionalism spread among traditional officials in various forms of patron-client, or ruler-vassal relations (E. Friedman 1984:150), modern cadres use their positions to manipulate promotion and demotion -- and typically seek the security imagined to rest on the patronage of more powerful officials, weave as they in turn do webs of personal dependence as the clients of still higher-ranking cadres. (R. Kraus 1984:135) Surely, feudal factionalism also carried other forms (patron-client and ruler-vassal relations aside), as in intrabureaucratic conflicts around generational, regional, and local divisions. Likewise, modern intrabureaucratic factionalism abounds, be it "provincialism" (as in cadre factionalism among different regions and provinces), "gerontocratism" (old veteran cadres clinging to power and position, thereby blocking the career promotions of younger ones), or "independent kingdoms" (the struggle between the centre and the locals). (J. Wang 1992:138; R. Kraus 1984:146)

Thirdly, just as the literati-officials often came from children of literati-officials (in a kind of literati-official class closure, though sometimes allowing those from the lower class to gain entry to it through hardwork, ability, intelligence, and some form of connections), the modern cadres often recruit from children of cadres (a tendency likely to be exacerbated by the elitist reforms of the education system in our times). (R. Kraus 1984:139)

Fourthly, modern cadre apparatus, like traditional literatus-officialdom, suffers from a chronic bureaucratic hierarchism which often results in administrative inertia and rigidity (that is, the in-ability to make timely decisions as needed), and the problem is worsened by the lack of education, skills, and training among many cadres (peasant and worker cadres especially). (J. Wang 1992:139-40) Among veteran cadres, the problematic further deteriorates into what Deng Xiaopeng called "ossified thinking": the common tendency of looking at problems "in the light of their personal
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And finally, throughout the history of this Other, arbitrary decision making, unresponsive to the uneducated masses in the villages, remains to this day the most fundamental problematic in the bureaucratic establishment in relation to the lower strata. The Confucian stress of a benevolent sovereign notwithstanding, literatus-officials often made decisions unresponsive to the peasants (who, though constituting the majority of the populace, yet lacked any formal or legal rights). Likewise in this modern Other, party members and cadres tend to become too remote from the masses (or, for that matter, from their nonparty cadre colleagues), the Maoist imperative of observing the mass-line policy equally notwithstanding. (W.White 1983:44) It is not surprising, consequently, that Deng's reforms in our times include such measures as decentralization, administrative efficiency, a system of public service in professional categories, legal procedures, and legal enforcement procedures -- all taken to correct bureaucratic corruptions (or "feudal fascism" and "state capitalism") so understood. (J.Wang 1992:142) And Milton Friedman's view (1993:65) is correct enough: unless this Other curtails its bureaucratic machine, it will be very difficult to achieve what its vast potential has us to believe.

(3) A Political Silhouette of the Coming Future. It is in light of this historical legacy of moral particularism in the imperial days and of romanticist moral universalism for a just society (of the communitarian type, the Maoist utopia of the anarchic category notwithstanding) that this Other never experiences what a liberal democracy (Section 5.2), nor, for that matter, any postmodern politics of difference (Section 5.4), is to be. Marx is right after all, in that humans do not change history as they please, but only under appropriate material circumstances: "No social order ever disappears before all the productive forces for which there is room in it have been developed, and new, higher relations of production never appear before the material conditions of their existence have matured in the womb of the old society."
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The Maoist fanatic attempt to rush into a communistic promised land during the Cultural Revolution in the absence of institutional maturity which only resulted in disastrous consequences of the most terrifying kind thus vindicates Marx's insight. Why should this be surprising, however, for a continent as vast as this Other which has for so long been situated in the history of its millenarian civilization within a primarily agricultural universe, often as much subject to the Malthusian cycle of poverty and unmerciful natural forces as slowed down by what Deng himself refers to as "this great weight of the peasantry in such a large land mass" (NPQ 1992:11), where only 3.1% of the populace ever demonstrate publicly on their own initiative (with great risk), 2.8% ever write to their rulers, and 20.9% look on politics as nothing but "a power of struggle involving a minority of individuals" (HKS 1994:8)?

Yet recent liberalization measures in this post-Mao historical epoch (Section 1.5) warrants some optimistic sign of progress towards an eventual democratic-restructuring, for two good reasons as familiar enough as much in social theory as in political sociology, namely, the dual process of (a) social differentiation (Sections 1.5 & 2.5) and (b) social rationalization (Section 3.4).

(a) Social Differentiation. In the institutional sphere, a transition to democratic restructuring is already in sight in three ways. (A. Walder 1993; J. Wang 1992:239-40) Firstly, the emergence of civic associations in the process of social differentiation under modernization helps to shape politics into a pluralistic framework. The weakening of party control over economic work units, the increased business/local linkage at the expense of state authority over locality in what Andrew Walder phrases as "local/state corporatism", migrant workers moving from one city to the next ("floating population"), and the emergence, or reemergence, to a degree, of what David Strand refers to as "independent social identity" in associations and institutions (universities, mass media, and factories) in urbanities or "clan associations, religious
organizations, and secret societies" (M.Tu 1993:xiv) -- trends of this kind facilitate the development of a democratic consciousness and open dissent. This is precisely what happened in the 1989 democracy movement, whose bloody crackdown, however, means that democratic restructuring is still in its infancy, so is the process of social differentiation (as this Other just entered its economic take-off stage, in Walt Rostow's sense).

Secondly, social stratification is related to democratic politics in that, as Lowell Dittmer argues, the crackdown aforeindicated reflects leadership cleavages along generational and ideological lines, start as they did with the emergence of influential, conservative and anti-reform Party elites of the old guards, who were challenged by a corps of younger, pragmatic, but pro-reform intellectuals, many of whom, Party members in their own right, advocated more attention to human rights, privatization and a multi-party political system. The failure of the latter means in this light a temporary setback, but with Deng the last revolutionary titan in this Other on his deadbed, the leadership cleavages will for sure undergo another round (or more rounds) of power struggle, and this time, in the absence of any titanic figure, mediocre leaders of a Jiang Zemin and a Li Peng will play the historical role of transitional politics.

Finally, leadership cleavages also lead to mass politics. In fact, Walder argues, this is precisely what happened in 1989. The protest became a "popular rebellion" from the bottom (with mass support as much by students and workers as ordinary citizens) -- unlike most mass campaigns from the top -- only after the students had the support and sympathy from one of the contending factions (Zhao's reformist faction especially). The removal of the latter may reflect opposing factions' weak leadership but magnifies leadership disunity, which, as the reforms progress, will likely encourage mass politics once more.

In this perspective, the problematic of social cleavage, Seymour Lipset claims, is essential for eventual democratic restructuring. (S.Lipset 1968:104;M.Schwartz 1990:20;S.Eisenstadt 1966:3-4;R.Wallace 1986:67-132)
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Lizhi is therefore right: modernization could not succeed without a "fifth" one (J.Wang 1992:234), that is, a democratic restructuring as a matter of eventuality, modeling on what Yingshih Yu (1993:130) calls "the basic cultural values of the West: democracy, equality, liberty, and human rights."

(b) Social Rationalization. Besides, the de-Maoist social rationalization under market measures have only cultivated a culture which is increasingly as much scientific-technocratic as market-oriented (Section 2.5): that is, material, pragmatic, critical in outlook, which has no ear for an orthodoxy as dogmatic and impractical as the Party's dogmatic Four Principles. After all, if "to be rich is glorious", so the slogan goes, who then cares for them? (A.Walder 1986:230-3; R.Terril 1992) Kim Dae Fung's optimism on this issue is good for thought here, as it will apply all the more to a rapidly developing Chinese economy (1994:192-3),

The Asian economies are moving from a capital- and labour-intensive industrial phase into an information- and technology-intensive one. Many experts have acknowledged that this new economic world order requires guaranteed freedom of information and creativity. These things are possible only in a democratic society. Thus Asia has no practical alternative to democracy; it is a matter of survival in an age of intensifying global economic competition....The fundamental reason for my optimism is this increasing awareness of the importance of democracy and human rights among Asian themselves and their willingness to make the necessary efforts to realize these goals.

Yet what democratic restructuring would this Other take, should it ever come -- liberal, communitarian, anarchic, postmodern? The choice is most likely a new political romanticist moral universalism of the communitarian type in the foreseeable time (Section 5.3) --, with a good reason. Late comers of modernizing experience, as exemplified by Russia (A.Gershenkron 1962), Germany and Japan (F.Tipton 1981:139-50), often differ from such early comers as the British, the French, and the American in relation to the initiative of the state: the former stressing strong protectionism, directed labour, control of unions, and central
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supervision of banking and credit under an active state, while the latter, individual entrepreneurship and free market economy. (E.B.1994a:288) Late comers tend to adopt a top-down approach to modernization (D.Landes 1994), in allowing the state taking a more active role, and the experiences of the British, the French, and the Russian, Jeffrey Sachs (1995) argues, show an unmistakable pattern of the progressive growth of the state's role, while undergoing democratic restructuring in the process as well.

The state in many late comers, therefore, are not politically neutral as is in a liberal democracy. In the case of this Other, the historical legacy of the Confucian moral particularism coupled with the Maoist institutionalized communitarianism strongly suggest a coming political restructuring comparable to contemporary East Asian developing democracies, share as they all do a similar Sinitic cultural fabric: that is, a slow transition to a multi-party, paternalistic democracy with a state-controlled market economy in an East Asian setting. (Y.Lu 1991:46; D.Plunk 1972:105; W.McCord 1991:107-13; Asiaweek 1994:25) Beyond this political silhouette, no one can say for sure what distinctive features the coming communitarian democracy in this Other will take. But someone as authoritarian-prone as Lee Kuan Yew, "the grand old man of Asia," has this to add (NPQ 1992:6):

For Asia, I think that over the next one, two or perhaps three generations (with each generation marking 20 years), there will have to be adjustments. I am certain that the younger Japanese -- those in their 30's, not the older generation who committed those crimes -- already feel a certain revulsion at the idea of chopping off somebody's head and putting it on a stick. And that is because of their exposure to different values since defeat in 1945. But their process of change began in 1868 with the Meiji Restoration, 120 years ago! So, 100 years from now, I am sure Europeans, East Asians and Americans will arrive at something approximating universal values and norms.

The process of adjustment in this Other, from this perspective, will be long and slow for sure, and will likely go through, I project, different phases beginning

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with authoritarianism (as of a Singaporean variant) through semi-democracy (as of a Taiwanese version) to a more full-fledged one (as of a Western form) -- before finally converging into a model roughly universally shared by most earthlings, be they Europeans, East Asians, Americans, Latin Americans, Middle Eastern, or Africans in the distant future. (Chapter 6) In fact, "strong currents are moving in favour of democracy throughout almost all the East Asian countries (with the notable exception of North Korea)," Frank Gibney (1993:24) writes, "and it is doubtful that China's communist security mechanism can continue its oppression indefinitely. Currents are running there, too."

But the rationale for Lee's optimistic statement as quoted is based on a survival-of-the-fittest argument, in that "I can only say that if Western values are in fact superior insofar as they bring about superior performance in a society and help it survive, then they will be adopted. I truly believe the process is Darwinian." (NPQ 1992:7) And this Darwinian process, for Lee, takes no other agent than the critical spirit of science: "Inevitably, that critical scientific mentality must bring about a change in their [East Asian] perceptions of core values. But it is a long and slow process."

Suppose one entertains this idea further and asks what this Other's political restructuring will take, once it reaches the highly differentiated social structure as is already peculiar to many post-industrial states in our times, then a tentative answer is a postmodern politics of difference (Section 5.4) which this Other must confront, if it is to catch up with the superior performance of the Same (qua Western modernity) in this domain. Tibetans, women, and other minorities in this Other (who have since time immemorial taken in a silent, oppressed, subordinate position in the social hierarchy) will voice their difference and ask for political recognition in a way totally as much inconceivable as intolerable within the current authoritarian, highly homogeneous social structure, a primarily-agricultural economy as it still is (or what Durkheim calls the mechanical solidarity in a traditional society).
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Merely speculative this certainly is not, with a two-fold rationale. Firstly, the socialist legacy of championing sexual equality has the redemptive virtue of making a first major step towards this direction of a coming postmodern politics of difference. And secondly, the feminist movements in Hong Kong and Taiwan in the last score of years (L. Lee 1995; D. Wang 1994), as they become more socially differentiated in the social-rationalizing process, are most instructive of what will await this Other in its more modernized future. After all, the "people's power" movement (R. Broad 1995:434-46) already spreading in South Korea, Taiwan, and many others in the Third World after the end of the Cold War has the virtue of pushing for democratic institutional changes in a more divided social world of diverse voices comprising "consumers, farmers, influential intellectuals, residents of polluted areas, and workers." (R. Broad 1995:436)

Marx is right: "the country that is more developed industrially only shows to the less developed, the image of its own future." (E. B. 1994a:281) But then this Other will face a comparable sense of frustration of political gridlock and the collapse of moral universalism so much dreamt of in the older days (as symbolized by "Mr. Democracy" among the "new youths" moderns and the Goddess of Democracy among the 1989 democracy activists, by then of course a historical memory from the historical time of the coming future generations) --, just as it is already so problematic in the postmodern West from the historical time of ours (Section 5.4).

What Lee Kuan-yew does not realize, therefore, is the deconstructive power of the critical spirit of science, which, when more maturely developed under social rationalization in its completion, will come to question the very foundation of moral universalism for a just society in this Other (and in due time their very postmodern politics of difference as well), not content as it is with merely destroying the perceptions of traditional core values. Just as the postmodern search for "local justice" in the Same (the Western world) leads to the realization, if critical reason is carried to its logical conclusion, that
there is no justice in the end (and the very postmodern slogan of 'local justice' is thus a postmodern oxymoron), this Other will likewise in due time confront this disquieting condition.

Heidegger’s pessimism (Section 5.4) is not without good reason in this regard. As Takeshi Umehara, a leading Japanese philosopher, recently asks (1992a:10), "Is it so hard today to see that modernity, having lost its relationship to nature and the spirit, is nothing other than a philosophy of death?"
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Today the globe has shrunk in the wash with speeded-up information movement from all directions. We have come, as it were, to live in a global village. Our information comes at high speed, electronic speed from all quarters. We would seem to be living, almost under early conditions, in a small village world.

-- Marshall McLuhan & Bruce Powers (W.Kuhns 1971:179,184,195)

Nation-states fight to retain as much sovereignty and freedom of action as they can. But they are being driven, step by step, to accept new constraints on their independence...What we are creating is a new multilayered global game in which not merely nations but corporations and trade unions, political, ethnic, and cultural groupings, transnational associations and supranational agencies are all players.... Planetary consciousness...[will] rise to groups with larger than national interests. These form the base of the emerging globalist ideology. And its appearance is seen as an evolutionary necessity -- a step closer to a "cosmic consciousness" that would embrace the heavens as well.

-- Allan Toffler (1980:306-8)

The chapter asks what is there to be said, now that the modern project (as fought out between the Enlightenment thinkers and their enemies back in the heyday of modern times), and now its postmodern successor as well, turn out to be illusory.

I argue that there are four legacies of modernity to our postmodern time to be learnt.

The first legacy, as discussed in Section 6.1, is that this bitter struggle (in both its modern and postmodern forms) has been spread to other civilizations, be they in Latin America, Africa, the Middle East, East Asia, or South Asia (with
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substantive evidences from cross-cultural studies to support the claim). The result is a global civilization in the making, however slow and long the process might take.

But the global emergence, I further argue, is not without some historical delimitations which take the form of three clashes of civilizations, which constitute the other three legacies. These three clashes take place in the realms of (a) rechantment, (b) resentment, and (c) regional divisionism (regional integration and the North-South economic divide as exemplars), in the Others (as discussed in Sections 6.2, 6.3, & 6.4, respectively).

My main point, however, is that in the long run, the first legacy of modernity to the postmodern epoch will be more important than the other three (which are meaningful especially in the foreseeable future). A global civilization, that is, will emerge someday in the more distant future --, thanks to this fundamental legacy of modernity.

6.1 Global Culture After Modernity: Universal Civilizationalism and Multi-Civilizationalism

Hegemonic modernity (Section 1.4) has the effect of imposing Western valuative and conceptual frameworks -- as in the four-fold ideal of the modern self (and its enemies) in free-spirited modernity (Section 1.2), with special reference to the modern strivings for, and now within the postmodern reactions towards, a consumeristic/technophilic lifeworld (Chapter 2), a scientific/instrumental mode of mental/behavioral dispositions along with a religious resurgent context (Chapter 3), an aesthetic inner logic (Chapter 4), and a moral universalism and localism for a just society (Chapter 5) -- into the Others. But the hegemonic imposition reflecting Western superiority also carries with it as much virtues as vices, as much benefits as ills whose sober reality the Same already confronted as early as in the heyday of capitalist modernity.
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(Section 1.3), and thus illustrates the essential tension within the ideal of what a modern self is to be since the succession war, after the death of God, between the Enlightenment and its enemies way back in the early days of free-spirited modernity.

The fact that this Sinitic Other's essential tension in its soul-searching modernity (analogous to the Same's free-spirited one), as addressed in Section 1.5, within the historical context of an emerging state-market modernity (comparable to the Same's capitalist one) is scrutinized has one good reason: more than any other Others, this specimen of the Others has always been equated as the most different other of all Others, an Other as a type which is taken as the exemplary opposite of the Same. The Chinese in a smaller sense, or the East Asians in a larger one, are somehow too alien, too foreign in the eyes of the Same. Not even the Orientalism of the Islamic Other can exceed this Other's foreignness when its experience with the Same is to be compared, since both the Islamic Other and the Same belong after all to the "Abrahamic" religious tradition (G. Kepel 1994:2), and part of the Indo-European language identity and of the Caucasoid category. Yet this most inscrutable of all inscrutableness, this most foreign of all foreignness in this Other cannot but succumb as well to the hegemonic striving of the Same. The logic here is, If this most different, most tenacious other of all Others cannot succeed in resisting, much as it had tried for roughly two centenaries (Section 1.5), this most hegemonic of all hegemonies in all human histories hitherto existing, how much more will the rest of the Others find it most impossible to escape a similar fate, if not always worse (Section 1.4) in outcome (be it slavery, forced labour, capitulation, coolie system, treaty concession, or else)?

This hegemonic striving of the Same, with as much its most triumphant spirit as its most decadent double, raises three exceedingly important questions for the human future. (a) Firstly, is there a universal civilization in formation, even if not entirely in the imagery of the modern Same? (b) Secondly, what are the countervailing forces, both from within and from without, of what lies behind
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this imagery of the modern Same, namely, of the dominance of the critical spirit of science as the institutionalized genre of discourse in social rationalization of modern times? Or differently put, are there inhibiting factors constraining the cultural hegemony of the modern Same, as much from within as from without? (c) And lastly, what implications are there for the historical telos of humans in light of this global cultural formation and the spread of formal rationality so understood? Let me first consider Question (a) -- concerning universal civilization hereafter in this section. And Sections 6.2, 6.3, & 6.4 will deal with Question (b), whereas the last chapter entitled "A Final Thought" is to address Question (c).

The first legacy of modernity, in its mature development, is a global culture in the making -- breaking all national boundaries and recognizing no cultural independence. But how is this global culture to be understood -- a universal civilization or multi-civilizations in conflict? My short reply is, Multi-civilizations for the foreseeable time, but a universal civilization after modernity for the more distant future --, within three major historicist delimitations, constitute as they do three more legacies of modernity (as will be analyzed in the coming three sections). Why?

To talk of a global culture in formation, as the first legacy of modernity, is not to grant a privileged status to the historical epoch of ours as somehow special; each age, after all, tends to think of itself as somehow special in its history as related to a larger significance of historical telos. Quite on the contrary --, as early as by the 1880's, technological breakthrough in telegraphic transmission already helped integrating the world over (S.Tarrow 1995), and by the turn of this turbulent century of the 20th, a global integration was already institutionalized to the three-fold extent (J.Sachs 1995), firstly, of the global rivalship among the Europeans in their colonial/imperialist conquest, secondly, of the institution of the Gold Standard, and thirdly, of the enormous international financial capital flows (exceeding even the level of the 1990's).
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Jeffrey Sachs's observation is worth repeating: that the contemporary global integration has yet to catch up with the higher level of global openness as already prevalent in the Golden Age (roughly understood as 1870-1914, when not only the world experienced a historically unprecedented high growth rate but also global integration was so extensive as to have 89% of the world population under the Gold Standard by 1908). (J. Sachs 1995b)

Yet a global integration in these older days was not without its own weaknesses (J. Sachs 1995): that is, an inherent instability due to its violent nature (as in colonial conflicts), its predominance of authoritarian (war-prone) regimes, its dependence on the British hegemonic regime53 (J. Spero 1992: 213), and its relative inadequacy of an institutionalized rule of law across national boundaries, with the eventual degeneration into WWI and later WWII, at tremendous human and material costs beyond the historical imagery of the pre-moderns. In addition, as Benjamin Cohen (1995:212-3) critically puts it, the gold standard during the Golden Age was neither impersonal nor fully automatic, and it was also not politically symmetrical (since it was limited only to "core" countries in Europe, North America, South Africa, Australia, and Argentina, say -- but not elsewhere, where it was far less successful in maintaining payments stability and avoiding policy conflict).

The post-Cold War era in our times is blessed, by contrast, with, firstly, transnational institutions (the World Bank, IMF, WTO, UN, EU, ASEAN, NAFTA, APEC, IPU, GATT, the Group of Seven, the OECD, ITA, or else) for the maintenance of an equivalent rule of law among nations even if primarily for the interests of the hegemonic Same (S. Huntington 1993:39; B. Buzan 1991:438) and the major power groups, secondly, trade competition rather than world war, and thirdly, more than 100 democracies of various gradations (as opposed to only ten or so during the Golden Age) in a world of roughly 185. (J. Sachs 1995)

53. Britain at the time had the economic and financial resources to play the triple role of (a) opening its domestic markets for foreign imports, especially from those countries in balance-of-payment difficulties, (b) providing contracyclical foreign long-term lending, and (c) being the lender of last resort in times of exchange crisis. (J. Spero 1992: 213)
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This historical precedent and its peculiar features aside --, a global cultural formation in our time already exhibits four attributes which are hard to deny. (S. Huntington 1995)

(a) Firstly, a diplomatic elite corps and their associates around the globe, with an estimated 55 million members, share certain beliefs and protocols largely along Western-type institutions. In more formal concerns, a common set of mannerisms sets limits to "cocktail party charm and conference rhetoric," to "knowing when to be incisive and when to bore the time away," to "judging what will count as a joke and what as an insult," as Ronald Dore (1984:422) beautifully puts it.

(b) Secondly, the seduction of Western pop culture and its consumeristic dispositions are spreading fast to all corners of the globe (Sections 1.4 & 2.5, & Chapter 6), as in "the direct spread of fashions and tastes, of architectural styles and wallpaper patterns, of pop songs and Kentucky Fried Chicken." (R. Dore 1984:416) As Sid Tarrow (1995) puts it, many in the world more than ever before dress the same, play the same computer games, listen to the same music, and myriad other life activities. Even any advance in music, art, literature, and architectural techniques by the Western avant-gardes can be quickly diffused and emulated in the rest of the globe, as O.B. Hardison (1989:142-3) thus tells us, "Architectural styles, dress styles, musical styles -- even eating styles -- tend increasingly to be world styles. The world looks more homogeneous because it is more homogeneous."

(c) Thirdly, the globalization of electronic communications (the rise of the Internet, for one) disseminating ideas and information is a still ongoing process, governmental intervention notwithstanding: "Instant communications now span the globe. We watch in real time the drama of Tiananmen Square and Sarajevo (if not yet Lhasa or Dusanbe). Financial markets on a 24-hour schedule link the world's economies." (R. Bartley 1993:16) Alex Inkeles's point (1988:133-63) is well taken: for the first time in entire human history, the whole planetary Earth is linked as a communications system linking the whole human race. Postal services,
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telephone exchanges, satellite services, press services, radio and TV broadcasting, business communication, books in translation, the global circulation of magazines and newspapers, international movie dissemination, the spread of nonverbal language (of gesture, of the pictorial, and of sports), and now the spread of the information superhighway on the Internet -- myriad sources of similar emergence of a global communications system are spreading all the way down into the most isolated inhabited places. A McLuhanite global village is already in front of us.

(d) And lastly, a language for wider communication (LWC) is institutionalized by the use of English in most diplomatic, business, literary, and other communications functions. The Nobelmania in literature (and other fields), Stephen Owen (1995) argues, has encouraged many governments actively sponsoring the translation of their national treasures, if only to not be left out in the vainglorious game of winning more Nobel prizes for their country fellows, to the effect that English comes to play the new linguafranca (and, for that matter, the very age of national literature of the old is increasingly becoming obsolete as well). Historically, the effort to establish a universal language already took the form of Esperanto back in 1887, -- consequent, to be sure, to the on-going trend towards greater integration in world affairs. (R. Seidenberg 1951:70)

Yet if these were all there is, then Samuel Huntington's most provocative argument in "The Clash of Civilizations?" (1993) would well be correct enough: that on a more substantive, more basic level, "Western ideas of individualism, liberalism, constitutionalism, human rights, equality, liberty, the rule of law, democracy, free markets, the separation of church and state, often have little resonance in Islamic, Confucian, Japanese, Hindu, Buddhist or Orthodox cultures." (S. Huntington 1993:40) It is on this deeper level that a debate between universal civilizationalists (such as Fouad Ajami, Francis Fukuyama, Ohane Keniche, and V. S. Naipaul) and multi-civilizationalists (such as Samuel Huntington, William Lind, Barry Buzan, and Michael Vlahos) occurs.
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This debate on civilization is not new, however, in European intellectual history. After all, the word 'civilization,' whose most stringent demand for instinctual renunciation as a sacrifice for cultural sublimation Freud so much scorned, contains a conflicting copresence in usage from its very beginning with both a universal and particular touch. The definitional problematic here does not so much concern whether or not the word can be defined at all: surely it can, as Huntington (1995) puts it, 'civilization' refers to a cultural phenomenon in its broadest, most comprehensive sense, as contrasted with the barbaric, the primitive --, which lasts for a long historical eon, may disappear, adapt, or renew, and may not coincide with a specific political entity (either a core state or many within its cultural influence). Rather, the problematic lies elsewhere.

As a historical product, civilization as the conceptual opposite of barbarity was first used in the middle of the 18th century by two Enlightenment thinkers, Mirabeau in French in 1756 and Adam Ferguson in English in 1767. (I.Wallerstein 1991:216) Two historical developments further propounded this Enlightenment rationalistic spirit, that is, the French Revolution in its contribution to the spread of an ideal of constructing a new social order as nothing had before and, secondly, the Napoleonic conquest in its imposition of French civil codes throughout Europe, to the effect that both the French Revolution and the Napoleon’s armies were welcomed by other Europeans as the carrier of a universal idea, precisely that of civilization as progress. (I.Wallerstein 1991:217)

Yet this very foreign invasion, Wallerstein argues, evoked resentment and bitterness among some Europeans qua local "nationalists", to the extent that the real birth of nationalism can be traced to this historical epoch. Civilization as a concept thus received a particular, plural usage as well, and both Guizot in 1828 and Ballanche in 1819 were credited with initiating this second usage of the particular, pluralistic sense. Yet the most powerful critique of the first usage of civilization (as singular, universal with a capital c) as ideological was most vocally made by the Marxists, with Marx’s memorable passage that "the
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ruling idea of any age is the idea of its ruling class." (A. Stinchcombe 1968:97)

Later on, both in historical sociology and international relations, the tendency to view world affairs on the lofty level of the civilizations, Albert Weeks (1993:24-5) points out, provoked a similar debate between such "macro" thinkers as Arnold Toynbee, Oswald Spengler, Quincy Wright, and F.N.Parkinson, and their "micro" counterparts as Hans Morgenthau, John Herz, and Raymond Aron, on the other hand. The "macro" thinkers, in their coming to terms with the persistent failure of globalism (the very idea of a world order), proposed conceptual constructs such as Toynbee’s distinction between primary, secondary, and tertiary civilizations by the time of their appearance in history and Wright’s classificatory categories of "bellicose" (Syrian, Japanese, Mexican), "moderately bellicose" (Germanic, Russian, Scandinavian), and "most peaceful" (Irish, Indian, Chinese) ones. The "micro" proponents, by contrast, rejected the usefulness of such classificatory typologies and stressed primary determinants such as political and geopolitical factors. "Men have believed that the fate of cultures was at stake on the battlefields at the same time as the fate of provinces," Raymond Aron thus added, "In our times the major phenomenon is the heterogeneity of state units [not supranational aggregations of civilizations]."

Huntington is thus resurrecting the debate decades later within this legacy of intellectual history in his delineation of some major civilizations aforeindicated as the coming focal point of conflict in the post-Cold War era. My construction of the respective labels in the debate as “multi-civilizationism” (that there is to be no world culture on the deeper level of civilizational clash) and "universal universalism" (that there is a coming global culture universally substantively shared) only attempts to resituate the historical dialogue in a more affective-neutral light (after countless years of abuse on both sides) and to capture something new in this most recent round.

Fouad Ajami (1993:3), a universal civilizationalist as he is for instance, rejects Huntington’s underestimation of "the tenacity of modernity" and secularism in their deconstruction of the old ways against great odds, be the
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places Islamic, Hindu, or East Asian in cultural origins. "Hindu chauvinism may coarsen the public life of the country, but the state and the middle class that sustains it know that a detour into religious fanaticism is a fling with ruin," Ajami rebutes, in light of a resourceful middle class which "partakes of global culture and norms."

Even for a religious revival as radical as Islamic Fundamentalism, Ajami continues, it is "less a sign of resurgence than of panic and bewilderment and guilt," as exemplified by the Iranian theocratic revolution, of how much the Arab world comes to imitate the ethos of the Same as well. This loudest anti-"Satan" in the Islamic Other, with so much sound and fury as its revolution had, is still reigned, as recounted by V.S.Naipaul, with "the omnipresent signs advertising the products of Sony, Hitachi, and JVC, whose appeal remained virtually irresistible and gave the lie to the regime's pretensions of restoring a state based on the rule of the Shariab." (F. Fukuyama 1989:10) "The millennium has been brought down to earth, and the dream of a pan-Islamic revolt in Iran's image has vanished into the wind. The terror and the shabbiness have caught up with the utopia," Adami (1993:4-5) concludes, "Sudan could emulate the Iranian 'revolutionary example.' But this will only mean the further pauperization and ruin of a desperate land." And the slow reversal of its theocratic course in post-Khomeini's Iran proves this point all the more.

Likewise in Central Asia, modern Turkey under its founder Kemal Ataturk, for instance, "pointed his country westward, embraced the civilization of Europe and did it without qualms or second thoughts." (F. Ajami 1993:6) Turkey's subsequent, relatively spectacular achievements in modernization and democratization (D. Sezer 1992:19-20) in a short timespan (two decades or so) becomes what Eric Rouleau (1993:114-5,117) and Tansu Ciller (1994:9), Turkey's then prime minister, call an attractive model minus militant Islamic fundamentalism for the Muslim world (Iran especially): that is, a Muslim power yet with a moderate secular democracy and a successful market economy. This remains so, in spite of the Turkish resentful backlash (some years before)
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towards the European Union's rejection of its being part of the Western world (in denying its application for membership), as in an Islamic resurgence. (E. Rouleau 1993:116; S. Huntington 1995) As if the story has a good ending, the recent European Union's acceptance of its final attempt for membership has much soothed for sure this resentful spirit.

And in the East Asian region, "the civilization of Cathay is dead; the Indonesian archipelago is deaf to the call of the religious radicals in Tehran as it tries to catch up with Malaysia and Singapore," Ajami (1993:6) writes, "A different wind blows in the lands of the Pacific." Roh Tae Woo's South Korea, Robert Bartley (1993:17) reminds us, is closer to full democracy than it has ever known, just as the breakup of the dominant Liberal Democratic Party in Japan and the formation of opposition parties in Taiwan and Singapore should not be regarded merely as some form of Oriental consensual democracy. Bilahari Kausikan (1993:25) further adds, "China today, for all its imperfections, is a vast improvement over the China of the Cultural Revolution. So too has the situation in Taiwan, South Korea, and ASEAN improved. Western critics who deny the improvements lose credibility."

Kim Dae Fung (1994:192) cannot agree more: "In fact, Asia has achieved the most remarkable record of democratization of any region since 1974. By 1990 a majority of Asian countries were democracies, compared to a 45% democratization rate worldwide." And the more they move to an information- and technology-intensive phase, the more a democratic restructuring is hard to avoid, since it requires for its success "guaranteed freedom of information and creativity." (1994:192-3) After all, East Asia has a long democratic tradition undeservedly neglected by Asian scholars, as Fung (1994:191-2) continues,

Meng-Tzu [a Chinese sage] even justified regicide, saying that once a king loses the mandate of heaven he is no longer worthy of his subjects' loyalty.... A native religion of Korea, Tonghak, went even further, advocating that 'man is heaven' and that one must serve man as one does heaven. These ideas inspired and motivated nearly half a million peasants in 1894 to revolt against exploitation by feudalistic government internally
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and imperialistic forces externally... The government of the Chin Dynasty... practiced the rule of law and saw to it that everyone, regardless of class, was treated fairly. For nearly 1,000 years in China and Korea, even the sons of high-ranking officials were not appointed to important official positions unless they passed civil service examinations. These stringent tests were administered to members of the aristocratic class, who constituted over ten percent of the population, thus guaranteeing equal opportunity and social mobility, which are so central to popular democracy.

And Ivan Hall repeated a similar historical perspective (1994/5:23), throughout Asian history there has been a broad awareness of the individual as a morally self-directed and responsible entity -- in the Brahmin's lonely working out of his individual karma, in the Buddhist's progress toward enlightenment, and in the sort of proto-liberalism which the late Sinologist John King Fairbank noted in the personal integrity and humanistic self-cultivation of the traditional Confucian gentleman-scholar. Indeed, only in warrior-dominated Tokugawa Japan (and some of its modern projections) and in the Maoist attempt to mold a New Man have Asians come anywhere close to creating the sort of self-denying automaton touted by the region's latter-day prophets of political obedience.

Moreover, if Huntington's political universe depicts the Japanese civilization as a class of its own, yet their very success of grafting the essential elements of economic and political liberalism onto indigenous, uniquely Japanese traditions and institutions precisely shows, Francis Fukuyama (1989:10) claims, how much alien cultural ideals can be diffused even to a most unique Other, and its equally consumeristic lifestyle modelling on the imagery of the Same which "has become both a symbol and an underpinning of the universal homogenous state." Even Deng's China as in Guangdong's prospering sphere, a gradual accommodation with a less authoritarian style of governing is already a promising sign of progress.

Perhaps Liu Binyan's remark (1993:21) is most direct: "It is ironic that Samuel Huntington sees a resurgent Confucianism at the very time when spiritual
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deterioration and moral degradation are eroding China's cultural foundation", and "the Chinese people do not speak in Western phrases and political philosophies, but they knew what kind of political and economic system best serves their own welfare." A story recounted by Fukuyama (1989:11) is worth retold here, about how Ne Win, the Burmese strongman, began depressed when a senior officer of his "went to Singapore for medical treatment and broke down crying when he saw how far socialist Burma had been left behind by its ASEAN neighbors."

And the collapse of various Communist regimes in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union at the end of the Cold War has since led to democratic restructuring and market reforms -- by they called, for instance, "shock therapy" (T. Weisskopf 1995:475) in Russia or "leap to a market economy" (D. Lipton 1995:461) in Poland. The once Iron Curtain has now been changed beyond recognition, even if the ultimate success of the reforms has still a long way to go.

The spreading of the democratic process from the Same to the Others, be they Asian, African, Latin American, or Orthodox, is further observed by John Cavanagh, Walden Bello and Robin Broad (1995:435), in that "[a] new wave of democratic movements across Africa, Asia, and Latin America is demanding another kind of development. Through citizens' organizations millions of environmentalists, farmers, women, and workers are saying they want to define and control their own futures. They are beginning to lay the groundwork for a new type of development in the 1990's -- one that emphasizes ecological sustainability, equity, and participation, in addition to raising material living standards." The "people's power" movement is on the rise around the world.

The multi-civilizationalist world outlook as exemplified by Huntington's recent construction, Albert Weeks concludes, is inherently faulty in that "with the cultural and religious glue of these 'civilizations' thin and cracked, with the nation state's political regime providing the principal bonds, crisscross fracturing and cancellation of Huntington's own macro-scale, somewhat anachronistic fault lines are inevitable," and it therefore ignores such primary determinants as political and geopolitical factors in explaining global affairs.

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After all, "the most violent conflicts have occurred within civilizations: Stalin’s purges, Pol Pot’s genocide, the Nazi Holocaust and WWII," Jeane Kirkpatrick (1993:23) thus replies to Huntington’s thesis, "The Allied and Axis sides included both Asian and European members."

The very idea of an alleged spectre of a coming clash of civilizations haunting the post-Cold War earthlings is therefore ridiculed by Gerard Piel (1993:25-6) "for the same reason that Nils Bohr admonished us to fear ghosts: We see them, and we know they are not there!" -- in ignoring the rites of passage as applicable in any modernization which progressively embrace Huntington’s litany: "people in those countries are beginning to live long enough to discover they have rights and to assert them. Mass education, which comes with Westernizing industrialization, makes its contribution as well. Tiananmen Square in Beijing and the massing of the people at the parliament building in Moscow stand as rites in a passage."

All these criticisms aside --, Huntington’s thesis has the heroic virtue of attempting to account for a most fundamental, exceedingly complex phenomenon in our times, of what Wallerstein refers to as the emergence of a capitalist-industrial global system which is however in crisis. The very history of intersocietal evolution to this global stage can span over 10,000 years for sure, as can be simplistically summarized in four phases.

Firstly, circa the ten millennia before Christ, this historical epoch of our primal ancestors lived in multiple, autonomous mini-systems within each of which a single cultural and political process operated side-by-side with a small-scale division of labour. (I. Wallerstein 1991:222) Beyond this historical delineation, Wallerstein cautions us, our ignorance cannot say how many there were, how long-lasting each was, or how they in fact operated.

Secondly, from then to circa 1500 AD, two additional historical systems emerged, known as they were as world-empires and world-economies. (I. Wallerstein 1991:222-3) World economies had the triple facets of a large geographic space,
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a dominant center, and peripheral zones --, as in the Indian, Chinese, Roman, Insulindian continents of the time, or Venice and Genoa before the war of Chioggia (1378-81). (F. Braudel 1990:81-84) Unlike world economies, world empires were "successful" (I. Wallerstein 1991:223) in absorbing adjacent mini-systems and world economies and thus destroying their autonomous status --, as in the Roman and Chinese Empires.

Thirdly, circa 1500, a new historical epoch known as modernity began, driven as it was eventually by a capitalist-industrial world economy which in the process destroyed the very existence of mini-systems and world empires of the old. (Sections 1.3-1.5) By the late 19th century, this truly world economy encompassed the whole globe and for the first time on this planet Earth, there existed only a historical system. (I. Wallerstein 1991:223) Insofar as contemporary humans are still within this historical legacy, the very usage of civilization as universal and singular must be so understood as an ideology by those who espoused its all-encompassing penetration as both inevitable and desirable in intersocietal evolution: that is, the commoditized indust-reality was to represent progress because of its "civilizing" attribute.

Thus the conceptual challenge to civilization of the universal came into existence, as a defense against the ravages of civilization as singular, against universal civilization, against the hegemonic Same qua the dominant reality of a capitalist-industrial world economy. Yet the essential dilemma of the civilizationalists of the plural is that, while it is sensible to assimilate to civilization (singular) as an acknowledgement of the backwardness and inferiority of the pre-modern past, yet to reject civilization of the singular risks, in its plural accent, "immolation in archaisms that may not even have had the virtue of being truly traditional and may further have been crippling because non-growing." (I. Wallerstein 1991:224)

Fourthly, and lastly, somewhere by the last score of years in this century of ours, a new global situation has emerged, both in recognizing the very ambivalence of this whole modern project (as discussed in previous chapters) and
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in the emergence, for the first time since the dawn of modern times, of rival power centers of the Others qua the non-West, a more multi-polar, multi-cultural, multi-civilizational planetary network, in which the top 5 world economies come from 4 civilizational spheres (Western, Chinese, Japanese, Indian). (United Nations 1994:201-4, 209; S. Huntington 1995) The end of the Cold War, in its moving out of the Western ideological conflict so much dominant in modern global politics, further contributes to this direction. (F. Fukuyama 1989)

Where then do we go from here? --, there is no easy answer, and thus the debate between universal civilizationalists and their multi-civilizational counterparts becomes relevant all the more. A most likely eventuality, I suggest, however, is that a global cultural formation is a slow, long process, with its own ups and downs for sure, to the effect that some clashes of civilizations in the convergence process are hard to deny for the foreseeable time, before eventually evolving towards a more universal, planetary consciousness. But this universal, planetary consciousness is not without its historicist constraints as expressed in (a) rechament, (b) resentment, and (c) regionalism, among other factors for sure. To understand this peculiar transforming nature therefore requires an understanding of the three-fold historicist delimitation as three more legacies of modernity to posterity after modernity, whose subject matter falls within the jurisdiction of the respective three sections hereafter (Sections 6.2, 6.3 & 6.4). My intention, be ostensible as it already may, is to dismiss the debate as falsely structured: that is, both multi-civilizations and universal civilization will be our human future (foreseeable for the former and distant for the latter).

But what historical telos will this human future serve? Nothing, so it seems, if not as a fuller realization of the dual process of social rationalization and differentiation -- as exemplified by the ambivalent modern strivings for, and now in the postmodern reactions towards, a consumeristic/technophilic lifeworld (Chapter 2), a scientific/instrumental mode of mental/behavioral dispositions along with a religious resurgent context
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(Chapter 3), an aesthetic inner logic (Chapter 4), and a moral universalism and localism for a just society (Chapter 5) --, thus best capturing the major facets of human existence as the Practical and the Technological, the True and the Holy, the Beautiful/Aesthetic, and the Good and the Just (as already discussed in previous four chapters) and extending to the planetary magnitude and beyond, as much with its benefits and ills as with its triumphs and failures, just as well with its opportunities and dangers.

In the end, the dual process stands for the paradigmatic spirit of the Enlightenment as the critical spirit of science, without however the wishful dreams of the philosophes, whose project is regarded by its post-modern successors as bankrupt beyond recovery, or what Lyotard takes as a lamentable series of failed projects (C. Norris 1990:7-8), and coupled with a sense of playfulness, of sensible looking, of imaginative thinking, equally without the romantic/nostalgic hopes of the Enlightenment's enemies, or with Richard Kearney's three aesthetic functions of the imagination (1992:14) yet without his hopes (that is, to project new ways of seeing beyond the existing status quo, to retrieve images of the past for their forgotten potential for change, and to feel what others suffer, need or desire).

A coming global culture evolving out of this historical legacy is therefore a global culture after modernity, against eternities as it is, with no conviction of any higher order other than a sober acknowledgement of historical contingency all the way through, much credited as this is to the critical spirit as inherited from modernity. To live after modernity is to accept "the death of all metanarratives," as some literary critics are fun to speak of. This death includes that of the modern equivalents as well, as exemplified in what I have called the four-fold ideal of the modern self and its enemies' alternatives (all of which, as analyzed in chapters before and in Section 6.2 hereafter, are to be abandoned too). Surely, to live after modernity carries along with the death of metanarratives both ills and benefits, both dangers and opportunities, whose ambivalence, as discussed in Chapters 2-5, is yet beautifully expressed by
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Octavio Paz (1991:38), the 1990 Mexican Nobel laureate for literature, in his comment on Dostoyevsky's idea that if God is dead, everything is permitted: "but if everything is possible, nothing is. If the absence of God makes everything thinkable, there is no difference between everything and nothing."

The ambivalence sounds nihilistic, for sure, and thus vindicates Nietzsche's insight that science qua the new will to truth (power) in superceding the old qua God devalues all values and beliefs hitherto existing and is nihilistic (that nothing is grounded) in its core. "Science is the realization that reality is nothing but mere experience, methods of perceiving or thinking. This ‘definition’ of science, like all theories or thoughts, is no more than another empty experience or method," Harry Neumann (1991:3) writes, "All science is nihilist." And this brave new world is ambivalent, to the effect that it is up to those living after modernity to either use it constructively for a new frontier of opportunities and horizons or to abuse it destructively, as the price to pay for freedom in an increasingly technocratic, scientific age.

But two potential confusions requires some clarification at the outset.

Firstly, does the very idea of after-modernity suggest a break with modernity? The myriad notions, sometimes conflicting as they are, of postmodernism in the arts and literature (Section 4.4) already show how tricky and dissensual this business of talking about a break with modernity is. My answer, however, is not either-or but both, in that, firstly, after-modernity cannot be possible without the four legacies of modernity (to be further analyzed hereafter), in which sense a break with modernity is not a coherent concept, and that, however and secondly, after-modernity retains the free spirits of modernity without their utopian flavour, without their dreams, without their metanarratives (and for that matter, without the metanarratives of whatsoever epoch there might be). In this second sense, there is a logical break: to think critically, to look sensibly, to imagine freely, to contemplate creatively --, yet without any hope of utopia nor dream of salvation, without any euphoria toward the future nor nostalgia towards the past, without any great expectations of the philosophes nor
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romantic sentiments of their enemies, and equally without any dystopia nor apocalyptic mood, without any lamentation nor melancholy.

And secondly, is after modernity, as a term, equivalent in meaning with 'postmodernity'? My answer is in the negative --, since at some point further away from after-modernity, the postmodern values and beliefs will be deconstructed as well (as already discussed in Sections 2.4, 3.3, 4.4, & 5.4). The euphoria once held towards postmodernism, for instance, will be over in due time. While this is not to fail learning something from its critical and imaginary spirit, the point is to deny the postmodern hopes as well. Precisely at this juncture will occur what might be called, in the absence of a better term, after-postmodernity. By 'after-postmodernity,' I refer to that historical epoch where formal rationality (without, however, its dreams nor the hopes of its enemies) will eventually spread to the whole globe, long and slow as it will for sure be together with its ups and downs, such that it can be logically carried to its final completion, in yielding what I call a post-human consciousness, in that humans are nothing in the end, to be superceded by posthumans at some point after postmodernity (as will be the focal point of analysis in Chapter 7).

6.2 Social Rationalization, Rechantment, & Marginality

Modernity, most notably in (but not exclusively to) its capitalist dominance (Section 1.3), produces a disenchantment consequent of the spread of formal rationality, as the second, regretful legacy to the post-moderns as much as to the Others still struggling with the hegemonic Same. Both from within (the Same) and from without, this disenchantment evokes deep discontent, to the effect (1) that free-spirited modernity (Section 1.2) is inherently split, followed with human tragedies familiar to modern historians and (2) that its spread to the Others provokes likewise a rechanting effort from indigenous civilizations, with paramount implications often unconducive to a global cultural formation in this
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fourth stage of intersocietal transformation of ours. I proceed first with an examination of (1) --, and later, of (2).

(1) Rechantment in the Same.

Consider first the rechanting efforts from within the Same (the Western world), as in (a) rebellious movements of the marginal type and (b) the violent grasp of power of the institutional one.

(a) Rechantment of the Marginal Type. The history of rechantment from romanticism (Sections 4.1 & 5.3) through existentialism (Sections 3.2, 5.3 & 5.4) to postmodernism (Sections 2.4, 3.3, 4.4, & 5.4), might they have different causes and as they penetrate into different academic and social spheres, yet often point to familiar themes of discontent with the modern lifeworld. (G. Vattimo 1988:105) A glance at the list can be impressed as much by its diversity as by its imagination: namely, the recovery of the primal forces in the sub-/un-conscious psyche (Surrealism), the yearning for "the simple life" or return to nature (Rousseau, Emerson, Thoreau), the rebellious youth culture (the Yippies), the "green" consciousness (Carson & Co., Deep Ecologists, Social Ecologists), the will to live in an absurd world without bad faith (Sartre, Camus), the fascist and nazi fascination with violence and death, the cults of emotional spontaneity of avant-garde artists, the temptation of a Zarathusran overcoming, the rebellion against the empiricist world of representation (Picasso, Nietzsche, Derrida), the call for a just social order for the marginalized (the postmodern politics of difference), the heroic striving for a resolute confrontation with mortality and fallenness (Heidegger), the will to subvert permanently (Foucault), communist utopia (Marx), religious revival (Bell), alternative modes of perception (dream, trance, and hypnosis), the nostalgia for popular folk and fairy tales, and the search for comfort in misleading cosmological thoughts (as in the appeal to the Anthropic Principle,
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the Gaia Hypothesis, and the "death of materialism").

"It is often said that there is no such thing as a free lunch. The universe, however, is made of... materials at all, but something without space-time dimensions that "unfolds" into matter. To understand the beginning of the universe, or even to decide whether there really was a Big Bang and general relativity) are quite plausible, given the scientific evidence currently available. (J. Gribbin 1989:22)

Moreover, the Anthropic Principle does not hold true at all for other universes which may not have intelligence beings, and thus it attaches too much importance to human existence in the Milky Way. For this reason (and others), alternative cosmological theories, as will be discussed in Section 7.3, have been proposed, ranging from Closed Universe theory (that is, the universe contains enough matter to bring the density up to the critical density, so that it would probably recollapse eventually) to Open Universe theory (that is, the universe would be self-contained and expand forever). (M. Lemonick 1995:82; S. Hawking 1993:151-4 & 1988)

As to the Gaia Hypothesis, Havel portrays the world around us as a living Earth Mother, so as to facilitate his argument of a need for transcendence in the postmodern world, if we want to save ourselves from the problematic abyss of modernity. But as Edward Cornish (1995:50) aptly criticizes him (and indirectly so to Glynn as well), "Both ideas [that is, the Anthropic Principle and the Gaia Hypothesis] appeal to people's desire for a more comfortable universe than the cold, weird, and unfeeling realm that scientific inquiry has revealed. But these ideas are more romantic than scientific. They reside in the misty regions of human thought where generally respected scientific findings and theories are conflated with poetic fantasies and mystical speculations....History shows us that metaphysical doctrines have only too often led to an intense conflict rather than increased harmony."

And the argument of "the death of materialism," as advocated by Glynn, states, with the equally misleading use of quantum mechanics, that the universe at its deepest level is not material at all, but something without space-time dimensions that "unfolds" into matter. To see how Glynn distorts the scientific theory of quantum mechanics for his spiritual quest --, see Stephen Hawking's A Brief History of Time, with his, that is, Hawking's, discussion of quantum mechanics, especially on how particles can be created out of energy whose total sum in a universe approximately uniform in space is zero, since the negative gravitational energy cancels out the positive energy of matter. (1985:129) As Alan Guth at M.I.T. once beautifully puts it, "It is often said that there is no such thing as a free lunch. The universe, however, is a free lunch." (P. Davies 1983:216) In this sense, matter can be created out of nothing --, without, however, Glynn's spiritual contamination.

But this precisely shows how absurdities of Havel and Glynn reflect one more romantic protest (a latest rechanting effort, if you will), contra the continuous spread of scientific/instrumental reason in post-modern times. Romanticism has been with us since the dawn of modernity and is now taking a post-modern form.

See also footnotes #68 and #79.

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Rechanters of this, disgruntled as they are, lash at modernity as something reducible to "conspicuous consumption" (Veblen), "petits et vulgaires plaisirs" (Tocqueville), "pitiable comfort" (Nietzsche), "mass culture" (the Frankfurt School), "fetishism of commodity" (Marx), "sensate culture" (Sorokin), or in brief, a life of banality as too philistine, too alienating in its utilitarian preoccupations, mediocre conformity, bureaucratic rigidity, social inequalities, and baseness of taste. (M.Calinescu 1987:45,226-41; P.Sorokin 1956; C.Taylor 1992:4; T.Lears 1981:28; M.Weber 1958:182)

That noble their goal is, for sure, is beyond reasonable doubt, nor is the heroic spirit in their striving to be underestimated. Yet as much to their sorrow as to our sympathy, the rechanters have failed miserably, as has been discussed in the previous five chapters on various issues (and is herein summarily reminded), to institutionalize a workable alternative order as a substitute for a social-rationalized age when the very foundation of traditional life-meaning is destroyed. And this failure renders, ironically, their rechanting effort disenchanting all the more. After all, once society is regarded as having lost its sacred structure (the breakdown of the Christian interpretation of history, of the sacramentalism of nature, of the Great Chain of Being, and of the analogy of the various planes of creation), everything seems up for grabs. (C.Taylor 1992:5,85) Current talk of multi-culturalism in an increasingly pluralistic social structure is something less to celebrate but more to reflect a chaotic syncretism underlying the very spiritual crisis of the modern age when "God is dead" in a Nietzschean ethos which sees its future as increasingly nihilist-decadent (B.Smart 1992:12), or when, in Weber's worry (1958:182), "specialists without spirit, sensualists without heart, this nullity imagines that it has attained a level of civilization never before achieved." Freud, for another, is no good friend of civilization either, the renunciation of instinctual gratifications as it requires, on behalf of life and work and by the strict standards of the superego, as a sacrifice for cultural formation, which to no

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surprise results in the unhappiness of the moderns. (S. Freud 1966b:134; P. Ricoeur 1970:309)

(b) Rechantment of the Institutional Type. For those, romantic as they are, who dare to confront the challenge of constructing a Messianic social order on a grand scale, their heroic deeds only degenerate into catastrophic consequences still haunting our memory, historical children of their victims as we are --, as exemplified by the historical tragedies of Stalin's terror and Hitler's holocaust, a regrettable part of world history that they now constitute. The fall of the Fascist and Nazi ideologues, exploit as they did the circumstantial disadvantages of the time (hyperinflation, national humiliation, political instability, anomie, and hedonistic materialism), is not a surprising matter of fact, if only because of their self-destructive tendency in an expansionist ultranationalism prone to unending conflict. (F. Fukayama 1989:9) Yet if there is a lesson to be learnt, it is the disenchanting problematic (lack of community, philistinism, and secularism) within the social-rationalizing trend in capitalist modernity against which these movements so much rebelled at the outset, among other causes for sure.

Perhaps the more serious challenge, with a even more global impact, came instead from the Marxist ideologue, which, whenever transformed into institutional practice, its rhetorical soundbites notwithstanding against the shameful English factory system and class injustice, proved more alienating and oppressive than the very liberal, capitalist regimes and feudal ancien regimes it tried to replace. The fall of the Berlin Wall and, subsequently, of the Eastern European Communist regimes (the Soviet Union included) only tell us how much the Messianic appeal of this most challenging alternative never had before to capitalist modernity has lost to hundred of millions of both ordinary mortals and cultural, social elites.

The logic here is that these rechanting efforts, stunningly empowering as they once were to the millions and hundreds of millions, yet fail to provide a more humane, liberating alternative to the secular order so much socially
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rationalized as in capitalist modernity. Thus the very split of free-spirited modernity remains as sharp, if not more, now as was so then in the early days of Romanticism. For this very reason, the postmoderns, in their pessimistic moment, have a point, much that our human pride would like to deny: that is, there is neither utopia nor salvation of whatever type; only a fool, a die-hard romantic still yearns for it. So what is the future of rechantment in a much disenchanted world?

Firstly, at one extremity, a sense of pessimism, of frustration, of disillusion with so much sound and fury ever since the first moment of free-spirited modernity's internal split is not uncommon. The project of post-modernity in our time only carries this nihilistic spirit to the extreme (Derrida, Foucault, Lyotard, Baudrillard). (C. Taylor 1992: 60; D. Bell 1976: 51; S. Seidman 1990: 233) Discourses on literary theory (deconstruction), cultural theory (feminism), social theory (social differentiation, poststructuralism), epistemology (perspectivism, social constructionism), historiography (fragmentary history), political philosophy (liberal toleration, the postmodern politics of difference), art theory (postmodernism), and ethics (emotivism, prescriptivism) hardly fail to remind us how much life meanings, beliefs, and values have disintegrated in a modern secular, pluralistic culture. The Good, the Beautiful, the Holy, the True, the Just -- all of these narratives which once made our ancestors' lives so pious, ethereal, ascetic, sublime, heroic, righteous and certain become something which no one can say for sure what they are anymore, as afore-analyzed in Chapters 2-5. "Truth sucks. Beauty stinks. Morals are shit. God is dead," so a disillusioned radical would say. It is not without reason, therefore, that the post-moderns are accused as destructive, exaggerating, and, most of all, nihilist (the belief that nothing in the end has any rational foundation). (C. Taylor 1989: 504; A. Heller 1990: 3; M. Calinescu 1987: 96; D. Harvey 1989: 114-7) Why should this be surprising, however, when, with the death of God, infinite little gods thrive without adding up to anything?

Yet, and secondly, there are still the less pessimistic of the courageous
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type, who still search for a better social order of some sort, be they active in
new cults and sects, in politics of difference, in green movement, in sublation
of art, or else. Yet, as already discussed in the previous four chapters, many
of this type are pushed into the edges of a socially rationalized lifeworld which
remains unchallenged, unthreatened by their marginal existence. In this sense,
modernity has left us a second historical legacy: rechanting effort as such
either fails institutionally (as in the disastrous endings of Nazism, Fascism,
and Communism) or is pushed into the margins of existence (as in new religions,
green politics, the sublation of art, and the postmodern politics of difference).

The bright side, nevertheless, of the history of rechantment in the Same
since the dawn of modernity precisely shows, as much to our admiration as due to
their heroic tenacity, that, however much dominant the social rationalizing
process evolves in modern times, it has never been total. Social rationalization,
from the first day of its existence, has always been surrounded by its rechanting
enemies in its cultural war against eternities.

(2) Rechantment in the Others.

The same logic holds true in the rechanting efforts of the Others (qua the
non-West). This can best be illustrated by the four most fundamental movements
of the most impactful type ever experienced in the modern Others (with my focus
primarily on the last two, in light of this post-Cold War epoch of ours): namely,
(a) Fascism, (b) Communism, (c) Islamic fundamentalism, and (d) neo-Confucianism.

(a) Fascism in the Others. It is not controversial, as in the case of
Japanese Fascism, to take the dropping of the atomic bombs on Hiroshima and
Nagasaki as a convincing exemplar of its destruction as a livable alternative,
both on the level of consciousness and institutionally, to capitalist
modernity. (F. Fukuyama 1989:9) History was likewise unreceptive to other fascist
movements in the Others like the Peronists in Argentina and Subhas Chandra Bose’s
Indian National Army -- which both withered after the Second World War.

(b) Communism in the Others. Even the remaining, still by far the largest,
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Communist regime there ever be, Red China (where the sun was supposed, so they once chanted in their revolutionary fervor, to rise and set) is equally undergoing a de-Marxization process, to the extent that being rich comes to be acclaimed as the glorious virtue, thousand thanks to the deconstructive, transformative power of introduced market shock therapy (as a metaphor), in a society where its members were once disposed to greet each other by revolutionary slogans. "Anyone familiar with the outlook and behavior of the new technocratic elite now governing China knows that Marxism and ideological principle have become virtually irrelevant as guides to policy, and that bourgeois consumerism has a real meaning in that country for the first time since the revolution." (F. Fukuyama 1989:11)

For those of the "lost generation" whose terrifying memoire of the Cultural Revolution still haunts them to these days of ours, or for those, farther back in time, who experienced the Great Leap Forward, in what Jeffrey Sachs (1995) calls "the greatest economic fiasco in all recorded human histories," where 20-40 millions died from mass starvation (A. Neier 1993:45), just as mass cannibalism was widely practiced under extraordinary harsh circumstances, or for those who barely survived through Pol Pot's Oriental holocaust as the "killing fields" in Cambodia, or for those, known as they are anonymously in history as "boat people," who risked their human lives, sacrificed every remnant of their meagre fortunes, and dared natural adversities on the mightly South China Sea (piracy, rape, robbery, drowning, starvation, aimless wandering) only to escape what they perceived as an unlivable hell in Communist Indochina --, it is, needless to say, a judgement of history that how much Communism as an ideologue has lost its legitimacy to millions in the peripheral Others as well. Other once hard-core renegade regimes as Cuba (and Vietnam, for that matter), modelling after the Chinese success story, start introducing some dose of market shock therapy by the code name of Market Reform (K. Fedarko 1995:51), and will they before long see the succumbing of everything which the Bolskevik Revolution stood for in the first place.
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But the most challenging rechanting efforts in the Others, now the Cold War is part of a bygone world history, lie in neither Fascism/Nazism nor Communism. Quite the contrary, the new institutional rivals are none other than the revival of Islam in the Arabic Other and of neo-Confucianism in the East-Asian Other.

(c) Islamic Fundamentalism in the Others. Take the case of Islamic fundamentalism as an illustration first. What can it offer, Sir Vidiadhur Naipaul (1990:7) asks, to this modern age of ours, "an infinitely more educated, infinitely faster, world in the later years of the century"? At the core of the fundamentalness in Islam is a religious idealism, which promises the faithful an utopia free of all sociopolitical and moral problematics so peculiar to a secular, consumersitic world as in the Same's modernity which signifies a movement away from God, too alien to Islam's theocentric emphasis. (M.Marty 1991:817-8)

In rejecting in principle all exegical hermeneutics other than their very literalist reading of sacred texts and myths as correct, as privilegedly accessible to the absolute truth, the faithful bother not by any claim of the contrary. The Shi'ites, for instance, take it as self-evident that at the endpoint of time in their suffering injustice in the extant order, await they the coming of a Messiah, the Hidden Imam. (M.Marty 1991:819-20)

To advance their goal with a tremendous zeal, the faithful resort as much to subversive rhetoric whenever needed ("the Great Satan" for the West) as to fanatic discipline and ascetic purity if found useful (M.Marty 1991:820,828) and exploit the openness (A.Branscomb 1995) of secular democracies (tolerant mass media and social institutions) for their power acquisition just as much as available traditions for different purposes at hand (Ayatollah Khomeini's brilliant distortion of the Sh'ite doctrine of the "Guardianship of the Jurist" to legitimize his absolutist, theocratic rule, as much as to urge political struggle to create an Islamic state in lieu of the Shi'ite quietism). (A.Dessouki 1982:7;M.Marty 1991:826,829-30) Their anti-democratic sentiment is explicit enough in a fervently monist worldview, in which there exists only one organizing principle, God, with individual freedom thereby reduced virtually to
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zero. (G. Kepel 1994:193-4) "In Islamist thinking there could be no room for autonomous political activity outside the control of the shar‘ia, the Law codified by Islamic scholars from the revealed scriptures" -- with some qualification to be made in Section 6.3, however.

Islamic fundamentalism thus attempts to provide a much needed solace (A. Dessouki 1982:26) with an indigenous touch to the spiritual shallowness as already so much familiar in social rationalization as part of any modernization striving, as in the case of Iran, which, under a Shah with a modern consciousness, was transformed, with the ready-at-hand of petro money, into a modern society with its hedonistic materialism (alcohol, sexual liberation, hedonistic materialism, Western tourism) and social breakdown -- too much sinful in the eyes of the orthodox. (A. Branscomb 1995; NPQ 1992c:53) The Messianic Arab faith proves as much useful as pertinent in this critical juncture, in its righteous theme that everything before the faith is wrong, misguided, heretical, to the effect that in the heart and mind of the believers there is no room for their pre-Mohammedan past (be it the pre-Islamic Ruins of the very old cities of Mohenjo-Daro and Harappa, which only thereby confirms the Koran saying that this is what befalls unbelievers, or the great Persian past, whose history is revised to serve the greater glory and truth now regarded as only possible with the coming of Islam). (V. Naipaul 1990:8-9)

The price to pay for this revision of history to suit the spiritual needs of the faithful, for Naipaul, is its alteration of human values, of ideals of good behavior, and human judgements (V. Naipaul 1990:12,16), to the effect that the faith is the complete way, fills everything, leaves "no spare corner of the mind or will or soul." Immensely satisfying this renunciation is, Naipaul (1990:16-7) argues, be it in the form of a sense of identity or a direction in life (NPQ 1992c:53), yet it is intellectually flawed: it dangerously assumes that somehow there will continue to be people outside to produce all those goodies which a modern society cannot do without, in a secular world where it is necessary to be an individual and responsible, to develop technical vocations,
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to be stirred by ambition and achievement, to believe in greater expectations.

It is no wonder, consequently, that no Islamic fundamentalist state has
successfully modernized so far. (K. Mahbubani 1992:7) Turkey's experience is most
instructive (T. Ciller 1994:9; E. Rouleau 1993:114-5, 117), in that a Muslim society
as it is, yet its miraculous transition to multi-party democracy and successful
adaptation to market economy (D. Sezer 1992:19) shows how a predominantly Moslem
society can modernize and democratize without the need for radical Islamic
fundamentalism. And for the two Muslim brothers (Malaysia and Indonesia) who are
in the verge of doing so, it is by virtue of their distancing from the Islamic
fundamentalist wave (far as they are from its birthplace, lax as its version is,
detached as they are from the Middle Eastern geopolitics, and more heterogenous
as they are than other Muslims in their social structures, as in the coexistence
of Islam, Buddhism, and Hinduism, or of Chinese, Malay, Javanese, and others),
to be increasingly swept along instead by the rising Asia-Pacific economic tide
with its potent secular trend. (NPQ 1992a:19) The dilemma confronting Islamic Iran
is already clear after more than a decade of revolutionary experimentation: a
further lag in economic development if radical Islamization is not curbed.
Naipaul, Fukuyama, and Ajami as indicated before are therefore right: the Islamic
millennium has been brought down to earth, now what? (F. Ajami 1993:4-5; F. Fukuyama
1989:10) The persistence of hedonistic consumerism is as much intense in that
world, if not more, as before the revolution, while its economic machine suffers
more shabbiness with the passing of each additional year of theocratic rule. Not
incidentally, post-Khomenei Iran is now undergoing a gradual shift away from its
theocratic course. (S. Huntington 1995)

(d) Neo-Confucianism in the Others. And the appeal of neo-Confucianism in
the East-Asian Other is not as rosy as it seems. A false perception need be
corrected at the outset: that the Confucian ethic is responsible for the economic
miracle in this Other. Samuel Huntington’s wisdom of skepticism (1995) is sharp
to the point here: that we should remain on guard against the current,
 fashionable claim that the Confucian heritage facilitates rapid economic
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development, any more than should we be persuaded by the opposite of the same argument equally fashionably made decades before, that it was inherently incompatible with modernizing strivings.

Maybe the best spokesman of a Confucian virtuocracy under modern conditions is that grand old man, known as he is by the name of Lee Kuan-yew (or Henry Lee as a student in Cambridge University in his younger days). More than any other export this tiny city as Singapore ever excels in, its most familiar yet most controversial product is its idea of how to govern, in the spirit of a Confucian, authoritarian alternative to the triumphant, individualist liberalism of the Same. (Asiaweek 1994) If viewed as a rechanting effort in a social-rationalized/-differentiated world, this appeal is quite limited in influence, however much "neo" its Confucianism is to be. The reason is not hard to find.

What Lee does not recognize is that the Same’s decadent, alien values (not just its more liberating, humane ones), even should they not be conducive to survival of a society, can still be diffused to the Others as part of the darker side of modernity in a social-rationalizing process. The story of Park Han Sang is most revealing. (WSJ 1994:a1,a4) Here is a young man who stabbed his parents in Korea with a six-inch hunting knife, tearing through his mother’s neck. Now an uneducated man Mr.Park is not, and nothing can insult a man more than to call him uneducated while he is privileged enough to have a college education. Nor does his home lack disciplinary cultivation; again nothing can show more disrespect to a family than to libel it as loose while having a most respectable, strictly regulated set of home rules as typical of many of his contemporaries. So the puzzle is, Why did it happen --, something so shocking as to cut through the heart of a culture innocently long revered by outsiders as a sacred home of the Confucian cultural legacy (even more than what Lee’s Singapore can compare with)? "Such a violent crime was possible because filial piety is lost beyond imagination," thus explains Shim Yoon Jong, a sociologist at Sungkyunkwan University, "Ultimately, it represents the end of our society’s value system."

Our human kindness should as well extend to Prof.Shim by forgiving his
being emotionally carried away a bit here. Yet Mr. Park’s deed is not an isolated case, as one may be tempted to thus think. Other instances of heinous violence are not uncommon. (Boston Globe 1994:WSJ 1994:a4) A man, a 40-year-old unemployed so it was told, attacked his parents with a knife only for a minor disapproval directed at his blowing the nose at the dinner table. Lest this too is regarded as merely another specimen of some rare events, police officers in this allegedly well-behaved Confucian society have noticed, much to their displeasure for sure, an unmistakenable increase in crime rates over time. Local sociologists thus see like instances of Mr. Park as exemplifying the ills accompanied with Korea’s rapid modernization and its disorienting encounter over some decades with imported bourgeois culture of the Same, to the effect that the society ends up in an anomic state so familiar in the modern West: "earning money by every means necessary, including illegal ones." "As Koreans become more affluent after years of toil starting in the early 1960’s," Prof. Shim thus adds, "their fierce work ethic and Confucian values are yielding to a strain of materialism and slovenliness."

Similar moral erosion already occurs in another Confucian place nearby, Hong Kong. (J. Gagliardi 1994:17) "They chop, they stab, they burn. They hurl acid. They even send bombs through the mail," thus wrote Gagliardi on increasing violence in this modern city, "and nowhere more so, it seems, than in Hong Kong." Old crowded housing complexes, long working hours, a growing gap between the opulent and the destitute -- social-environmental factors of this type can contribute to the problematic. Yet the more vital element lies in the inevitable consequence of an extremely competitive, individualist creed of making money at all costs which governs much of the life in this so-called fragrant harbour. Or in Deng’s coastal regions as well, whose latest Oriental economic miracle has incited so much talk among economic watchers abroad, a similar trend of spiritual erosion takes place: the rise of crimes, mental illness, immoralities, and what Liu Binyan (1993:21) refers to as "the rampant lust for power, money and carnal pleasures," that is, "spiritual deterioration and moral degradation" of the most...
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anomic kind. (NPQ 1992:11)

Or in Japan, the very idea of antei na kuni (safe society), a sense of itself as a nation immune to violence and fear as had been for so many years, can no longer be taken for granted, as Takeo Mori, a professor of criminal psychology at Senshu University, points out, recent violence as in the subway gas attack by a doomsday cult and the shooting of Takaji Kunimatsu, chief of the country’s police force, only reflects something larger in a society after decades of rapid modernization, to the effect that "there is a marked lack of humanity, a hollowing out of the heart," with the death of their God as in imperial times after the humiliating defeat in 1945. (KFedarko 1995a:55)

Even in this austere place as Singapore, the caning of Mr. Faith and his local buddies are not isolated instances of criminal offense, as Kim Dae Fung (1994:191) comments on this incident, "moral breakdown is attributable...to inherent shortcomings...of industrial societies; a similar phenomenon is now spreading through Asia’s newly industrialized societies." The didactic point here is, That the East Asians in our times are not as well-behaved as we often depict them to be in our exotic fascination with this so-called inscrutable Others. Once their inscrutable mask wears down with our increased understanding of them, they can be in their truer light as much immoral and self-oriented as offensive and corrupt -- countless treatises on Confucian ethos of the contrary notwithstanding. (T.Umehara 1992:15)

As these Oriental Others become more modernized, the undermining of traditional values is hard to avoid. As young men and women there start "asking more questions, challenging old taboos, and pushing for greater openness on issues ranging from premarital sex to homosexuality," their yearning for greater freedom impose intense pressures for change, with subsequent problems like increasing teenage pregnancy, single-parent families, rising divorce rates, loneliness of elders, political apathy, and a lack of a sense for the common good, with which the modern West has long been familiar but which are likewise steadily haunting these Oriental Others. (Asiaweek 1995a:36-41)
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Some statistics, however hard to get by as they are on sensitive issues of this nature, yet are forthcoming. (Asiaweek 1995a:36-41) Already in Philippines, for instance, a 1993 survey of 500 young people showed that many regarded premarital sex as socially acceptable. In India, scores of phone numbers are often advertised in weekend newspapers where college students can set up blind dates. In Japan, more and more young and moneyed women begin to explore their sexual fantasies in strip clubs, erotic magazines (as in Kirei), sex shops, massage parlors like Taboo (for intimate massage, sado-masochist play and other services by attractive young men), and sex tours to Southeast Asia. In Singapore, the average age at the time of those who admitted, in a 1986 Family Life Education survey, having their first sexual intercourse was 16.4 years for males and 15.6 years for females. In China, 86% in a 1990 survey approved of premarital sex, while 69% agreed that extramarital affairs were acceptable. And in Thailand, married men in a 1992 survey had on average 30.2 sexual partners before marriage.

Well, so much are Confucian propriety (and any other equivalent moral codes) on the surface in these modern Others.

Yet neo-Confucianism, and Islamic fundamentalism for that matter, give much solace to those who suffer from the ills so characteristic of social-rationalization in relatively less-developed societies: social inequality, authoritarianism, endemic underemployment, corruption, and social breakdown (G.Kepel 1994:8,193) -- as in the search for alternative values, be they of the Confucian wisdom in the classics, of the shar‘ia (the Law of Islam) in the Koran, or for that matter, of the halakah (the Jewish Law) in the Old Testament. (G.Kepel 1994:195) In this more positive light, the rechanting efforts in the Others pose as a delimitating factor to any global cultural formation, insofar as the revival of indigenous civilizations turns out to be useful to the sufferers, to the weak in searching for a spiritual identity and social community much lost in the social-rationalizing process in the Others.

The history of modernity, however, is not receptive to their fate of
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revival as they once so much enjoyed the privilege of having in previous millennia. The triumphant spread of social rationalization offers them no pleasant set of choices to select from: either being pushed into the margins of existence (as mostly likely for neo-Confucianism, unless grossly distorted for ideological politics, out of context) or risk a humiliating institutional defeat as a matter of eventuality (as mostly likely for militant Islam, with theocratic-revolutionary Iran as an exemplar, unless mellowized into a much milder form as in modern Turkey). Although some qualifications are to be made in this regard in Section 6.3, the logic will still stand, in what Wallerstein understands as the politics of civilizational claims, appropriated distortingly by different social groups for various contextualized purposes.

But this is only to repeat how much any global cultural formation, triumphant though it is in an on-going trend, has always been, in one form or another, restrained within historicist challenges from indigenous civilizations in the Others --, just as the spread of social rationalization in the Same has likewise been constrained within the anti-Enlightenment challenge (starting from Romanticism), as the inherent split of free-spirited modernity of the European type. Slightly differently put, the equivalent of romanticism in the Others is none other than Islamic fundamentalism, neo-Confucianism, and others for sure, and the split of free-spirited modernity in the Others is likewise understood as the war of ideals, after the death of their God, between their romantic yearnings so understood and of an equivalent Enlightenment often modelling on the Same’s (as in the four-fold ideal of a consumeristic and technophilic lifeworld, an aesthetic inner logic, a moral universalism of a just society, and a scientific mode of mental/behavioral dispositions). (Chapter 1-5)

6.3 Hegemony, Resentment, & Role Reversibility

Precisely because of the Same’s hegemonic spread of its imagery, a bitter
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sense of resentment has penetrated into the deep psyche of the Others. The revival of indigenous civilizations has therefore a second function: as much to protest against the Same’s expansionist intrusion as to soothe the Others’ ineffable humiliation. Modernity thus leaves us a third historical legacy: the arrogance of the Same and the resentment of the Others, the oppression of the Same and the suffering of the Others --, overshadowing any humanitarian, virtuous deeds of the Same towards the Others (and conversely, any inhumane, terrifying deeds of the Others towards the Same) there might be in modern times.

In the history of intersocietal transformation (Sections 1.4, 1.5, 6.1 & 6.2), the hegemonic spread of the Same’s presence to the Others is something unprecedented in human history. In the older days of multiple, mini-systems --, civilizations seldom interacted or only uncommonly, and even during the age of world-empires and world-economies prior to 1500 A.D., different civilizations (of the Roman and the Chinese), conquer and absorb as they did adjacent mini-systems, yet did not interact much with each other. And often could it take several centuries for a major invention to disseminate from its birthplace to other lands. The Chinese inventions of paper and gunpowder in the 6th century, Huntington (1995) recalls, did not reach Japan until the 8th, the Islamic world until the 9th, and Europe until the 12th.(W.Kuhns 1971:161) Even when contacts were made (as between the Romans and the Moslems in the fields of trade, war and religion), they did not amount to anything but relatively marginal exchanges (by modern standards, obviously) prior to 1500 A.D.(H.Bull 1984:425)

Yet from circa 1500 A.D. on, with modernity at its dawn, things started to change very rapidly, as Norbert Wiener’s observation (1967:65) is pertinent enough: "What many of us fail to realize is that the last four hundred years are a highly special period in the history of the world. The pace at which changes during these years have taken place is unexampled in earlier history, as is the very nature of these changes." Needless to say, European expansion changed the course of world history, with an impact so gigantic on, and a force so potent to, the Others that there seemed little choice as to what the latter could react

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Chapter 6. Four Legacies of Modernity, and After Modernity (Section 1.4). The weak and the less developed fell without much challenge to the European hegemony (as in Africa, the New World, and much of Asia), and those in a comparable league with the Same in the early stage as the Eastasians, Indians, and the Muslims did resist for some centennia before finally succumbing as well to the hegemonic Same by the 19th century. (J. Merson 1990:8-105; J. Levenson 1967:56-114; R. Murphey 1977:12-65; J. Parry 1963:190-201) The Same's world conquest reached its peak, Huntington (1995) claims, by 1920, when almost every single piece of land there ever was outside Europe was under the Same's dictation of power, in one form or another. International relations was henceforth very much Western politics writ large: successive waves of global conflicts fought largely within competing formulas of Eurocentric national interests.

A historical perspective of this drastic change of the global balance of power can be more precisely put in terms of the relative share of total world manufacturing output by major civilizational groupings since 1750 A.D.\textsuperscript{55} (S. Huntington 1995) In the early days of the Industrial Revolution as in 1750, the Same qua the modern West had only an unimpressive share of 18.2%, as opposed to 32.8% for the Chinese, 24.5% for the Indian, and 24.5% for the rest. The Same's share more than doubled by 1860 to 53.7%, while the latter dropped to 19.7%, 8.6%, and 18% respectively. By 1900, the Same's preeminence was secured with a monopoly of 77.4%, while the Chinese and Indian Others further declined to the dismal records of 6.2% and 1.7%. And by 1928, the Same's dominance was utterly unchallenged with a high of 84.2%, while the Chinese dashed to a suicidal low of 3.4%, the Indian Other stood around 1.9%, and the rest took the remainder (10.5%). The fate of the Same never looked so promising as it did in this historical epoch, just as the Chinese and Indian Others were never so humiliated as then --, as Ralph Waldo Emerson, for one, already in his time brutally portrayed the Sinitic Other with these condescending words: "But China, reverend dulness! hoary ideot! all she can say at the convocation of nations must be --

\textsuperscript{55} Data are originally from Paul Bairoch, "International Industrialization Levels from 1750 to 1980," Journal of European Economic History, 11 (Fall 1992):269-334.
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'I made the tea.' (N.Kristof 1993:61)

The arrogance of the Same, its superiority complex, its intrusion to any place of the Others with no fear of challenge, its violence to indigenous civilizations, its exploitation and plundering of native resources (human and material), its bravado of manifest destiny, its pretension of the white-man burden, its racist condescension towards the Others, its Eurocentric reduction of all perspectives into its own measure of being and time, its contempt with no equal towards the Others' humanness --, such is the historical legacy of hegemonic modernity. "Sickly gook," "fucking nigger," "damned native" --, no other indexical summations do better in expressing the infinite superiority-complex of the Same towards the Others than racial-derogatory attitudinal dispositions of this type, which are still in circulation (though not as much now as then) as much in the States as elsewhere, in many human relations involving the Same vis-a-vis the Others. In America, as an illustration, a recent survey by the National Opinion Research Center (NORC), as taken in 1990, shows that most whites still regard the others (blacks) as less intelligent, lazier, and with other racist stereotypes. (S.Lipset 1992:60)

The resentment of the Others, their bitterness, their inferiority complex, their suffering beyond God's power to soothe, their cry of slavery with no response, their humiliation as a vocation, their pray for justice, their sorrow for an identity violently crashed, their yearning to stand up with human dignity, their fight for recognition, their dream of freedom long denied --, such is the historical legacy of hegemonic modernity, seen from the other side of the same mirror. "Satan," "devil," "barbaric foreigner" -- no other indexical summations do better in expressing the infinite inferiority-complex of the Others than resentful concepts of this kind.

Forget not the historical memory of the Others so much vividly recounted by Paul Harrison's insight (1979:50-1): "practically every leader of a newly

54. See footnote #5.

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independent state could recall some experience such as being turned out of a club or manhandled on the street by whites, often of low status. The natives were made to feel ashamed of their colour and of their culture." Or think of what the Martiniquan political philosopher Frantz Fanon had to say: "I begin to suffer from not being a white man, to the degree that the white man imposes discrimination on me, makes me a colonized native, robs me of all worth, all individuality."

Or imagine what it would be like if you were treated as a Dr. Mbanka in Ronald Dore's fascinating account (1984:422) of how a delegate from the Others is often slighted in international diplomatic gatherings,

[This delegate from a lesser Other] does not get beyond being 'that boring Malian chap' (to be approached by such conversational gambits as 'would it be raining in your country at this time of year?), he is in effect treated in terms of his national identity rather than as a person in his own right. And that means that his national identity does become a more salient part of his personal sense of identity....As such, every slight to his nation is a personal slight to himself. In New York, perhaps, he suddenly discovers for the first time what the xenophobia of the opposition's nativist nationalism was all about. So he may withdraw, start insisting on wearing national costume, using interpreters, and keeping his socializing to the formal minimum -- and have as little sense of belonging to a world community linked by ties of fellow-feeling as a fully clothed Martian suddenly precipitated into the middle of a human nudist colony.

Be they in the form of the Mahdis, the Boxers, Shinto patriots, Ghandians, Islamic fundamentalists, or neo-Confucians --, indigenous cultural revivals can take numerous forms for sure (R. Dore 1984:411) but share a fundamental sentiment: a bitter resentment towards the hegemonic, arrogant Same. Perhaps two most potent forms of resentment ever expressed towards the Same in the Others are (a) Islamic fundamentalism and (b) neo-Confucianism of our time.

(a) Islamic Fundamentalism. The subversive revival of Islamic
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fundamentalism in the post-Cold War epoch, for instance, must be historicized within a second context as resentment so understood (A. Dessouki 1982:23) -- its rechanting striving aside (Section 6.2). The observation of Martin Marty and Scott Appleby (1994:814) is much relevant in this light, in that Islamic fundamentalism represents, in Bruce Lawrence's parlance, "a delayed reaction to the psychological hegemony of European colonial rule," only "after they had become independent nation-states, that is, in most instances, after World War II." Its main adversary is none other than the imagery of Orientalism and its inferior identity, so much imposed upon the indigenous by the hegemonic Same.

"The relationship between Occident and Orient", Edward Said wrote in Orientalism, "is a relationship of power, of domination, of varying degrees of a complex hegemony, and is quite accurately indicated in the title of K.M. Panikkar's classic Asia and Western Dominance" (E. Said 1992:139) -- "as a sign of of European-Atlantic power over the Orient."(E. Said 1992:140) In this regard, the appeal of Ayatollah Khomeini's theocratic revolution to millions of Muslims is clear, as Kepel keenly depicts the psychology of the followers: "the humiliation inflicted on the 'arrogant' American superpower is a sign: the Western dominance of the universe is not irreversible, battle 'in the name of God' can end in tangible earthly success."(A. Hartley 1991:63)

Yet, noble may the cause be, will its very militant theocentrism constitute the very romantic tendency most likely to eventually degenerate into an institutional downfall (Section 6.2)? Or will it instead mellow over time into a softer, laxer form of Islamic purity which might be therefore more conducive to economic development under modern conditions, something comparable to what the Protestant ethic did to Western capitalist industrial revolution? The latter possibility, I predict, is more likely in the longer run, with a good reason: the model of Turkey. (T. Ciller 1994:9; E. Rouleau 1993:114-5,117) A Muslim society as it is, yet Turkey's spectacular transition to multi-party democracy and successful adaptation to market economy (D. Sezer 1992:19) precisely proves that a predominantly Moslem society can modernize and democratize without the need for
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militant Islam fundamentalism, though the European Union’s rejection (in some years past) of Turkey as part of the Western world (in denying its application for membership) helps no human cause other than a resentful backlash in the form of an Islamic revivalism. (D. Sezer 1992:24; E. Rouleau 1993:116; S. Huntington 1995; J. Brown 1994:56) And, to be sure, the European Union’s recent acceptance of Turkey as a member, in its final attempt, has much soothed this resentful spirit.

After all, some persistent misunderstandings of Islamic teaching are not lacking in the mind of the Same. Islamic thought is not as inherently unconducive to market economy and to democratic rule as is often so portrayed in the Western reading of this Other. Neither the Koran nor Muhammad opposed any economic system based as it is on individual enterprise and reward (as the very idea of command economy was unknown to the pre-moderns). (The Economist 1994c:8) To be sure, Muslim scholars often speak against natural monopolies, excessive profit, which, however, are not alien to the Christians themselves (as Thomas Aquinas, for one, was greatly concerned with the problematic of usury in Christendom). A good Muslim would easily make into a good businessman in a way which puts English capitalists in their heyday to shame: guided by an Islamic conscience, he is to pay a reasonable wage, charge a fair price, use his profits wisely (frugality and investment), and take good care of the environment. Ostensibly, this sounds quite congenial in spirit to the Protestant ethic, facilitated as the latter has economic modernization. As a bright banker familiar with Islamic teaching puts it, "If the scholars of the Koran had economics degrees, they would understand what we are trying to do." (The Economist 1994c:10)

Nor are Islamic institutions inherently oppressive, be they against women in a smaller sense or democratic rule in a larger one: "They happen because of the pre-existing habits of the people among whom Islam first took root; because the economies of most Muslim countries have for most of the time not been conducive to a relaxed time for women (as they were not in the West until fairly recently, and still are not in many parts of the non-Muslim non-West)." (The
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Economist 1994c:10) After all, the Koran treats women even better than the Bible, as in the Islamic exegesis of the genesis, Eve was not, as for Christians and Jews, the belated product of Adam's rib: both sexes were born equal ("from a single soul"). Nor did Eve tempt Adam into eating the forbidden fruit: in the eyes of the Mulsims, it was Adam who let the devil talk them into it. Surely, the Koran is not without its phallocentric bias, as in verse 34, Chapter 4 ("On Women"), it contains the passage that men "have authority" over women. Yet how are like passages of this to be interpreted and translated is controversial among the ulema themselves (the scholars of Islam), as is true for other biblical texts, often full as they are with poetic, allegorical phrases, and for that matter exhortation and commination. (The Economist 1994c:11-3)

Neither is the Koran inherently anti-democratic, since it equally contains passages which suggest the contrary, be they about the concept of shura ("consultation"), in that men "who conduct their affairs by mutual consultation" will receive God's blessing, as in Chapter 42, verses 36-39, or about ijma ("consensus"), in that "The community of God will never agree upon an error." (The Economist 1994c:12-14) Once more, how like passages of this are to be interpreted depends on the socio-political environment at a historical epoch. Only about 80 of the 6,000 verses in the Koran, one must bear in mind, concern with public law, and only a few of these 80 have relevant application to the modern world --, without, however, the exegical weapon of biblical interpretation (ijtihad). There is no way of deciding apart from an ideology at a historical epoch -- a politics of civilization claims, that is, in Wallerstein's terms, "claims in the present within the existing historical system about heritage, separateness, rights. They are as valid as they are asserted effectively." (I.Wallerstein 1991:236-7) As Tariq Banuri (1994:33) puts it, "[c]hanging circumstances bring about adaptation and change in every civilization, not least in the Islamic civilization." The success of Turkey is therefore by no means culturally accidental in this sense, nor is its model for Islamic societies without good reasons.

(b)Neo-Confucianism. A similar yearning for solace to soothe the common
sentiment of bitter rancour applies to the appeal of neo-Confucianism in the Eastasian Others --, pay tribute as it does to the historical legacy of "humiliation, remorse, regret, and bitterness" (M.Marty 1994:816), Tu Wei-ming thus wrote, so much shared by the East Asians in the postcolonial era, or what the Chinese regard (D.Roy 1994:161) as the bainiande ciru ("century of shame"), in their search for a modern identity without being reduced to an imagery of the Same. Yet this very indigenous cultural revival suffers the gross misfortune that, strictly confined as its appeal is within a small circle of conservative intellectual elites, its future looks dim from both perspectives of institutional alternative and social movement. (Section 6.4) As some critics frankly put it (The Economist 1994c:4),

Those supposed Confucian habits of public life -- a cheerful respect for authority on the part of the governed, based upon the assumption that Confucian governments honestly use their authority for the benefit of those they rule -- may be no more than a polite fiction. The history of the Chinese-speaking world contains at least as much selfishness and brutality on the part of the rulers, and at least as much dumb suffering on the part of the ruled, as the history of any other part of the globe.

One stubbornly shouts for a return to a good old golden age which was never as good as so alleged and was utterly condemned as "feudal scums" in Red China, its native home, while the earth under one’s feet is cracking by the tenacious force of social rationalization within the Asia-pacific economic tidal wave.

Or, so it seems, a pan-Third World spirit (Section 6.4) of shared resentment, a voice of the Others in the North-South divide, or a sense of common plight of the have-nots easily renders a global cultural formation problematic, if not in terms of a call for a New International Economic Order (NIEO) by reason of the sins of the Same’s exploitative, violent hegemonic history in the Others. (T.Sowell 1983:207-41; P.Bauer 1981:86-150; Project 2025:16-7) But it has few buyers from the Same (save such more sympathizers as the Scandinavian
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countries, the Netherlands, Canada, and Germany), least of all from its leader
qua Clinton’s America. (P. Kennedy 1994:82)

Dismissive certainly this is not to be. After all, the very resentful
spirit spreading to the whole universe of the Others has something brighter to
shed light on: that the global trend of social rationalization has never been
total, triumphant though it has been as an on-going process. The future of global
cultural formation must take into account this delimitating factor as indigenous
civilizational revivals in the Others vis-a-vis the Same. Yet upon what good
rationale is this seemingly hopeful prospect for the Others based --, doubts as
aforeindicated aside? A good reason certainly there is.

Roughly three scores of years after the peak of European expansion in 1920,
that is, in this fin-de-siecle century, a relative decline of the hegemonic Same,
a theme familiar enough since Oswald Spengler’s The Decline of the West, is
unmistakable by any available indicator. (S. Huntington 1995) Back in 1962, Paul
Ricoeur already captured a spiritual disquietude in the end of Western dominance:
"When we discover that there are several cultures instead of just one and
consequently at the time when we acknowledge the end of a sort of [Western]
cultural monopoly, be it illusory or real, we are threatened with the destruction
of our own discovery. Suddenly it becomes possible that there are just others,
that we ourselves are an ‘other’ among others. All meaning and every goal having
disappeared, it becomes possible to wander through civilizations as if through
vestiges and ruins." (C. Owens 1983:57)

But how is this decline be measured? If judged by geopolitical control, the
process of decolonialization becomes so complete that hardly any colony is there
left by the last decade of this century -- save Hong Kong and Macao as the last
ones (which, however, are to be returned soon to China), and a few more tiny
places. If considered in terms of demographic quantity (global share), the Same’s
drops to a current 12%, from a high 25% in 1920 (and will fall to 11% by 2000 and
8.6% by 2025). (Project 2025:7)

If examined by demographic quantity (life and population features), not
only is there a growing aging process in the Same’s demographic transition (with a consequent increased burden on their economies), but also a better-fed and more literate populace in the Others when compared with their dismal records at the turn of the century (with no denial, however, of a large gap on an absolute scale to be closed when contrasted with the Same’s). Persons over age 60, for instance, will constitute 20% of the U.S. population (from the current 12%) by 2020, 30% of Japan’s by 2020, and 35% of Germany’s by 2030 --, which means that “fewer workers will, relatively speaking, support more retirees.” (G. Becker 1994:20; R. Samuleson 1994) And the typical Third World family is better off, in per capita incomes (PPP), the 1992 Nobel laureate in economics Barry Becker (1994a:16) argues, than 40 years ago, so is literacy rate higher. (The Economist 1993) True, there is a decline in some African countries, but the picture remains valid in most instances. After all, the majority of the world’s populace has achieved a medium-income developmental level (from a share of 11.0% of world GNP in 1960 to 42.2% in 1992) or high-income one (from 16.4% to 22.3% during the same period). (United Nations 1994:68) Even the ratio between the income earned by the global top 20% and by the global bottom 20% has decreased from a ratio of 1:30 (in 1960) to one of 1:61 (in 1991). And by 2010, the average income per capita for developed countries will be roughly $22,802 as compared with $2,563 for emerging market economies: that is, when contrasted with $16,610 for the former in 1994 and $950 for the latter, a big improvement will be made in terms of a ratio of 17.48:1 shifting to 8.9:1. (Business Week 1994a:194)

Other consequences resulting from an aging population might include (H. McRae 1994:109),

- Low inflation (elderly voters will dominate the polls and are unsupportive of any attempt to have their savings eaten away by inflation).
- Low unemployment (because of the fall in the proportion of people of normal working age).
- Low crime (since the young commit most offenses, while the old are not tolerant of them).
- Low intolerance (or lower intolerance) of disorder and of anti-social or even unconventional behavior.
- Greater acceptance of authority (in controlling disorder and anti-social behavior).

An aging society, as McRae (1994:110) argues, is likely to welcome a return to "Victorian values": that is, that combination of puritanism, prudery and certainty about what is right and wrong --, as was so characteristic of the late-Victorian era in Britain.
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If evaluated in military terms, the collapse of the Soviet military power (Russia's nuclear arsenal notwithstanding) coupled with the consequent military budget cuts in the same, and the growing military might in East Asia (China and Japan especially) in light of their experiencing the world's fastest economic growth, together with many lesser powers equipped with mass-destructive weapons as power-equalizers for the weak (chemical, biological, non-nuclear ballistic missiles) -- this has destroyed the bi-polar global power structure of the previous decades. (Project 2025:11) To understand the radical shift of the global balance of power here, one needs only to remember how much dominant the Europeans once were in 1920, masters as they were of the entire planet Earth. Even as far back as in the early days of European expansion, it took only Hernando Cortez and his several hundred men to conquer the entire civilization of the Aztecs in the New World. (W. Prescott 1936:611-3)

But time has changed. It now has to take close to one million men and women from the mightiest military machine ever on Earth, in conjunction with 20 plus allies only to push back a lesser intruder as Iraq from Kuwait to its home base. The lesson to learn from this development, Huntington observes, is the relative decline of the Same's dominance in global affairs. In less than a generation, even lesser powers of the Others will be expected to get access to such sophisticated weapons as precision-guided munitions, night-vision devices, attack helicopters, tanks with advanced armor, long-range artillery and tactical surface-to-surface missiles, stealthy fighter-bombers, airborne warning and control aircraft, cruise and ballistic missile-launching submarines, and even aircraft carriers. (Project 2025:14-5) Already in our times, North Korea has acquired advanced Mig-29s (from the Soviet Union), Taiwan has its F-16's (from the U.S.) and Mirage-2000's (from France), and India owns advanced Mig-29's, sophisticated German submarines, and two aircraft carriers. (W.Hu 1993:4,14) Since information and communications technology will further transform radically the battlefield, this means, Andrew Marshall, Director of the Office of Net Assessment at the Pentagon, predicts, that even tiny countries can use this
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technology well against more formidable adversaries. (Business Week 1994:105) Some others (Libya, Syria, Algeria, Iran, Iraq, Pakistan, and North Korea, with India, Ukraine, Belarus, Kazakhstan, and Israel as already de-facto nuclear states) will obtain nuclear bombs (W.Martel 1994:6) -- in what Huntington refers to as the most effective "equalizer" of lesser powers with great ones, just as a gun serves, David Landes suggests (1994), as a potent equalizer of a physically weak individual against a strong one.

And if matched by comparative economic analysis, the Same's decline is even more revealing. Back in 1920, it enjoyed the rare privilege of almost monopolizing the top 10 world economies but, by the nineties, has to face a new multi-polar planetary network with its 5 largest economies from 4 civilizations (Western, Chinese, Japanese, Indian). (S.Greenhouse 1993;United Nations 1994:201-4,209) The top 10 economies in 1994, as measured by GNP(PPP) in current U.S.dollars, have a ranking as follows: U.S.($6,397b), China ($2,855b), Japan ($2,633b), Germany ($1,619b), India ($1,126b), France ($1,121b), Italy ($1,045b), U.K.($1,030b), Russia ($927b), and Brazil ($856b), while the estimate made by the United Nations (1994:201-4,209-14) put the figure for China even much higher in relation to the others.(Asiaweek 1995:53)

The decline of the Same can be more precisely measured in a different way. Huntington (1995) shows, as an illustration, that, if put in terms of relative share of global GNP/GDP (based on purchasing power parity estimates) by political control of civilizations, the Western world held a respectable dominant share of 64.1% back in 1950, while the others divided the rest into 0.2% for the African, 6.4% for the East Asian (the Sinitic and the Japanese), 3.8% for the Hindu, 2.9% for the Islamic, 5.6% for the Latin American, 16.0% for the Orthodox (of the former Soviet Union and Yugoslavia), and 1.0% for the remainder --, as shown in Figure 1. By 1992, however, the Same's hegemony in this light slides to 48.9%, with 2.1% for the African, 18% for the East Asian, 3.5% for the Hindu, 8.3% for

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58. Huntington relies on sources from the World Bank, International Monetary Fund, and the U.S.Department of State.
Figure 1. The Global Balance of Power (as measured by GNP/GDP under the political control of civilizations)

Sources: World Bank, IMF, & U.S. Department of State. 1992 figures are based on World Bank purchasing power parity estimates. "Orthodox Russian" estimate for 1992 includes the former U.S.S.R. and the former Yugoslavia. "East Asian" includes the Sinitic and Japanese civilizations, whereas "others" includes other civilizations and rounding error. Data were originally from Samuel Huntington's seminar at Harvard University.
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the Latin American, 6.2% for the Orthodox, and 2.0% for none of the previous categories.

There are losers and winners, for sure, in this Olympic comparative game. The Western and Orthodox worlds are most marked by their relative decline, while the East Asian and the Islamic ones are on their rise. Since the numbers do not yet account for the long-term destructive economic consequences of contemporary Islamic fundamentalist revivals, and in light of the spectacular economic performance in the East Asian Others, coupled with a still respectable share of slightly less than half of the world’s GNP/GDP by the Same, it is reasonable enough for Huntington (1995) to make two tentative points on the changing sources of the global balance of power for the coming 21st century: (a) the relative decline of the West (though still dominant for some more foreseeable time) and (b) more regionalized power distribution (with special reference to the rise of the East Asians).

An elaboration of these two points, in that order hereafter, is needed.

(a) The Relative Decline of the West. Joseph Nye in Bound to Lead (1991:174) makes a plausible critique of those proponents of multicultural, multi-polar worldviews, in that, the relative decline of the West notwithstanding, yet its dominance, as exemplified by the United States, or what Barry Buzan (1991:434) refers to as "the greatest of the great powers," is instructive, as shown in Table 2, in his classificatory typology of sources of power among the major contenders (with ‘s’ stands for strong, ‘m’ for medium, and ‘w’ for weak): (B.Buzan 1991:434)
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Table 2: Power Resources of the Major Rivals

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sources of Power</th>
<th>US</th>
<th>USSR</th>
<th>EU</th>
<th>Japan</th>
<th>China</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Tangible</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Basic resources</td>
<td>s</td>
<td>s</td>
<td>m</td>
<td>s</td>
<td>s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Military</td>
<td>s</td>
<td>s</td>
<td>m</td>
<td>w</td>
<td>m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economic</td>
<td>s</td>
<td>m</td>
<td>s</td>
<td>s</td>
<td>m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science/technology</td>
<td>s</td>
<td>m</td>
<td>s</td>
<td>s</td>
<td>w</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Intangible</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National cohesion</td>
<td>s</td>
<td>m</td>
<td>w</td>
<td>s</td>
<td>s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Universalistic culture</td>
<td>s</td>
<td>m</td>
<td>s</td>
<td>m</td>
<td>m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Int'l institution</td>
<td>s</td>
<td>m</td>
<td>s</td>
<td>m</td>
<td>m</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


But with the collapse of the Soviet Union (the decline of Russia's GNP share by a half after the breakup, to be further deteriorated as much by its post-Communist economic shabbiness and political instability, as by its demographic shrinkage to roughly 147 millions and its territorial reduction), Nye's account for the Soviet Union is out-of-date (and thus overestimated) for sure. United Nations 1994:48, 212) Recent economic statistics puts Russia's GNP (PPP) of 1994 at $927 billion, with a 9th rank in the world economy (from an impressive 2nd rank during the Cold War). (Asiaweek 1995:53) Its military might, once feared by all, no longer stands a chance in any confrontation with Europe, as the ratio is shifting to more than 4.5:1 to its disadvantage after the Soviet collapse, and the slide is still an on-going process. (A. Arbatov 1994:69) As some sober Russian strategic analysts admit (R. Betts 1993/4:50),

Having retained more than four-fifths of the territory of the USSR, Russia nonetheless accounts for slightly over one-half of the population. It controls (taking into consideration production decline) less than one-half of the Soviet gross national
Yet Nye’s larger contending point remains valid: no other power comes close to challenge the American hegemony. True, America is not what it used to be, since its share of the industrial world’s output had fallen to 33% by 1990 (comparable to the 34% back in 1914), as opposed to an impressive 58% in 1955. (H. McRae 1994:7) And its share of world exports of manufactures fell from 29.4% in 1953 to 13.4% in 1971, while the shares of Western Europe and Japan rose from 49.0% and 2.8%, respectively, to 59.9% and 10.0%, and the Japanese managed to increase its share to 15.3% in 1984. (R. Baldwin 1995:343-4) Perhaps Benjamin Cohen’s point (1995a:521) is well taken, in that “[t]he United States possesses neither the resolve nor the capacity it once had. The economic ascendancy of Europe and Japan has sapped not only America’s ability but, more importantly, its willingness to make painful sacrifices for the common interest.”

Yet, America’s relative decline notwithstanding, especially in the shadows of a resurgent Europe, the emergence of Japan as a financial and commercial superpower (B. Cohen 1995a:519-21), and the collapse of the Soviet Union --, the talk of multi-civilizations in a multi-polar world is more of a myth than a reality, as this planet Earth is still dominated by major contenders in a pecking order. Or in Huntington and Barry Buzan’s way (1991:437) of arguing, global economic affairs in the post-Cold War era depend on decisions as made by the United States, Japan, and Germany, just as international political-military resolutions are now most shaped by the United States, French, and Britain. China, Russia, India, and the Muslim world remain regional in their sphere of operation. Surely, the old hegemonic structure once so much familiar with during Pax Britannia and Pax Americana is now gone, since neither of the remaining power centers in the post-Cold War era (U.S., Japan, and the EC) is politically and economically powerful enough to play the hegemonic role. (R. Baldwin 1995:348)
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The game of power decline is therefore relative.

(b) The More Regionalized Distribution of Global Power. Yet by 2020, a projected altered global order will look quite different, and the process of relative power decline will be intensified all the more. The new order will then consist of the 10 largest economies, 7 of which, however, are likely to be Asian and 3 Confucian. And the top 5 economies will come likely from 5 civilizations, in the pecking order of China, America, Japan, India and Indonesia. (S. Huntington 1995; Y. Kobayashi 1992:23) Already by 1991 the East Asian economies accounted for 25% of the world’s GNP (roughly equal to the U.S.’s), as opposed to a tiny 4% in 1960, and will grow to a share of a third of the world’s GNP by 2000, of half of the world GNP growth and of half of the global trade growth. (R. Manning 1994:81) And by the 2nd decade of the coming centenary, East Asia’s economic output will exceed that of North America and the European Community combined. (A. Friedberg 1993/4:7, ft #4)

By 2002 or later, the gross domestic product of Greater China (China, Taiwan, and Hong Kong) will be around $9.8 trillion (with $9.7 trillion for the U.S. instead), in an overly optimistic estimate (N. Kirstof 1993:61), or, in a more realistic projection, $8.9 trillion by 2010 (still comparable with the U.S.’s). (C. Farrell 1994:22) China alone could grow with a 7 or an 8 percent per annum for at least several more decades, as its vast interior has yet to undergo economic modernization as is already so in the coastal areas, and the point to remember here is: at an 8 percent growth, an economy quintuples in size every 21 years! (N. Kirstof 1993:63) A tremendous economic leapfrogging of this type is all the more important in a post-Cold War epoch, where economic might becomes the most decisive contributive factor to global dominance, in what Steven Miller (1994:98) calls "an age of 'geo-economics.'" The global balance of power will be completely changed for sure, as Lee Kuan-yew insightfully observes (N. Kirstof 1993:74), "The size of China’s displacement of the world balance is such that the world must find a new balance in 30 to 40 years. It is not possible to pretend
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that this is just another big player. This is the biggest player in the history of man."

Surely, prediction is always a risky business, nor are the dates and figures as cited above to be taken too seriously. Not all scholars agree, for instance, that the relative decline of the United States, as often so portrayed by what Samuel Huntington calls "declinists" (B. Cohen 1995a:522), is permanent. Paul Krugman (1994:70), for another, warns that much of this talk of "Asia's miracle" contains its own myth as well: that is, the Asian miracle is not sustainable, since "Asian growth, like that of the Soviet Union in its high-growth era, seems to be driven by extraordinary growths in inputs like labour and capital rather than by gains in efficiency." By contrast, the long-term rise in U.S. per capita income, in a famous estimate by Robert Solow, has 80% of its growth accounted for by technological progress (efficiency growth), with capital growth explaining only the remaining 20% (P. Krugman 1994:68). So do Lawrence Lau and Jong-Il Kim conclude, in that "the hypothesis that there has been no technical progress during the postwar period cannot be rejected for the four East Asian newly industrialized countries." (P. Krugman 1994:71)

True --, Japan is a rather unique case, as it has growth both through high rates of input growth and through high rates of efficiency growth, yet "that gap in growth rates [between Japan and other advanced economies] is now far smaller than it used to be, and is shrinking." (1994:73) And the euphoria around the Chinese miracle need be received with skepticism too, as Krugman (1994:76,78) continues, "Suppose that the U.S. economy continues to grow at 2.5% each year....But if Chinese growth is only a more realistic 7%, its GDP will be only 82% of that of the U.S. [by 2010]. There will still be a substantial shift of the world's economic center of gravity, but it will be far less drastic than many people now imagine [as shown previously]....From the perspective of the year 2010, current projections of Asian supremacy, extrapolated from recent trends may well look almost as silly as 1960'-vintage forecasts of Soviet industrial supremacy did from the perspective of the Brezhnev year."
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This qualified --, yet the rise of the East Asians few deny. (S.Huntington 1995; P.Kennedy 1994; W.Overholt 1993; J.Leger 1994; The Economist 1994:4-5; P.Kennedy 1987; J.Leger 1994a:50) After all, late comers often leapfrog in economic growth. (The Economist 1993) It took 58 years (1780-1838), for instance, for Britain to double its GDP per head, while the United States and Japan spent only 47 (1839-86) and 34 (1885-1919), respectively. Better still, South Korea recently required only 11 years (1966-77), together with other "tigers," whereas Deng's China, less than 10. The contending points, ostensibly, fall on the details about when and how much.

This issue of details aside --, the rise of the East Asians have exceedingly important implications to hegemonic modernity and its role reversibility. The resentment of the Others can change into a new arrogance. What were once the oppressed Others can change into a new hegemonic Same. Old resentment of the Others can be metamorphosed into new arrogance, just as old arrogance of the Same into new resentment. Some emergent signs of this role reversibility among participants in this everlasting game of hegemony and of the dialectics between resentment and arrogance are already on the horizon. And the revival of indigenous civilizations can be further historicized within this truly historic shift of the global balance of power.

Consider two interesting cases: one contemporary and the other current. Firstly, the oil shock in the early seventies gave the Arab world in OPEC an unusual economic power of shaking the throat of Western economies, to the point that a story was circulated around the Arab world about their dual pleasure to celebrate the triumphant moment for, firstly, humiliating the West with a revengeful satisfaction and, secondly, showing their contempt towards Christianity (and thereby redeeming Islam). (S.Huntington 1995) The oil boom, however, was short-lived, and business gradually returned to normalcy.

Secondly, and by contrast, the prospect of the rise of East Asia is by no means short-lived. The arrogance of the East Asians is not historically new; the superiority complex of the Middle Kingdom is classic, if only one remembers how..
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the Manchu emperor Ch’ien-lung issued an arrogant edict addressed to the English king George III in 1793 in reply to the latter’s request for trade (Section 1.5). Neither is, for that matter, the arrogance of the Same historically permanent; after all, as recently as in the 16th and 17th centuries, northern Europe was by contrast backward, technically and culturally, and enjoyed a lower standard of living. (D. Landes 1994; E. B. 1994a: 281) The European Industrial Revolution, of course, had changed all that.

But if the admixture of humiliation, rancour, regret, and bitterness (M. Marty 1994: 816) so much shared by the East Asians in the postcolonial era had tormented their poor souls ever since the onslaught of the expansionist Europeans, the rise of the economic powers in East Asia (Japan, South Korea, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Singapore, coastal China, and others on the verge of being so as Thailand, Malaysia and Indonesia) is slowly but steadily changing their perceptions towards other Others and the old Same.

"For the first time since the Universal Declaration was adopted in 1948, countries not thoroughly steeped in the Judeo-Christian and natural law traditions are in the first rank: That unprecedented situation will define the new international politics," Bilahari Kausikan (1993: 32) writes, "It will also multiply the occasions for conflict." The reason is not hard to find, as said before: greater economic success is easily translated into greater cultural arrogance. Instead of resentment as this Other used to be so inclined in the old days of relative backwardness and collapse during European expansion, it now looks at the old Same as much as other Others with a different consciousness: that it is steadily getting somehow better, somehow richer, somehow superior. Kausikan (1993: 34) thus continues,

Economic success has engendered a greater cultural self-confidence. Whatever their differences, East and Southeast Asian countries are increasingly conscious of their own civilizations and tend to locate the sources of their economic success in their own distinctive traditions and institutions. The self-congratulatory, simplistic, and sanctimonious tone of much Western commentary at the end of the Cold War and the current
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triumphalism of Western values grate on East and Southeast Asians. It is, after all, a West that launched two world wars, supported racism and colonialism, perpetrated the Holocaust and the Great Purge, and now suffers from serious social and economic deficiencies.

That the East Asian Others come to speak their own minds, have their own say, and refuse to be pushed around, the more the global power structure progressively shifts to the Asia-Pacific rim (Section 6.4), explains how much more self-assertive the Others will be when the ballgame shifts to one party's favor at the expense of others. The West's jealousy (B.Buzan 1991:448), the East's pan-Asianism, the coming "yellow peril" paranoia -- all these polemics, further any humanity though they do not, become more intense with each decade's passing, to the point that D.S.Mahathir bin Mohamed, Malaysia's prime minister, adds some oil to the fire by proposing an East Asian Caucus for East Asians only (not even Australia and New Zealand are to be invited), drawing the ire of the latter and, needless to say, of the U.S. Even the Hongkongese nowadays start talking of how richer they in fact are, when compared with many of the Europeans.

And among the Europeans themselves qua the EC in their relation with the American hegemony since the world war ended decades before --, "[f]or many years the Europeans," Michael Vlahos (1991:61) writes, "had no choice. Now they do, and their choice is go their own ways and assert their own culture-area independence." The idea of a resurgent Europe is no pure fantasy, however, since a fully integrated Europe will alter the distribution of global economic power, as Benjamin Cohen (1995a:526) likens it to "an economic earthquake in the making: "[I]f a reunified Germany alone poses new challenges for the world economy, what of a reinvigorated and truly integrated [European] Community? Together, the Twelve have a population of some 325 million and can boast of levels of production and trade that are already larger even than America's."

The American arrogance -- or what Benjamin Schwarz calls the "solipsism" as "a perennial American temptation" (1995:57) --, once fostered by short-lived post-war dominance, was already challenged as early as decades before in the
Vietnam experience, whose lessons, as Robert McNamara (1995) recently speaks out in *In Retrospect: The Tragedy and Lessons of Vietnam*, that the U.S. can no longer as much judge others solely on the American perspective as act unilaterally in the international scene, are condemned, if not learnt, to be repeated. The new global balance of power, now that the Soviet Union is no more, further evolves, to the similar effect that, Vlahos continues (1991:70), "[t]oday, America’s biggest challenge is in the American mind. Americans must face the new world even as they breathlessly engage in acts of dismantling the old," since "the newer world powers -- the EC and Japan -- will act like world powers. Over time, the collegiality of these former allies will wane." The anti-Japanese backlash in the States, most notably in relation to their trade surplus and property/asset acquisitions (the purchase of Columbia Pictures as the most symbolic exemplar) precisely shows how an old arrogance of the Same can be easily translated into a new resentment. But this is only a beginning (something on the tip of an iceberg).

The global cultural formation must come to terms with this shift of the global balance of power and thus what Wallerstein (1991:236-7) calls "the political renaissance of civilizational claims," in that a given cultural heritage is non-material (not empirical-verifiable) except as an ideological exploit, to be appropriated by whatever group which wishes to appropriate it for ready purposes at hand. Are Australians part of the East Asian grouping, as Mohamed says no but the former say yes? Is Confucianism compatible with modernization, as it was in the old days fashionably argued in the negative but currently recognized differently? Are the Chinese the "sick man of Asia," as the Japanese fascists said yes but the newer generation regards it in a more favourable light? Or in Wallerstein’s didactic examples, can Christians as well as Muslims be Arabs? how about Sephardi Jews in Israel?

The point is: there is no way of answering apart from an ideology at a historical epoch -- a politics of civilizational claims. As Wallerstein explains, "We have to remember that, as empirical reality, the capitalist world-economy in
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its own process of expansion destroyed other historical systems. They ceased to exist as systems. Their influence remained as civilizational claims, that is, as claims in the present within the existing historical system about heritage, separateness, rights. They are as valid as they are asserted effectively." Or in a theme much talked of at a recent Harvard conference on literary and cultural studies, "[s]ocieties are constantly reworking their memories, transforming the past in the service of present needs." (J.C.Louis 1996:20) Just as some larger group of persons are claiming to be proud Arabs in the name of Islamic cultural clothing, a similar claim of proud East Asians is also being made in East Asia in the name of neo-Confucian cultural camouflage.

But this role reversibility is historically constrained within the extent of the shift of the global balance of power in the making. Or in Dore's parlance (1984:423), "when, say, the Japanese or the Chinese or the Koreans perfect the first cheap and effective ABM system and secure military as well as economic dominance, when it is the Tokyo or the Peking autumn collections that dominate the fashion magazines, and the computers churn out more translations from Japanese into English than vice-versa, and Japanese or Chinese universities become the goal of the world's ambitious youth -- then that situation will change." Only until then, however, will the Same's unfair cultural dominance over the Others be reversed.

Suppose this historic shift come some day. Will the world be a better place to be then? The point to remember, if we have learnt anything from the millennia of hegemony in human history, is, Who is speaking, in Foucault's sense of asking? Lord Acton's caveat does not lose its historical didactics: power corrupts, and absolute power corrupts absolutely. This corruption, I need not to overstress, touches the hand of any power successors, by they men or women, black or white, rich or poor, Christians or Mulsims, yellow or brown, human or

9. There are those West-bashing, East-romanticizing individuals like Malaysia's Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad (1995:6-11) and the Japanese Shintaro Ishihara who find much pleasure in preaching that Eastern values are more humane, in contrast with Western ones, and that the world is therefore a better place to be in the coming Pacific century, when the East will presumably rise to the prominent position, once again.
extraterrestrial.

The game of hegemony will still continue, as it has for thousands of years, except for sure with a change of the guard and of its content. Just as the old guard (the Europeans especially) will recede, in this scenario, to a less dominant place to leave room for the new one (the East Asians as a good candidate), the content of the hegemonic game will take a new face, an Oriental touch yet not reducible to an Oriental heritage but something new, something Orientally postmodern -- meaning something their new prominence will bring by way of new cultural construction more universalizable in a global society which is hybridized of diverse cultures, though with a hegemonic, indigenous touch of the Same (then Oriental, not European). Should the new guard instead be other Others (the Islamic, say), the same logic would still apply, save of course that the new hegemonic Same will contribute its new cultural clothing, again, not reducible to any particular cultural heritage though with its own indigenous touch (this time, Islamic).

The hegemonic game in this farther future, as the social rationalizing

While this preaching gives much solace for sure to many in East Asia and is much pleasing to their ears, a sober moment should suffice to awake us to the brutal truth that the East Asians in their civilizational history have never been as peaceful, well-behaved and benevolent as these nostalgic individuals want us to believe. Does anyone still remember the terror brought about by Genghis Khan and his successors to those they conquered, or the oppression of women and ethnic groups by the Hans? And as recently as in this century of ours, we should not too quickly forget the brutality and violence brought about by the Japanese militarists to the natives throughout East Asia in the 1930's and 1940's, by the Chinese against the Tibetans in Red China, by the Chinese against each other during the Cultural Revolution, by the Khmer Rouge elites against their own populace in what is notoriously known in contemporary history as the Killing Fields, and by the Indonesians against the East Timorians -- just to cite a few well-known cases.

In a recent survey conducted by PERC (Political and Economic Risk Consultancy), a Hong Kong firm --, corruption is so pervasive in East Asian societies, in fact several times more so there than in any other region of the world, that "it has made puritanism a competitive issue." (The Economist 1995:61) It is quite common, for instance, that, in order to have a business deal, some bribery is imperative, be it in the form of "putting a cadre's son through college in America, providing a 'company' car, or lunching a petty bureaucrat who obfuscates until he has visited all six of his favourite restaurants."

The preaching of these West-bashing, East-romanticizing individuals nicely reflects instead an emergent politics of civilizational claims, as the East Asians become more economically successful and start searching for a new identity of their own. I cannot but seriously warn the world that as the East Asians regain their prominent position once more in the coming Pacific century, they too will have their darker side and will be as much hegemonic as oppressive towards others, though in different forms which time will tell.

No hegemon in human history is immune from this brutal human condition: it can, and does, commit as much good as evil. The East is no more innocent than the West; it has never been and never is. But will it ever be? I do not hesitate to answer in the negative. The play of the romantic East is only its mask of innocence.
process takes its more mature turn, will likely be less violent than what was often true in the old (subjugating the Others by violence and conquest as in hegemonic modernity). The game of hegemony in a postmodern global society will most likely shift to the less violent rivalry as in trade, tourism, sports, science and technology, and space exploration. Lee Kuan-yew's idea is good for thought here: "If we don’t allow societies to mesh with each other through the exchange of goods and services, and through investments, trade and tourism, we go back to territorial conquests and spheres of influence."

After all, the virtue of the postmodern politics of difference (Section 5.4) is precisely to shun the second, more violent option. But how far this new hegemony in a postmodern global society will be less violent, how long will it last before a more violent type becomes necessary (as most likely in the eventuality of a rivalry among major contenders for space colonization or of a confrontation with extraterrestrial beings), or answers to similar probings no mortal in our time can tell.

6.4 Regional Divisionism, Global Village & Intersocietal Transition

The political renaissance of civilizational claims can also be looked at from a different perspective of delimiting the global cultural formation of the formal-rationalized type: namely, the emergence of regional divisions within the very converging process of a coming global village. This is the fourth historical legacy of modernity to our human posterity.

That the planetary Earth becomes a giant communications system perhaps best illustrates the emergence of a global village long conceived by Marshall McLuhan (1989) and Bruce Powers back in the 1960's (evolve as it did from information systems of the old, that is, from the oral, the writing and then the printed --, to be now superceded by the electronic form, as most exemplified by television media): "Today the globe has shrunk in the wash with speeded-up information movement from all directions. We have come, as it were, to live in a global
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village. Our information comes at high speed, electronic speed from all quarters. We would seem to be living, almost under early conditions, in a small village world." (W. Kuhns 1971:179,184,195)

This globalization knows no political or regional boundary, as "TV and radio, in their almost universal access among all nations, rich and poor, are the obvious manifestations of globalization trends. TV today has the capacity, through complex and sophisticated technology, to link the center of events -- wherever they occur -- to the living rooms of every nation and every family." (C. McMillan 1994:141)

And Paul Harrison (1979:48) could not agree more: "Go to almost any village in the Third World, and you will find youths who scorn traditional dress and sport denims and T-shirts. Go into any bank and the tellers will be dressed as would their European counterparts; at night the manager will climb into his car and go home to watch TV in a home that would not stick out on a European or North American estate. Every capital in the world is getting to look like every other; it is Marshall McLuhan's global village, but the style is exclusively Western. And not just in consumer fashions: the minicry extends to architecture, industrial technology, approaches to health care, education and housing." So do Alex Inkeles (1988:162) recently write,

Our common linkage to the modern means of communication permits us to share...
for the first time in human history,...a truly universal world culture. We come increasingly to share the same movies, television programs, music, and sports events. Our clothing becomes more alike and our cooking and ways of eating more internationalized at every turn. Interpersonal relations, patterns of marriage, birth, and death become increasingly homogenized. Of course, endless and profound differences persist from society to society, as well as within the same nation or community. A single world culture is not a fact, but rather is only an emergent of which only a few elements are firmly established. Nevertheless, the process is clearly well underway, and there is not much reason to believe that it can readily be reversed.

And more, Ronald Dore (1984:416) claims, a shared set of attitudes and values
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(stressing individual choice and responsibility, belief in rationality, greater expectations) and of social institutions (bureaucratic systems, civil service organizations, school and health systems, democratic governments), to only cite a few striking cases, are found in various degrees all over the globe. "The Information Revolution," Christopher Farrell (1994:16) argues, "is forging strong links between nations, companies, and peoples. Improving educational levels are creating a global middle class that shares 'similar concepts of citizenship, similar ideas about economic progress, and a similar picture of human rights,' says John Meyer, professor of sociology at Stanford University."

Even latest breakthroughs in Western music, art, literature, and architectural designs can be quickly transmitted and imitated in the world over (P.Drucker 1993:145),

But now French people -- and English, German, Russian, Japanese, and Chinese -- prefer Charlie Chaplin's successors, the situation comedies or the "docudramas," to anything produced in their own countries. "High culture" has gone supranational fully as much as "popular culture." Architecture surely conveys as much of a message as does a TV show or a news bulletin; and today there is very little difference between the office buildup that go up in Tokyo and those that go up in Dallas or Dusseldorf.

But this exemplary global culture in the making (Section 6.1) exists coterminously with a countervailing process of what I call regional divisionism: that is, a trend towards regional groupings for various purposes at hand, be they economic, political, or cultural. Two major phenomena are of interest: (1) the North-South divide and (2) regional integration. Let me examine first (1), and then, (2).

(1) The North-South Divide. Jean Raspail in his futuristic novel The Camp of the Saints has this to narrate,

Now, stretching over that empty sea, aground some fifty yards out, [lay] the incredible
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fleet from the other side of the globe, the rusty, creaking fleet that the old professor had been eyeing since morning. He pressed his eye to the glass, and the first things he saw were arms. Then he started to count. Calm and unhurried. But it was like trying to count all the trees in the forest, those arms raised high in the air, waving and shaking together, all outstretched toward the nearby shore. Scraggy branches, brown and black, quickened by a breath of hope. All bare, those fleshless Gandhi-arms... thirty thousand creatures on a single ship!

In citing this passage in "Must It Be the Rest Against the West?" (1994:61), Paul Kennedy and Matthew Connelly draw us to a potentially explosive planetary problematic, where a country like Switzerland with an annual average per capita income of about $35,000 exists side-by-side with a neighbor not too far away, Mali, with its equivalent of less than $300. (P.Kennedy 1994:69) The exodus of the unwanted to promised lands, be they Haitians or Chinese by boat in recent years to America, only revisits a global problematic often neglected during the Cold War, as Samuel Francis exaggerately yet timely puts it, "Not since Genghis Khan rode out of the Asian steppes has the West -- Europe as well as the United States -- encountered such an alien invasion." The situation could not be more ironic, since it has been the Europeans themselves whose expansionist migration to the entire globe since the dawn of modernity has posed the greatest threats (not just societal ones) to the Others. (B.Buzan 1991:447)

A scan at available statistics holds no sign of much relief. (P.Kennedy 1994:72,76) Firstly, 95% of the twofold increase in global population as expected by 2050 (to 10 or 11 billion, as opposed to 5.7 billion at present) will be in the Third World. Secondly, in absolute numbers, people within poverty line in these Others will be far more than ever before recorded in human history. Already by 1991, 1.3 billion humans worldwide, mostly in the Third World, lived in crushing poverty, while the richest 20% possessed 84.7% of world GNP and the poorest 20% shared 1.4% only. (United Nations 1994:68) Thirdly, a larger proportion of them will reside in gigantic shantycities (22.6 million in Sao Paulo by 2000, 17.4 million in Shanghai, 16.2 million in Mexico City, and 464
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million in Calcutta). And fourthly, many of them will be unemployed or underemployed.

In brief, already sharp this North-South divide is, to a heart-breaking gap between Europe and Africa or between North America and Latin America. The rosy prospects for East Asia, an exception to the rule as it is, cannot refute the pitiful human plight of billion others. "The life of the people and the life of the planet are the problems of the 21st century," said Juan Somavia, Chile's UN ambassador and summit chair of the 1995 UN World Summit for Social Development in Copenhagen. (T. Zimmermann 1995:68)

Any talk of a global cultural formation must be thus historicized within this delimitating factor of a world polarized between the opulent few qua the Same (the West, and soon, East Asia) and the destitute many qua the Others (Africa most of all). This is a tale of two opposing lifestyles, two contrasting universes, two incompatible worlds of heaven and hell. This divide privileges a small segment of humanity which consumes hundreds of times more resources per head than the Others (P. Kennedy 1994:79) and which enjoys cultural efflorescence, accountable authority, responsive leadership, and effective bureaucratic structures for governing, while condemning the Others to live in the worst of all possible worlds: corruption, authoritarian regimes, ethnic/tribal warfare, bloody chaos, poverty, disease, overpopulation, unprovoked crime, scarcity of resources, transnational criminal cartels (P. Williams 1994:96), refugee migrations, the increasing erosion of nation-states and international borders, the empowerment of private armies, security firms, and international drug cartels. (Project 2025:4; J. Clad 1994:145; R. Kaplan 1994:46)

Ethnic, nationalist, and separatist conflicts alone already killed some 10 million people in the Third World, as Benjamin Schwarz (1995:60) reports, "2 million of them in India, another 2 million in Biafra's civil war, half a million in Bangladesh, and another half a million in Indonesia, with the remainder being casualties of tribal civil wars in Nigeria, the Congo, Chad, and Sudan, or Nagas killed by Indians, Chinese killed by Malays, Tibetans killed by Chinese,
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Columbians killed by Colombians, Tutsis and Hutus killed by one another in Burundi,...Turks and Greeks in Cyprus, and Papuans and Indonesians in New Guinea." The human tragedy facing this other universe is so much horrible that "many governments in the periphery will find themselves increasingly labouring under the weight of their often dismal performance record, without the support of the colonial rationalizations that might once have forgiven it. They will find it increasingly difficult to evade or parry the rising contempt of both foreigners and their own citizens."(B.Buzan 1991:440)

Refugee chaos (400,000 Sierra Leonians internally displaced, 280,000 to neighboring Guinea, 100,000 to Liberia; 400,000 Liberians to Sierra Leone, 600,000 to Guinea, and 250,000 to Ivory Coast), problematic borders (West Africa, Syria, Iraq, Jordan, India, Pakistan, Algeria), deadly epidemics (8 million Africans with HIV-positive, out of 12 millions worldwide with the disease, and the uncontrollable spread of malaria throughout the continent), ethnic cleansing (already several thousands killed in Rwandan tribal warfare, and many more in the war-stricken Bosnia), ungovernable regimes (totalitarianism as in Iraq, fascist-tending mini-states as in Serb-held Bosnia before the peace accord, road-warrior cultures as in Somalia, endangered nations near extinction as in Nigeria), bloody warfare (as in Liberia, Bosnia, the Caucasus, Sri Lanka), deforestation and soil erosion, water depletion, air pollution (R.Kaplan 1994:47-8,52,54,58-9,70,72; R.Peters 1994:16;S.Buckley 1995:al)) --, illustrative problematics like this lead Thomas Fraser Homer-Dixon, head of the Peace and Conflict Studies Program at the University of Toronto, to thus write: "Think of a stretch limo in the potholed streets of New York City, where homeless beggars live. Inside the limo are the air-conditioned post-industrial regions of North America, Europe, and the emerging Pacific Rim, and a few other isolated places, with their trade summitry and computer-information highways. Outside is the rest of mankind, going in a completely different direction."(R.Kaplan 1994:60)
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The divide between the North and the South could not be sharper. And the problematic takes an additional worrisome turn, as if there were not enough conflicts awaiting this much messed-up planet: that is, when coupled with the problematics of rechantment and resentment (Sections 6.2 & 6.3) in the Others, the North-South divide in the post-Cold War era can facilitate what Barry Buzan in "New Patterns of Global Security in the Twenty-First Century" (1991:431) calls "a civilizational 'cold war' between North and South." The likely form of a civilizational clash between the Same and the Islamic Others will it take, partly as much because of its rechanting striving against secularism as because of its resentful bitterness (as much over the continuous Western dominance of post-colonial Middle Eastern politics as over the superior civilizational accomplishments of the Same since the Industrial Revolution), and partly as much due to the historical, century-long rivalry between Christendom and Islam (B.Buzan 1991:448) as due to its internal underdevelopment, on a relative scale, in the North-South divide.

By contrast, other Others are less civilizationally threatening to the Same in the context of the North-South dividing problematic. The continuous fall of Africa (P.Kennedy 1994:76;The Economist 1994c:4), most tragic as it already is, is thus no match with the Same in any civilizational clash --, more than 100 religious movements in the African continent of this century notwithstanding. (A.Dessouki 1982:5) Nor is the Latin American challenge any more

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imminent, since, as Jeane Kirkpatrick (1993:22) and others (The Economist 1994c:4) point out, North and South American civilizations are only different versions of "Western" European culture with, however, an admixture of some marginal elements (as most notably the Amerindian component in Mexico, Guatemala, Ecuador, and Peru --, or the African element in America, Brazil, Belize, and Cuba).

Even the South Asian prospect does not suggest any forthcoming civilizational challenge; after all is Hinduism among the most tolerant and peaceful of all religions, coexist as India did in its multi-millennium civilization with successive barbarian conquerors of the Arabs, Turks, Tartars, and Moguls (K.Marx 1968:126). Quincy Wright had the good sense, consequently, to classify the Indians (among other civilizational groups) as the most peaceful. (A.Weeks 1993:24-5) Should it one day, Huntington speculates (1995), emerge as a great economic power, it would for sure lecture others on the virtue of the caste system or something with an indigenous touch, yet a civilizational clash with the Same in the Islamic form is not something natural to the Hindoos. So can this logic be applied to East Asia, insofar as its progressive rise makes them more eligible for becoming a new hegemonic Same, rather than as part of the south in the North-South divide --, as "[s]ome observers have suggested that the NIC's may be co-opted into the North, even becoming members of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, the primary international economic organization of the industrialized countries."(J.Spero 1990:229)

(2) Regional Integration. But the regional integration of East Asia poses a challenge to global cultural formation in a different way (as distinct from the issue concerning the North-South divide), coupled with similar developments elsewhere (the European Union and the North American Free Trade Zone). (R.Hormats 1994:102)

The driving forces behind regionalism are private trade and investment flows, vital as they are to growth, technological progress and job creation.
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(R.Hormats 1994:98), thereby furthering the social-rationalizing process of modernity, -- or as Lester Thurow (1995) puts it, regional trading groups are "the wave of the future." By far the most important regional blocs have been East Asia, the European Community, and North America, whose intra-/inter-regional trade flows are hereafter shown in Table 3. The World Bank estimates that, in as early as 1988, some 46.3%\(^1\) of world trade occurs within regional (and emerging regional) blocks.(C.McMillan 1994:143)

Table 3: Major Trading Blocs & Inter-Regional Trade

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percent of Total Trade</th>
<th>1980</th>
<th>1986</th>
<th>1989</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>EAST ASIA</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intraregional trade</td>
<td>32.8</td>
<td>32.4</td>
<td>37.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interregional trade</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>With rest of world</td>
<td>67.3</td>
<td>67.6</td>
<td>62.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>With North America</td>
<td>22.1</td>
<td>30.8</td>
<td>27.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>With the EC</td>
<td>12.2</td>
<td>13.7</td>
<td>14.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>EUROPEAN COMMUNITY</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intraregional trade</td>
<td>50.6</td>
<td>56.8</td>
<td>58.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interregional trade</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>With rest of world</td>
<td>49.4</td>
<td>43.2</td>
<td>41.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>With East Asia</td>
<td>4.9</td>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>7.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>With North America</td>
<td>8.7</td>
<td>9.6</td>
<td>8.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^1\) Robert Lawrence (1995:411) suggests that the share of intra-regional trade in total trade does not correctly reflect the degree of dependence on extra-regional trade. If measured as a share of GDP (that is, the ratio of total exports plus imports to GDP), extra-regional trade is actually more important to Europe (and, to a lesser extent, though still very significantly, North America) than the figures in Table 3 show.
Jeffrey Frankel's point (1992b:10) is correct enough: among the three major trading blocs, the EC is most inward-oriented. Yet a longer history of development as the European Common Market has, the result of its closer regional integration should not be surprising. The logic here is, If this can happen to EC, why not to other regions as well, if given comparable lifespans of headstart? Already, the significance of the 1980's, Charles McMillan (1994:147) argues, is the emergence in the global economy of rising interdependence of the three regional trading blocs, and indeed of a fourth as well around the rising Chinese sphere.

This is not to deny, however, difficult challenges confronting regional trading groups in the foreseeable time, nor to ignore vast differences across them -- in languages, customs, laws, religions, family values, and education. (C. McMillan 1994:143) NAFTA, for instance, already confronts serious problems in its first stage of implementation, to the effect that the U.S. has to offer enormous financial commitments to protect Canada and most especially Mexico. (L. Thurow 1995) Even the European Union in the making already has some of its currencies in crisis (Italy and Spain). 42 Perhaps the most challengable

42. The drive towards European monetary unification (EMU) -- the creation of a single European currency and central bank -- has been driven more by political than by economic calculations, as Jeffry Frieden and Barry Eichengreen (1995:267-81) persuasively argue. Economically, the arguments for monetary unification are, for instance, (a) an anti-inflationary commitment mechanism (that is, by pegging to the strong deutschmark, many inflation-prone members are required to strengthen the independence of their central banks from
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problem of all for Europe is the pull of ethnic strife which has haunted it for more than a millennium, as Hamish McRae (1994:268) suggests, "European integration will reach a point from which it cannot advance further, for the pull of nationalism is too strong....Regionalism will grow as smaller states and regions seek to assert their identities."

And in East Asia, a most unsustainable trade pattern exists, in that Japan practically has trade surplus already for quite some time with everyone (including the U.S.), as Thurow (1995) warns the Japanese that this could not go on forever without an eventual financial crisis spreading the whole Pacific Rim...pursuing inflationary policies due to political pressures), and (b)a reduction of transaction costs in a trade environment free of exchange-rate instability and thus of unproductive currency speculation. But as to (a), the loss of policy autonomy so implied is something not many countries are yet willing to bear --, even when policy autonomy is increasingly rendered impossible, due to the emergent international monetary interdependency (e.g., the rapid growth of Eurocurrency markets, the global spread of multinational enterprises, and the rising importance of non-American central banks and of multinational banks). (J.Goodman 1995:303-4)

And as to (b), there is little empirical evidence to suggest a very strong link between exchange-rate variability (and uncertainty) and the effects on trade and investment; after all, traders can use forward markets, hedges and other financial instruments to lessen the risks associated with exchange-rate changes. But this is not to deny, as a note of caution, some correlation between them.

Consequently, the drive for EMU is primarily political, so Frieden and Eichengreen continue, more as a result of inter-state bargaining, issue linkage, and domestic politics among various interest groups in relation to foreign policy and social goals. But then how these political concerns can be worked out among members becomes a formidable challenge. Yet in the absence of a promising alternative international monetary regime, the trend towards regional monetary arrangements (with EMU as one exemplar) cannot be dismissed too quickly. After all, three possible alternatives are no longer as feasible as might be previously thought.

(a)Firstly, a gold standard of some sort which was popular in the old days is not likely, insofar as the supply of gold in the world today increases only too slowly to meet the rapid growth in world trade and finance. (R.Baldwin 1995:345-8)
(b)Secondly, nor is there an existing hegemonic power (in the post-Cold War era) politically and economically powerful enough to play the role of the international lender of last resort; not even the U.S. can play this role any more, as best illustrated by its inability to save the Bretton Woods System back in the early 1970's. (J.Spero 1990:41-63;B.Eichengreen 1995a:236-53) As Spero (1990:63) puts it, "Gone are those simpler days when the United States, along with the United Kingdom, could draw up a constitution for a world monetary order."

And (c)thirdly, the international regime of floating exchange rates after the collapse of the Bretton Woods System has proved to produce high exchange-rate volatility which has negative effects on trade and investment. As Clyde Prestowitz (1995:516) writes, "the floating exchange rate system that replaced it from 1973 to 1983 was marked by speculative overshooting that again made the costs unbearable...and resulted in the Plaza and Louvre Accords of 1985 and 1987."

Consequently, regional monetary arrangements like EMU are historically contingent upon this absence of a promising alternative international monetary regime in the post-Cold War era. After all, it is increasingly recognized by analysts that the creation of an international currency and of "some kind of world central bank," as Prestowitz (1995:517) calls it, might be an ultimate development of international political economy in the more distant future. Regional monetary arrangements can therefore be understood as a major step towards this more distant global development. Beyond this major step, some intermediate steps in the period of transition to a truly integrated global economy include some kinds of "minilateralism" (especially among industrial countries) and "multilateralism" (among as many nations as possible in the world) for "collective management of common problems to suppress economic conflict and promote policy cooperation." (B.Cohen 1995a:528)
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region. Perhaps the most challenging task facing East Asia, more than any other regional grouping, towards any regional integration comparable with the European economic union in the coming decades is its institutional underdevelopment.

Its non-regional looking (Japan and the Four Tigers), its parochical vested interests (unsustainable Japanese protectionism, China and Taiwan not yet in GATT, the echoes of the North-South divide against Japan and NIC’s), its mutual mistrust and tension (China’s disputes with other East Asians on the Spratly Islands, local Japanophobia, historical animosity between China and Vietnam, the tension on the Korean peninsula and between the two Chinas), and its often incompatible, institutional/cultural mix (Theravada/Mahayana-Buddhist, Islamic, Confucian, Christian, Shintoist, authoritarian, totalitarian, democratic, underdeveloped, newly industrialized) impose obstacles of various types more formidable than what the Western Europeans had experienced since the world war. (G. Segal 1994:12-4; A. Friedberg 1993/4:15; I. Hall 1994/5:23.25) "Next to Europe, Asia appears strikingly under-institutionalized," Aaron Friedberg (1993/4:22) rightly writes, "The rich ‘alphabet soup’ of international agencies that has helped to nurture peaceful relations among the European powers is, in Asia, a very thin gruel indeed." The timespan for an East Asian regional integration will be longer to be sure, with, however, a sense of optimism: as Richard Betts (1993/4:46) observes, "In one sense, stability in the region has never been so good," as is in the post-Cold War period.

Regional divisions are not historically new, however. Four examples will illuminate the point. Firstly, the North-South divide has been with us as long as we can remember. Secondly, the geopolitics of regional alliance which eventually led to the two world wars is one more exemplar. Thirdly, the call for pan-Islam, first championed more than a centenary before by Jamal al-Dih al-Afghani, is still another case --, with its recent rebirth as in the 1981 pan-Islamic conference from 43 states (representing more than 700 million people). (A. Dessouki 1982:26-7) And lastly, the Cold War, as a more recent phenomenon, was a major impetus to regional division between the market-oriented
industrialized world and the state controled one (as symbolized by what Winston Churchill, in an immortal phrase, called the Iron Curtain in Europe, under the watchful eyes of NATO and the EC, on the western side, and the Warsaw Pact and the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance, on the eastern one). (R.Hormats 1994:101) The great fortune we have to witness the historic end of this Cold War, with its destruction of this artificial division, based as it was on ideological, military/geo-political ground, and thus mushroom various new regional groupings: NAFTA, EU-East European association, APEC, the revived Andean Pact, the renewed Central American Free Trade Zone, the South American Common Market (Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay, and Uruguay), and proposed free trade areas for Turkey and Central Asian republics, South Africa and neighbourly states, Israel and its Arab neighbors, Guangdong-Shenzhen and Hong Kong, and numerous subregional others. (R.Hormats 1994:102-3)

But this trend of regionalism, an on-going process as it has long been, is not without its limits. The reason has a lot to do with the very nature of regionalism, in a five-fold sense. (R.Hormats 1994:100,103-4; P.Gibney 1993:22) Firstly, it lacks a unified organizing principle. The European Union, for instance, is progressing from a common market towards an economic union (S.Huntington 1995) which has a common agricultural policy and an external tariff, coupled with a European parliament and an emerging common fiscal, monetary policy and is thus much more institutional than NAFTA, which, as a free trade area, has neither common internal policies nor common external tariff. Within East Asia, its regional grouping is even less cohesive, since the major driving force for regional integration is the market (with ASEAN and APEC serving solely as a consultation group). Secondly, regionalism has yet to address issues of how trade should be conducted among multiple regions or how large economies (China, India, Russia) are to be incorporated into the global economic order. Thirdly, its influence is confined within a couple of regions (EU, East Asia, and NAFTA), and thus many nation-states (roughly 130-150 left) have yet to institutionalize their own, though good candidates are already indicated above. Fourthly, it is
often tempted to a parochial ethos, be it protectionism in trade (F. Gibney 1993: 22) or closed blocs as during the Cold War. Finally, geographic regional groupings do not necessarily dictate closer trade ties: the U.S. trades much more, for instance, with partners much farther away as Malaysia, Singapore, and Thailand than with many neighbouring Latin American ones.

Yet these qualifications aside --, there is a price to pay for regionalism: namely, its inward-looking, parochical orientation so understood (with different gradations, to be sure, of cohesiveness for different regions) which is not conducive, in the short term, towards any global formation, be it economic, political, or cultural. The current European Union in the making, or the United States of Europe (a dream long had by Napoleon, shared by Hitler, and inherited by de Gaulle), many years as it might take, is precisely the driving force behind the European Community for a unifying process not just economically, but politically, culturally, and, not inconceivably, militarily in due time. The lesson here is: if this is happening to Europe, why not in due time to East Asia, North America, Africa, the Middle East, South America, or else, even if in various degrees of cohesion, integration, or identity --, just as the world had been split up before into different regional groupings as best illustrated during WWI, WWII and the subsequent Cold War as historical precedents, or, as still an ongoing process, in the North-South divide and the pan-Islamic movement?

On the other hand, this very regionalism is also producing, I suggest, two effects fundamental to intersocietal transition to the farther future: firstly, making the notion of national-states less relevant than it used to be in the heyday of nationalist fervor, and secondly, serving as a stepping-stone towards a larger global society in the distant future. Robert Lawrence, for one, argues that "[t]he major regional initiatives currently under way are more likely to represent the building blocks of an integrated world economy than stumbling blocks which prevent its emergence" (1995: 407), insofar as they are conducive to income gains from trade which induces increased investment, further stimulated by the psychological impact of regional integration. (R. Lawrence 1995: 409-10)
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can actually facilitate external liberalization (trade with parties outside blocs) and serve as building blocks towards a more integrated global economy. As Clyde Prestowitz (1995:513) puts it, "[m]ost agree that the world economy is moving inexorably toward greater integration...."

This trend of an intersocietal transformation rests on two powerful economic forces, namely, firstly, the roles of mobility of capital and technology, as well as rising international trade, and secondly, the unrivalled presence throughout the world of multinational firms. (C.McMillan 1994:147)

Some emergent signs towards this direction are already on the horizon. The World Trade Organization (whose members already reached 124 in 1994) with its assignment to stipulate trade, financial, and macroeconomic preconditions to be met for membership and to resolve multilateral conflicts through binding international resolutions in accordance to international laws and codes in the making, in such diverse areas as sanitation, agriculture, manufacturing, trade relations, foreign investment, or else (R.Hormats 1994:105-6; J.Sachs 1995), in conjunction with other international institutions as the United Nations, IMF, GATT, and the World Bank --, all point to the increasing recognition of the paramount need for global formation, in special regard to an emerging global economy which rests on what Fredric Jameson understands as transnational exchanges of finance, manufacturing, advertising, and consumption, that is, on what Ernest Mandel termed "late capitalism" (F.Jameson 1991:xix; C.Strauss 1995:4), and where money and information know "no Fatherland" (P.Drucker 1993:142-3), since they have gone international and "cannot be controlled any longer by national states, not even by their acting altogether."

This global formation in the making, Jeffrey Sachs (1995) argues, helps to increasingly break down national sovereignty43 in trade, financial, and

43. For instance, because of increasing monetary interdependence --, when the United States lowered interest rates in an attempt to stimulate the economy in April and May of 1971, the policy was defeated instead by an outflow of capital. (J.Spero 1990:41-3) And the reverse case was true for Germany in 1969 and 1971 (that is, raising interest rates to curb inflation led to an inflow of capital instead). This of course has something to do with the rise of Eurocurrency markets (that is, national currencies like francs, marks, pounds, dollars, and yen held and traded outside their home country), which, small as it was with only $20 billion
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Macroeconomic policies --, especially when accompanied, Viven Schmidt (1995:75-6) suggests, with such internal political, economic reforms (as privatization, deregulation, and decentralization) "which have diminished central governments' powers at the same time that they have freed business even more." The increasing loss of national sovereignty is thus attributed to the trend towards global interdependence (economic, financial, environmental, telecommunicational, migrational, military, political, cultural, or else), to the effect that transnational units as in transnational social movements (the Green Movement and the Islamic Fundamentalism, for instance), Sid Tarrow (1995) argues, further contribute to the coming of a transnational civil society, and, in the more distant time, of a transnational super-state.

And coupled with multinational corporate enterprises (MNC's), global media, regional groupings, and other transnational organizations (as in Transnational Criminal Organizations), there gradually emerges, in our time, what James Kurth (1992:33-34) calls the post-modern state which is becoming more "trading" than "military-political" (Richard Rosecrance), more "corporatist" than "liberal" (Peter Katzenstein), more a global economy than a national one (J. Kurth 1994:11): in brief, the increasing blurring of traditional nation-state boundaries. As Susan Strange (1995:61,67) recently argues, "there has been a fundamental change in the nature of diplomacy. Governments must now bargain not only with other

In 1964, yet grew to $4.5 trillions by 1987. The growth has no end in sight and has been spreading to the whole globe. And coupled with the huge expansion of international financial institutions (multinational banks) and of multinational enterprises (MNC's), and with the rising importance of non-American central banks, capital mobility becomes all the more difficult to control.

A second instance is more serious. The United States, under the Reagan Administration, no longer intervened in foreign exchange markets (in accordance to President Reagan's conservative economic policy) and pursued various economic policies unilaterally. (J. Spero 1990:57-8) As an illustration, when a tight monetary policy was used to bring inflation down in the early 1980's, many developed countries responded by raising interest rates (to avoid capital outflows to the U.S.) and avoiding capital controls. But in the end they suffered from recession (and some capital outflows, in the absence of capital controls, which by the way might not be effective either). For the developing countries, the consequences were worse: declining exports, greater debt service costs, dislocations in the capital markets. And for the U.S., the repercussions were serious as well: dollar appreciation plus world recession led to massive trade deficits.

In the end, the U.S. was pressured to abandon economic unilateralism and returned to a more multilateral policy by 1985. By then, the damage had already been done, since "[t]he policy...contributed to the most severe economic decline since the Great Depression," with repercussions both domestic and global, and, as Joan Spero (1990:54,58) concludes, "in the new world of global financial interdependence, national autonomy has proved illusory."
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governments, but also with firms or enterprises....Our contention is that transnational corporations should now be put centre stage; that their corporate strategies in choosing host countries as partners are already having great influence on the development of the global political economy...." This is all the more imperative in what Steven Miller (1994:98) calls "an age of 'geo-economics,'" now that the Cold War is over.

Or a few statistics well illustrate this gradual erosion of traditional national boundaries, as much credited to increased interdependence between nations, the ease of international travel and communications, demographic mobility, the globalization of international financial networks, and the growth of transnational organizations.(P.Williams 1994:97-8) Between 1960 and 1992, Raymond Vernon noted, passenger volume on international commercial flights rose from 26 billion passenger miles to 700 billion, and by 2010 global air-travel miles will reach 3 trillion.(Business Week 1994a:194) In 1984, 288 million people entered the United States, and the number increased to 422m by 1992. So did the number of carriers (aircraft, ships, boats, trains, buses and cars) increase from 90m in 1984 to 131m in 1992 for transnational businesses.

In Western Europe, immigration from Turkey, North Africa, and, since the end of the Cold War, Eastern Europe is no joke: over 1 million from Eastern Europe in 1989, and almost 1.8m in Germany and over 1.6m in France from North Africa and Turkey in 1990. And the increase in the value of global trade is enormous, since global imports reached $3.5 trillion in 1990, from merely $331 billion in 1970, and will be $16.6 trillion by 2010.(Business Week 1994a:194) In the late 1970’s, daily turnover on the world's exchange markets reached $100 billions but skyrocketed to $650 billion by the 1980’s.(J.Goodman 1995:303) And the Eurocurrency markets reached $4.5 trillions by 1987, as compared with a tiny size of $20 billions two decades before (1964).(J.Spero 1990:42)

Even transnational criminal organizations thrive better in a post-modern environment of state-boundary erosion, ranging from the cocaine trade by Colombian cartels (Medellin and Cali) through the distribution of heroin by East...
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Asian mafia (the Chinese triads and Japanese yakuza) to clearing house for heroin by Middle Eastern middlemen (the Istanbul connection) -- besides other transnational criminal activities (extortion, credit card fraud, prostitution and pornography, people trafficking). (P. Williams 1994:99,101,104)

And in the area of global communications (A. Inkeles 1988:134,136,143-4,149,154-5) --, by 1988, the number of international phone "conversations" in which Americans participated reached 1 billion. World telephone lines (both wired and wireless) will jump from 641 million in 1994 to 2.7 billion by 2010, so will communication satellites reach 2,260 from 1,100. (Business Week 1994a:194) The United Press International (UPI) serves 92 countries, with services provided to over 2,200 newspapers plus 36 national news agencies. In 1932, the INDEX TRANSLATIONUM recorded only some 3,200 translated titles published in 6 countries, but the number increased to over 53,000 titles globally in 1980. In 1987, the world total of radio sets reached 1.6 billion, yielding a ratio of close to one set for every three persons, or one for every two above the childhood years, and thus helping the breakdown of local isolation. So is the spread of movie attraction as produced by the U.S., Hong Kong, India, Mexico, and Brazil to the global magnitude, such that by 1980's, the number of attendances was 16 or 17 billion annually. The appeal of popular music is no less intense: that in 1985 Europe sent America some 14.3 million long-playing records while receiving from the latter 2.5 million, and Michael Jackson's 1987 recording of "Bad" had a sale record of 100 million copies worldwide, which led "Music Box," a music network, to suggest that "our type of programming has a universal appeal which transcends national cultures." (A. Inkeles 1988:159)

In brief, the decline of national sovereignty in intersocietal transition is already happening for five major reasons, besides others, to be sure (H. McRae 1994:21-2):
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- the formation of supra-national bodies (such as the European Union).
- the spread of global financial, or offshore, markets and transnational banking institutions (delimiting the freedom of both fiscal and monetary policy for a nation-state).
- the growth of world trade (constraining the scope of domestic policies to meet the need, say, of maintaining access to foreign markets).
- the emergence of transnational organizations and multinational corporations.
- the ease of global travel, communication, and demographic mobility.

Yet in either way, any global cultural formation in the making must be historicized within the delimitating factor of a regional consciousness separating a coming planetary one (that we are all fellow earthlings), or the further completion of what Ronald Dore (1984:412) refers to as the "fellow-feeling" in global culture, and a national counterpart (that you are French, I am American, or she is Japanese). Roland Robertson (1992:404-5), for one, already offers some models for this coming global order, ranging from global gemeinschaft 1 (a world order with a series of relatively closed societal communities) through global gemeinschaft 2 (a fully globewide community) to global gesellschaft 1 (a world order with a series of open, highly mutually-interacted societies) and global gesellschaft 2 (a formal, planned world organization).

Whichever form the coming global culture will take is something no mortal in our times knows for sure, yet the fate of national sovereignty of the old is living on borrowed time, as "[g]lobalization is the emergence of international interdependence -- a world order of living in the same space, regardless of geography, regardless of political regime, regardless of race or religion. The political order of nation states no longer controls the economic order of free capital flows for finance and investment and production based on knowledge and
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ideas." (C. McMillan 1994:142) And Allan Toffler" (1980:306-8) could not agree more but adds,

Nation-states fight to retain as much sovereignty and freedom of action as they can. But they are being driven, step by step, to accept new constraints on their independence....What we are creating is a new multilayered global game in which not merely nations but corporations and trade unions, political, ethnic, and cultural groupings, transnational associations and supranational agencies are all players. The nation-state, already threatened by pressures from below, finds its freedom of action constrained, its power displaced or diminished, as a radically new global system takes form...."Planetary consciousness...[will] rise to groups with larger than national interests. These form the base of the emerging globalist ideology. And its appearance is seen as an evolutionary necessity -- a step closer to a "cosmic consciousness" that would embrace the heavens as well.

Distant this future may be, yet this is only to repeat a global culture in the making, even with its short-term civilizational conflicts as, in a sense, hard to deny, within the modern historical legacies of rechantment, resentment, and regional divisionism as aforediscussed.

Welcome, therefore, to the emerging (however gradually) planetary civilization.

"Surely, Toffler's point need be qualified, in that the issue concerning the degree to which the causes of political and economic affairs are to be attributed to international (transnational) as opposed to statist/domestic factors remains to this day a major theoretical disagreement among scholars in international political economy. (J. Frieden 1995:5-10) But it is safe to perhaps say, especially with the evidences presented so far, that the transnational organizations and activities are increasingly a major factor to be reckoned with in understanding international affairs on this planet Earth which is getting smaller everyday --, but without failing to give due regard to domestic (statist, and socio-economic) factors.
The human mind treats a new idea the way the body treats a strange protein; it rejects it.

-- P.B. Medawar (M. Caudill 1992: 89)

It is almost irresistible for humans to believe that we have some special relation to the universe, that human life is not just a more-or-less farcical outcome of a chain of accidents reaching back to the first three minutes [of the Big Bang]. . . . It is even harder to realize that this present universe has evolved from an unepeakable unfamiliar early condition, and faces a future extinction of endless cold or intolerable heat. The more the universe seems comprehensible, the more it also seem pointless.

-- Steven Weinberg (1993: 154)

We stand at the crossroads of creating another intelligent set of beings that may eventually exceed our own enormous potential.... A narrow, parochical perspective may insist that life can only exist when it is controlled by DNA merged into genes. This may prove to be one of the greatest errors of judgment humanity has ever made, for while we treat these mechanical children as machines -- while...we...secure in our arrogance that we are masters of our world -- as all this is happening, they may be evolving into our successors.

Someday in the not-so-distant future we will awaken to a world that is radically different from the one we know now. We will be sharing our world with the products of our own imagination, androids. What will life be like then?

-- Maureen Caudill (1992: 204-5)

This chapter explores some implications of the global cultural emergence (as analyzed in the last six chapters) for the ultimate human future. This
emergence is exemplified by the continuous spread of the bitter struggle within Western modernity (and now its postmodern successor as well) to the Others, with its leaving behind nothing save the critical spirit of the Enlightenment and the imaginary seeing of its enemies, yet without the naivety nor dreams of either side in the history of formal rationality in modern and now postmodern times.

I first argue, in Section 7.1, that this intersocietal transformation is a historical trend, not an inevitable law, nor does it imply necessary progress. The spread of formal rationality embodied in this intersocietal transformation in modern and now postmodern times, when carried to its logical completion, will yield, solely as a historical trend once more, what I call a posthuman consciousness (in Section 7.2), in that humans are nothing in the end (other than what culture has shaped them to be), to be eventually superseded by posthumans.

Then in Section 7.3, I inquire as to what forms these posthumans may take and suggest, based on current research on cosmolgy, astrophysics, cybernetics, artificial intelligence, genetic engineering, neural networks, and other technologies, that they will be androids, robots, cyborgs, and genetically altered superbeings at some point after postmodernity (perhaps some hundred or thousand years from the present). I do not, however, deny other possibilities, for instance, that humans may as well destroy themselves sooner in a nuclear Armageddon or in a gigantic natural calamity.

Finally in Section 7.4, I raise the prospect of the loss of human privilege in this posthuman world, in that the very question which has since time immemorial been asked in myriad ways, Why are humans at all?, can now be thus answered: that is, the brutal truth is that humans are nothing in the end (with no God no solace to console them, now that all metanarratives in all human history hitherto existing, be they ancient, medieval, modern, and now postmodern as well, are to be, if not already in some places, deconstructed --, as has been discussed in the last six chapters), to be eventually superseded by posthumans.

To be sure, I am not unaware of how disquieting my thesis may be to my fellow humans. I am willing, however, to bow to their reproach, but I still have
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no consolation to offer them.

7.1 Intersocietal Transformation & Historical Trend

The intersocietal transformation into a global association of some form, through the potent planetary spread of social rationalization the world over -- as exemplified, among other facets, in the four-fold, ambivalent modern strivings for, and now in the postmodern reactions towards, a consumeristic/technophilic lifeworld (Chapter 2), a scientific/instrumental mode of mental/behavioral dispositions along with a religious resurgent context (Chapter 3), an aesthetic inner logic (Chapter 4), and a moral universalism and localism for a just society (Chapter 5) --, delimited though it is within the three historic processes of rechantment, resentment, and regional divisionism (Sections 6.2, 6.3, & 6.4), is historically unprecendented in all human histories hitherto existing. Two issues are of interest: (1) Is this intersocietal transformation historically inevitable?, and (2) what implications does it have for the historical telos of humans? I proceed first with an examination of (1) in this section, and later, of (2) in Section 7.2.

(1) Historical Trend Vs. Historical Inevitability. The idea of historical inevitability, old fashioned as it now is, yet was a favourite child among many modern intelligentsia. A quick glance at them produces an illustrative list (M.Blute 1979:47), most telling as it is in its teleological bias often for historical progress:
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- Despotism -->monarchism -->republicanism (Montesquieu)
- Theological mind -->metaphysical mind -->scientific mind (Comte)
- Status -->contract (Maine)
- Primitivism -->feudalism -->capitalism -->socialism -->communism (Marx)
- Savagery -->barbarism -->civilization (Morgan)
- Gemeinschaft -->gesellschaft (Toennies)
- Folk society -->feudal society -->industrial society (Redfield)
- Mechanical solidarity -->organic solidarity (Durkheim)
- Family: Sexual promiscuity -->matrilineal -->patrilineal -->conjugal (Tyler)
- Economy: Gathering -->hunting -->herding -->agriculture -->industry (Kroeber) -->postindustrial (Bell)

By contrast, I propose the following alternative view of history which is neither teleological nor inevitable, as will be clear shortly. That is,

- Premodernity (of the ancients and the medievals) --> modernity --> postmodernity --> after-postmodernity (of the posthumans especially).

The reason should be obvious by now, in that a stage theory of history (as indicated before) is often entrapped within its own problematic idea of progress which is perhaps best captured by Hegel's idea of spirit (which Marx turned upside down in propounding his historical dialecticism with a materialist accent). As Hegel well said in a concise passage (R.Nisbet 1969:159),
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The principle of development involves also the existence of a latent germ of being -- a capacity or potentiality striving to realize itself. This formal conception finds actual existence in spirit, which has the history of the world for its theatre, its possession, and the sphere of its realization. It is not of such a nature as to be tossed to and fro amid the superficial play of accidents, but is rather the absolute arbiter of things; entirely unmoved by contingencies, which, indeed, it applies and manages for its own purposes.

But time has changed. Teleological arguments of the old are no longer fashionable in our postmodern times as they once were in the older days. David Hull’s point (1974:103) is worth repeating,

On purely inductive grounds of the crudest sort, one should expect the search for the essence of teleological systems to be no more productive than the search for the essences of society, art, space, horses, and mankind. Many authorities would maintain that each of these notions has an essence and that they know what it is. Unfortunately, no two authorities can be brought to agree on exactly what those essences in each case actually are.

But the most fundamental scientific evidence against teleological arguments of the old comes instead from quantum mechanics and chaos theory (whose subject matter is repeated here from Section 3.2 as a fresh reminder for the present purpose).

In contrast with classical mechanics of Newton, Galileo, and Descartes --, the challenge of quantum mechanics is to deny the possibility, as is in Heisenberg’s Uncertainty Principle, that one can know with certainty and precision the position and momentum of a quantum-mechanic entity, be it a neutron, a J-particle, or else, since how the measuring observer conducts the experiment affects the outcome. (S.Hawking 1993:76-7; P.van Inwagen 1983:191-4; A.Ross 1991:42)

In other words, to see where a particle is, one has to shine light on it. But Einstein had shown that light does not come in contiuously variable amounts.
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but in packets of a certain size (called quanta) which would then disturb the particle and cause it to move at a speed which cannot be predicted. Later, the American physicist Richard Feynman made further contribution to the theory of quantum mechanics, in that a particle at point A can move on any path that starts at A (as opposed to the mistaken view that it will move on a straight line away from A as in a classical nonquantum theory). (S. Hawking 1993:79) Thus, his concept of a sum over histories suggests that the probability of the particle traveling from A to B is the numbers associated with all the paths from A to B.

The lesson that Heisenberg (and Feynman, for that matter) wanted to show us here is that the state of a system cannot be measured exactly; only the probabilities of different outcomes can be estimated. (S. Hawking 1993:77) And if one makes a slight change to the way a system is by a small amount at one time, it will soon behave in a completely different way which cannot be predicted. Human subjectivity and objectivity are thus emptied-out, as the scientist cannot know reality itself. (D. Porush 1985:50-1) The world as it is known is therefore a human construct, with what Wallace Stevens calls "necessary fictions" (though without being totally arbitrary either) that the mind plays with the world (O. Hardison 1989:47,49), just as the task of prediction can only be had, up to the limit as set by the Uncertainty Principle. (S. Hawking 1988:166) Stephen Hawking (1993:44,46), for instance, tells a story about some philosophers who are stupid enough to ask how the notion of "imaginary time" in theory of black holes makes sense, since it has nothing to do with the "real" universe. Hawking then answers, "it makes no sense to ask if it corresponds to reality, because we do not know what reality is independent of a theory....How can we know what is real, independent of a theory or model with which to interpret it?"

And in chaos theory, as in Ilya Prigogine's modern-biological idea that order can now come from chaos --, those features as disorder, disequilibrium, diversity, and randomness which were denied a major role in classical mechanics are now taken as co-existing in a natural order of things. (A. Ross 1991:47-8) The birfurcating model, for instance, allows systems to move out of equilibrium
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states, where emerge innovations, mutations, and unexpectancies as to challenge the prediction of any certain outcome. (I. Wallerstein 1991:235) Thus, any unexpected (random) change to the way a system is will therefore unleash a chain of reactions not exactly predictable.\footnote{Chaos theory has recently been used in biology to explain "evolution's Big Bang," that is, the abrupt, very fast appearance of amazingly diverse multicelled animals (which are the ancestors of almost all creatures known today) in the early Cambrian era (a geological period about 543 million years ago). (M. Nash 1995:67-70) The tough question now is, Why was the evolution so fast, so stunning in speed and scope? The standard Darwinian theory cannot satisfactorily account for something which happened so fast, since genetic variation and natural selection are to take place over a long period of time. As Queen's University paleontologist Narbonne puts it, "What Darwin described in the Origin of Species was the steady background kind of evolution. But there also seems to be a non-Darwinian kind of evolution that functions over extremely short time periods -- and that's where all the action is." (M. Nash 1995:74)} Even when the outcome can sometimes be predicted, since some range of initial conditions may not lead to chaotic behavior (M. McNutt 1995) --, the randomness of the initial conditions are likely not. (H. Feshbach 1995) And in complexity theory, although increasing interactions of elements in a system can lead to order out of a prior chaotic state, it is a kind of unpredictable order. (R. Lewin 1995)

The Hegelian idea of spirit (or any comparable historical teleology) now looks quite innocent (or naive), indeed. But there is a way of espousing historical change without falling into an old-fashioned trap of teleological ontology. Three examples are forthcoming. Firstly, historical change can be taken as more complex over time. (D. Campbell 1975:1115; R. Cohen 1981:206; F. Cottrell 1965:287) In this sense, historical change produces the effect of rendering societal systems all the more complex in their inherent structure. Secondly, societal systems evolve to a more heterogenous structure, from a homogeneous form as in the state of nature. Such an evolutionary view finds support among Talcott Parsons (1966:2), R. Cohen (1981:206), and Herbert Spencer, as the latter wrote, "evolution is definable as a change from an incoherent homogeneity to a coherent heterogeneity" (M. Blute 1979:49), even if one refuses, with good sense, Spencer's old-fashioned thesis of evolutionary adaptiveness. Or thirdly, historical change

\footnote{The beauty of chaos theory, therefore, is to allow intrinsic instability of a self-organizing system which walks on the rope between order and chaos --, and speciations and extinctions can arise naturally from any sudden change in the system for no obvious good reason, nor does superior fitness of the Darwinian kind provide any safety net. As Stuart Kauffman of the Sante Fe Institute argues in At Home in the Universe, these patterns are found in every chaotic system, be it human or biological. (M. Nash 1995:74)}
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over a prolonged eon implies the development of a more advanced form. (F. Cottrell 1965:284) In this light, the capitalistic mode of production is more advanced than the previous feudal one, just as it is meaningful to propose in the organic world that humans evolve into a higher form than that of protozoa.

In whichever of the three illustrative meanings historical change may be understood non-teleologically --, but the deeper question concerns whether or not it is as well progressive, unavoidable. Consider first the issue of unavoidability: Can it be reversed after all? The answer is yes for the critics. Parsons (1977:231), for one, introduced the dead-end evolutions of such societies as ancient Israel and Greece. Albert Keller (1951:326), for another, regarded historical change as neither progressive nor retrogressive but both: not only is a regression of historical change possible, but also particular human societies may be "neither advancing nor regressing" from the technological standpoint, for instance -- in what Gerhard and Jean Lenski (1974:84, note #8) referred to as "technostasis".

Likewise, the case concerning a global cultural formation is not irreversible. The political renaissance of indigenous civilizations (Chapter 6) is precisely an anti-systematic movement in this regard, its variety of causes notwithstanding. Yet in the longer run, a trend towards a more universal civilization is not unreasonable to propose, though a trend is not a law (and thus not inevitable as in either the Marxian or the Hegelian sense). After all, what other logical possibilities are there, besides those of being (a) reversing, (b) steady, (c) cyclical, and (d) progressing? Let me examine them one by one.

(a) Reversing. Wallerstein (1991:225) is right: the very idea of the breakup of the current Earth-wide capitalist historical system into a reversing course to the past (comparable to the pre-1500 A.D. situation of multiple systems) seems most implausible, "other than via the route of a nuclear Armageddon, which I do not rule out but which also seems to me eminently preventable." The modern world is infinitely more complex and interdependent than what any relatively autonomous historical systems of the past could ever be.
A Final Thought: No God, Nor Solace, and After Postmodernity (Chapter 6).

(b) Steady. Or one is to suggest a steady course of human civilizations as they have been, with no more integration than isolation. This, again, flies in the face of everything which modernity has been since its dawn (Sections 1.3, 1.4, & Chapter 6) --, and for that matter, of everything which human historical evolution has shown us.

(c) Cyclical. Alternatively, a different view takes a cyclical chronosophy, which has two forms. In one form, civilizational history is taken as countless cycles of rise and fall, with no progress. Henry George’s thesis on progress and poverty is illustrative enough, in that all civilizations finally collapsed under their own weight (inequality and mass poverty), such that there is no progress without decay. (C. Lasch 1991:65) And when they die, much (if not all) hard-won progress die with them as well: that the earth was "the tomb of the dead empires, no less than of dead men." Or cyclical chronosophy can take a different expression, along the line of a "decline and fall" thesis, in that great civilizations are to decline and fall, overwhelmed as they are by the barbarians. In both instances, it reflects a cultural pessimism, as nourished directly, Wallerstein argues (1991:235), by the Western experience of the fall of the Roman Empire and the invasions of Europe by so-called barbarian tribes.

But advocates of this cyclical chronosophy are almost unheard of in these days of ours, except in some Hollywood movies with the message that once the American empire falls, the world will go to pieces, as Wallerstein concludes, "if the scientific model of birfurcating [that systems can move out of equilibrium states and thus allow innovations, mutations, and unexpectancies] tells us anything, it tells us that we cannot predict that the outcome will be a pessimistic one."

(d) Progressing. Or a more plausible view concerns the transformation of the current global order into a different kind qua a global association of some form, as Wallerstein (1991:225) argues, "The other possibilities involve the transformation of the present Earth-wide historical system into a different kind
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of Earth-wide historical system. This seems to me the more likely. Indeed, I believe we are already in the early stages of that process." Norbert Elias ends his book *The Civilizing Process* with a wisdom from Holbach: "la civilization," Holbach wrote, "n'est pas encore terminee."(I.Wallerstein 1991:230)

Civilizational evolution has yet to finish its uncertain course. Yet the term 'progressing' as used here refers to a trend towards an intersocietal evolution into a more complex, more heterogenous, more advanced, or more interdependent global village without, however, being necessarily a more desirable thing to have. 'Progressing' is thus not synonymous with 'progressive' (favourable), nor is 'trend' equated with 'law' (inevitable).

But to refuse tying progress with this trend is not to suggest the impossibility of progress, as Adorno (1989:93) said it best, "those who, since antiquity and with ever new words, make the same wish: that there be no progress, have the most dangerous pretense of all. This pretense lives from the false inference that since no progress has taken place until now, there will never by any." Rather the point is to guard against the temptation of linear universalism so dear to the Western heart, rooted as it is in the three great monotheistic religions of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam.(I.Wallerstein 1991:233)

7.2 The Post-Human Consciousness, & After Postmodernity

This emergent global cultural formation (Section 6.1), even if only as a trend, however more decades it will take for its completion and in spite of a possible clash of civilizations in foreseeable time (Sections 6.2, 6.3 & 6.4), is driven by the engine of social rationalization so much characteristic of modernity (its counter-Enlightenment ideals notwithstanding). Yet the engine is no longer accepted with its once great expectations. This sober awakening is most exemplified by the conflicts and ambivalence within the modern strivings for, and now within the postmodern reactions towards, a consumeristic/technophilic lifeworld (Chapter 2), a scientific/instrumental mode of mental/behavioral
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dispositions along with a religious resurgent context (Chapter 3), an aesthetic
inner logic (Chapter 4), and a moral universalism and localism for a just society
(Chapter 5). This four-fold striving summarizes the most paramount facets of
human existence as known since time immemorial: the Good, the Just, the
Beautiful, the True, the Sacred, the Everyday, and the Technological.

What is most troubling consists not just of the recognition that, as
Lyotard recently puts it, the legacy of enlightenment values has been a failed
or miscarried political projects, but all the more that counter-Enlightenment
ideals/values equally receive either a marginal existence in the social-
rationalized world or a dismal institutional failure as well. Equivalently put,
free-spirited modernity (Section 1.2) when translated into practice with
capitalist modernity (Section 1.3) produces a most intensely spiritual
disquietude. Hegemonic modernity (Section 1.4) spread this social-rationalizing
force along with its deconstructive effect to the Others (plural) -- or what
Buzan (1991:445) understands as that "[i]ndustrialization is spreading... across
the planet" --, the political renaissance of indigenous civilizations with its
varieties of cause notwithstanding. The Others will likewise in due time
(especially after their modernity, as is already true after Western modernity in
the Same nowadays) experience the same awakening to its own spiritual
disquietude, since the Others' rechanting efforts, as exemplified by, but not
solely limited to (Section 6.2), the emerging split of the Sinitic Other's soul-
searching modernity within its state-market modernity (Sections 1.5, 2.5, 3.4,
4.5, & 5.5), already reveals something on the tips of an iceberg.

As discussed on various occasions of this project, what stand behind the
formal rationalizing process is the critical spirit of science whose questioning,
deconstructive power has undermined all human ideals (Enlightenment and its
enemies alike --, perhaps most self-reflexively, its own ideal of scientific
objectivity as well): as much all the way through as all the way down,
metaphorically put. Science, in its instrumental search, as appropriated by
various groups, for truth, be it about Being, Nature, God, or Progress, yet
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becomes in the end what Nietzsche called a "rebellious child," in dismissing all human ideals (the "way to true being," the "way to true art," the "way to true happiness," the "way to true nature," the "way to true God," or else) in its turn away from cosmology, metaphysics, and theology (now cast away into the dustbin of history). (R. Eden 1983:155, 160-1; W. Lowrance 1985:14)

All values and beliefs, be they ancient, medieval, modern, and now postmodern as well, are to be deconstructed in the Others (if not already so), just as the Same in postmodernity has already increasingly experienced the deconstructive process. And when this finally comes, the age of after-postmodernity (that is, at some point further away from after-modernity) will begin. This long yet slow battle ahead before its final triumph on the global scale, as a trend once more (not as an inevitable law), has an exceedingly important implication for the human future: the dawning of what I call the post-human consciousness in after-postmodernity. Post in 'post-human' means after in time, later, or following. Post-human in 'post-human' consciousness refers to something after in time of humans, something following humans. The post-human consciousness is one in which, within the context of after-postmodernity, the very idea of salvation or grace, of immortality or nirvanna, of heaven or hell,

". As a reminder, let me repeat from Section 6.1 the distinctions between 'after modernity' and 'after postmodernity' as used in this project. Two clarifications are in order. Firstly, does the very idea of after-modernity suggest a break with modernity? The myriad notions, sometimes conflicting as they are, of postmodernism in the arts and literature (Section 4.4) already show how tricky and dissensial this business of talking about a break with modernity is. My answer, however, is not either-or but both, in that, firstly, after-modernity cannot be possible without the four legacies of modernity (Chapter 6), in which sense a break with modernity is not a coherent concept, and that, however and secondly, after-modernity retains the free spirits of modernity without their utopian flavour, without their dreams, without their metanarratives (and for that matter, without the metanarratives of whatsoever epoch there might be). In this second sense, there is a logical break: to think critically, to look sensibly, to imagine freely, to contemplate creatively --, yet without any hope of utopia nor dream of salvation, without any euphoria toward the future nor nostalgia towards the past, without any great expectations of the philosophes nor romantic sentiments of their enemies, and equally without any dystopia nor apocalyptic mood, without any lamentation nor melancholy.

And secondly, is after modernity, as a term, equivalent in meaning with 'postmodernity'? My answer is in the negative --, since at some point further away from after-modernity, the postmodern values and beliefs will be deconstructed as well (as already discussed in Sections 2.4, 3.3, 4.4, & 5.4). Precisely at this juncture will occur what might be called, in the absence of a better term, after-postmodernity. By 'after-postmodernity,' I refer to that historical epoch where the process of social rationalization (without, however, its dreams nor the hopes of its enemies) will eventually spread to the whole globe, long and slow as it will for sure be together with its ups and downs, such that it can be logically carried to its final completion, in yielding what I call a post-human consciousness, in that humans are nothing in the end, to be superceded by posthumans at some point after postmodernity.

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of utopia or dystopia, or in brief, of whatever which gives humans a sense of specialness in its historical existence on this planetary place known as Earth, loses its once soothing or terrifying appeal, and where there is, for the first time, an acknowledgment of the coming end of humans in due time, as has happened to other earthly species --, but with a mature footnote: that there is no good reason for lamentation nor euphoria, nor does this constitute human fate nor destiny. Two issues are of relevance: (a) Why is this consciousness related to the modern/postmodern heritage?, and (b) what scenarios may this end of human dominance take? I hereafter proceed to address (a) first in this section -- and later, (b) in Section 7.3.

(a) The Post-Human Consciousness and the Modern/Postmodern Heritage. Unlike previous historical epochs, modernity triumphs in its most exemplary spirit qua the critical mindset of science: an instrumental, critical attitude towards all things and values (to the point of a self-reflexive critique of its own as well). (Sections 1.2 & 5.4, Chapter 3, especially) The Nietzschean summation index of "God Is Dead" best illustrates this inherent nihilistic spirit, when pushed far enough (as in postmodernity), in the modern ethos -- all rechanting efforts notwithstanding. (Sections 3.3 & 6.2) The existentialists have a point, with Nietzsche (1968:9-24) as their precursor: that never before in human history has there been a sense of awakening that whatever the ancients imposed by the route of meanings and values to life and world, they turn out to be nothing. So does becoming achieve nothing in the end, other than what culture has shaped humans to thus be. The human future seems to be a future without future.

Or in Rorty's recent phrasing, human existence is historically contingent all the way through -- through and through. All these metanarratives of the old, so much meaning and solace as they once offered to human existence in answering this most spiritual of all spiritual questions (P. Nietzsche 1969:162), Why humans at all? --, are now contemptuously treated as bankrupt, as most telling of the ignorance of the pre-moderns, in a world as much backward as antiquated. Or as
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Fredric Jameson (1991:310,323) puts it, "[y]ou are suddenly sick and tired of this antiquated world."

The death of metanarratives (especially in postmodernity) opens the door to the historically unprecedented flourishing of hundred flowers and thousand schools, to the effect that "[y]esterday’s values are obsolete today; and today’s values will be obsolete tomorrow. Who cares for, and who can create anything perennial in this inconstant Niagara of change?" (P. Sorokin 1956:257) And nothing accelerates this trend better than the most potent agent of the critical mindset qua the social rationalizing process, which, under capitalist modernity most especially (in which, after all, the logic of the market always dictates the imperative of making something new for sale), penetrates into all domains of modern (and now postmodern) life, in what Weber understands as "instrumental" (as opposed to "value rationality"), what Habermas calls "technical" (by contrast to "practical rationality"), or what Mannheim refers to as "functional" (as different from "substantive rationality"). (K. Mannheim 1935:58)

The collapse of alternative systems to capitalist modernity in the post-Cold War era, that is, the failure of Communism and Third World state-led industrialization (J. Sachs 1995 & 1995a), leads to a historically unprecedented world-wide shift, through a process of what institutional economists understand as diffusion (G. Parayil 1991:296; J. Honigmann 1959:212-23), to market economies of various type in what Jeffrey Sachs calls "the age of global capitalism" and thus globalizes all the more intensely this spread of social rationalization the world over: "In the past decade, dozens of countries, with a combined population of some 3.5 billion people, have embarked on fundamental reforms to integrate their economies into the world market economy." With the same spirit, Frank Comes (1994:13) and Christopher Power wrote, "capitalism...has proven its resilience over the competing systems of fascism and communism and transformed itself to accommodate dozens of cultures worldwide...Their energy will help shape an age that is already upon us."

But this global spread of formal rationality qua the most fundamental
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legacy of modernity (and now postmodernity in the same) to human posterity should not be taken solely as a good reason for lamentation (nor blind hope). As is true of everything, there are two opposing sides of the same issue: as much opportunity as danger.

The danger is already familiar to us, thanks to the works of Martin Heidegger, Michael Foucault, Erich Fromm, Herbert Marcuse, Max Horkheimer, Theodore Adorno, Max Weber, Noam Chomsky, and Jurgen Habermas, among others: that when social rationalization becomes total, merely as a service to power (as the will to dominate and master), the result is the decadent triumph of modern totalitarianism (Nazi, Fascist, and Communist), of the Holocaust, of Foucault’s micro-power subjugated subjectivity (D. Levin 1988:4,21; S. White 1991:120), of Chomsky’s manufacturing of consent (1988), or of Weber’s iron cage. The legacy of social rationalization in its extreme form is therefore terror.

Or conversely, the opportunity is not less striking, in an age where God is dead: its allowance for intellectual emancipation, for instinctual celebration, for imaginative playfulness, for creative liberation, for difference politics, for artistic spontaneity, to the point that even a most critical opponent of modern life and world cannot take away this brighter side -- its danger of degeneration into decadence notwithstanding. (Chapters 2-5)

And Joseph Weizenbaum, in "Against the Imperialism of Instrumental Reason" (1976:261), vividly writes of the ambivalence of this spread of social rationalization in modern (and now postmodern) times,

Our time prides itself on having finally achieved the freedom from censorship for which libertarians in all ages have struggled. Sexual matters can now be discussed more freely than ever before, women are beginning to find their rightful place in society, and, in general, ideas that could be only whispered until a decade or so ago may now circulate without restriction. The credit for these great achievements is claimed by the new spirit of rationalism, a rationalism that, it is argued, has finally been able to tear from man’s eyes the shrouds imposed by mystical thought, religion, and such powerful illusions as freedom and dignity. Science has given to us this great victory over
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ignorance.

But, on closer examination, this victory too can be seen as an Orwellian triumph of an even higher ignorance: what we have gained is a new conformism, which permits us to say anything that can be said in the functional languages of instrumental reason, but forbids us to allude to what Ionesco called the living truth. Just as our television screens may show us unbridled violence in "living color" but not scenes of authentic intimate love -- the former by an itself-obscene reversal of values is said to be "real," whereas the latter is called obscene -- so we may discuss the very manufacture of life and its "objective" manipulation, but we may not mention God, grace, or morality. Perhaps the biologists who urge their colleagues to do the right thing, but for the wrong reasons, are in fact motivated by their own deep reverence for life and by their own authentic humanity, only they dare not say so. In any case, such arguments would not be "effective," that is to say, instrumental. If that is so, then those who censor their own speech do so, to use an outmoded expression, at the peril of their souls.

7.3 Post-Humans & the Human Future

To carry the logic of the critical mindset as embodied in social rationalization (its ambivalence aside) to its completion is to recognize that if humans are thoroughly contingent, with neither Fate nor Destiny (now that all these metanarratives, be they based on mystical thought, religion, or other powerful illusions, are deconstructed), they might as well transform, as a trend once more, into a post-human successor, with neither fanfare nor melancholy justified -- at some point after postmodernity, when the very euphoria towards postmodernity is treated as a passe as well. This idea of transformation should not be conflated with a Darwinian evolutionary ethos, since the very process of social rationalization in modernity (and now postmodernity) precisely opts towards an anti-Darwinian/evolutionary trend: mastering, dominating nature to the human imagery. (L. Thomas 1977:1464)

For the first time since the dawn of humans, evolutionary forces of natural selection and speciation (the emergence of new species) which first brought the
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former into existence lose much of their power to shape humans, armed as they now are with the tools of molecular biology (W.Stevens 1995:c1) and other technological advances as in cybernetics and information technology in a modern living environment. (Section 2.3) In the old days, natural selection favored those born with advantageous genetic features in the genetic lottery to survive and reproduce. One major selective force was the climatic change which, with the global cooling circa 5 million years before, shrank the forests of Africa and induced the human forebears to walk upright and forage across the savanna, to exploit a life as hunters and gatherers. (C.Ember 1988:Table 1;W.Stevens 1995:c1)

But isolated by geographical distance (habitat), new species of the human line evolved over time.

Yet the only survivor of them all, Homo sapiens sapiens, has come to alter the very rule of this evolutionary game. Two illustrations will suffice. Firstly, technological advances (as in medicine) cancel out inherited genetic defects, just as other improvements (from clothing to central heating to hurricane warning systems) no longer subject humans to the mercy of harsh natural forces as much, whose environmental stresses once so much more brutally drove their evolution. (W.Stevens 1995:c3) Secondly, colonies, emigration, international business --, and global society in the making destroy the isolating geographical barriers which once so much induced speciation. Ian Tattershall, a paleoanthropologist, has thus to add: "Homo sapiens today is in a mode of intermixing rather than of differentiation, and the conditions for significant evolutionary change simply don't exist -- and won't, short of some all-too-imaginable calamity."

Futhermore and most significantly, once the current genome project is completed, with the 100,000 human genes successfully mapped in detail (P.Berg 1974:303;M.Singer 1973:1114;M.Rogers 1981:28-40;J.D.Watson 1981), "we will be in position to choose our own course of evolution," said Edward Wilson at Harvard. (W.Stevens 1995:c3) As Neil Gershenfeld (1995) recently adds, the advance in biotechnology is to edit the genome to make the human body to grow the right
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parts. Or in Steven Jones's *The Language of Genes*, humans are to repeal natural selection and play a whole new ballgame -- something which had long been denied to many intelligent beings hitherto existing, as even the inherited biological capacities of modern humans, as Roderick Seidenberg (1955:43) long ago said, do not differ greatly from those of their ancestors of the Stone Age. At the bottom line, the moderns have increasingly become a new god --, a god who is to recreate itself and reality to its own imagery. What lies the future of these humans?

There appears three major possibilities (to be hereafter elaborated), though all three, or a combination of them, might occur as well (though likely not simultaneously). My focus, however, is on the third, since the first two are unlikely to shape the ultimate human future. Differently put, the technological transformation of humans into post-humans in a more distant future is most likely --, any possibility of a nuclear Armageddon or of a gigantic natural calamity in the long run notwithstanding. Let me explain.

(a) On the Likelihood of an Annihilating Star War. Firstly, humans might eventually encounter a worst nightmare, that is, a nuclear Armageddon (or a Star War equivalent in the farther future). But this should not be a reason for pessimism. After all, Einstein's triumphant spirit is not unwarranted, in that even should there be a nuclear winter, humans would reconstruct a brave new world, however long the process of reconstruction might take, with all of their intelligence, capacity, and persistence. If not, then all the worse this would be for a violent human ending --, with no weakening of my claim as it stands: that humans are not indispensable (contingent), with neither Fate nor Destiny.

(b) On the Eventuality of a Gigantic Natural Calamity. Or secondly, they might suffer a natural calamity of a gigantic kind never had before, in two ways (one relatively minor, the other relatively major). The former, minor as it relatively is, should not be taken as any less disastrous --, since such eventualities as another ice age, a global greenhouse-effect disaster, "the movement of continents and the impact of asteroids and comets" (W.Stevens
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are not something to look forward towards in good spirit, however unlikely though they seem. But Einstein's optimism equally applies here, in that even should this happen, humans might as well start all over in building a new civilization, however more years it would take. But not all share Einstein's optimism; Edward Wilson (1993:26), for one, provocatively has an article of his titled "Is Humanity Suicidal?" and then writes, "The human species is, in a word, an environmental abnormality. It is possible that intelligence in the wrong kind of species was foreordained to be a fatal combination for the biosphere. Perhaps a law of evolution is that intelligence usually extinguishes itself."

Another possibility, major as it relatively is, however, can take the form of the eventual collapse of our solar and galactic systems in the longer run. The sun, for instance, will run out of nuclear fuel in about five billion years. (S.Hawking 1993:118) Norbert Wiener (1967:58), for one, argued for an increased entropy in the universe over time, such that "the time may well come when the earth is again a lifeless, burnt-out, or frozen planet....The best we can hope for the role of progress in a universe running downhill as a whole is that the vision of our attempts to progress in the face of overwhelming necessity may have the purging terror of Greek tragedy. Yet we live in an age not over-receptive to tragedy." Should the worst come, however, it would well be some billion years from the present.

But this should not be taken either as a reason for lamentation, since humans will have advanced by then (hundreds of million years from the present) to the point of technologically capable of migrating to other solar systems, or to other galaxies --, long before the collapse of our solar system. Yet this only pushes the question one step further, Will these other solar systems, or other galaxies, burn out one day as well, in turn?

Precisely here, astrophysicists disagree over the fate of the cosmos. (M.Lemonick 1995:82; S.Hawking 1988 & 1993) The contention all boils down to whether the cosmic density is less or greater than a certain critical value. (S.Weinberg 1993:150-5) If it is less than the critical value, as in Open
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Universe theory, the cosmos is able to resist the gravitational contraction as inherent in all the matter in the universe and will go on expanding forever. But the thermonuclear reactions will slowly come to an end in all the stars, leaving behind a variety of cinder: black dwarf stars, neutron stars, perhaps black holes. And the cosmic backgrounds of radiation will continue to fall in temperature -- leaving behind an intolerable cold universe. Or this non-contracting universe might take a different form. As suggested by Flat Universe theory, it is simply flat, meaning an evolution to its maximum size and staying there ("even if our part of it eventually collapses, as some spots in the cosmos would suddenly start inflating on their own, creating brand-new 'baby universes,'" thus suggests the astrophysicist Andrei Linde).

Conversely, as in Closed Universe theory (or the theory of the "Big Crunch"), if the cosmic density is greater than the critical value, the expansion of the universe will come to an end in due time and give way to an accelerating contraction --, until it is to collapse into a singular state of infinite density (with intolerable heat). And whether or not the universe will reexpand (in a kind of cosmic "bounce"), then slow again to a halt and be followed by another contraction -- is uncertain at this point of scientific knowledge. (S. Weinberg 1993:153)

Yet, how much difference would this really make to the present enquiry? For instance, even should, however, a closed universe be possible, what difference would it make anyway? After all, should a galactic collapse be eventual in a future time, it would not happen until astronomical years from our present -- in light of the fact that the universe will have at least another ten billion years or so (S. Hawking 1993:147).

(c) On the Coming of Post-Humans. By that time, and finally, humans will have long been transformed into posthumans of some sort. This is, I claim, the most likely possibility (regardless of whether the universe is closed, flat, or open). The important point, as entertained as much by astrophysicists as by biologists, is therefore a long transformative process to a post-human species,
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something of a post-*Homo sapiens sapiens*, a successor of the only living species of the genus *Homo*. This is not, for sure, to trivialize the enormously devastating consequences of any potential nuclear Armageddon or of a potential gigantic natural calamity as explicated before, but the point is that such eventualities do not determine the ultimate end of the future human world.

That said --, how long the process of this technological transformation of humans into post-humans will take, how any potential contacts with extraterrestrial beings will speed up and shape the process, or similar speculation no mortal in our time knows the answers of. But an idea for thought is thus suggestive: that even should this happen, the process would be so gradual that the death of humans is to occur over a lifespan as measured in evolutionary years, to the effect that the occasion for their death cannot be meaningfully located in any given year or decade. The death seems as much painless (without melancholy needed) as without fanfare.

This talk of a human supersession, alarming as it might sound, should not be viewed as humanly tragic. Robert Nozick, a philosopher at Harvard, has a point: "It now would not be a special tragedy if humankind ended. Earlier, it would have constituted an additional tragedy, one beyond that to the individual people involved, if human history and the human species had ended, but now that history and that species have become stained, its loss would now be no special 67. A seemingly interesting question to ask here is whether humans in postmodernity, if the future of this technological transformation of them into posthumans in after-postmodernity is now recognized, can do something to reverse its course. Of course, they can, since this is just a trend, not an inevitable law (as has already been dismissed in Section 7.1).

But this question does not make sense in two ways. Firstly, it already assumes that this technological transformation is inherently bad and thus must be avoided. But it need not be so. After-postmodernity, just as modernity (and now postmodernity) have already been, is ambivalent --, such that the posthuman history in after-postmodernity has its own civilizational discontent, just as the modern (and now postmodern) ones already have their own (as will be elaborated in Section 7.4).

Secondly, the transformation in question is not something which would occur in one's lifetime or in one generation such that a public policy to reverse it can be implemented by the state (or through some campaign by concerned public citizenry). On the contrary --, the transformation is so evolutionary as to require probably thousands, if not millions, of years. No sane citizen and public-policy maker could want to base the rationale of a public policy on something which would happen thousand or million years from the present, while neglecting myriad social problems at the present (as has been discussed throughout the whole project) which, unfortunately, desperately require immediate attention and urgently need workable solutions.

At least in these two senses, the question is meaningless.

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loss above and beyond the losses to the individuals involved. Humanity has lost its claim to continue." (E. Regis 1990:146-7) And Albert Camus had decades before written in Le Mythe de Sisyphe (1955), though not surprisingly from someone who was a major figure in the existentialist movement of his time, that the only remaining philosophical question worthy of further pursuit is that of death. Or listen to what Frank Tipler, a physicist, has to say, "Our species is an intermediate step in the infinitely long temporal chain of Being that comprises the whole of life in spacetime. An essential step, but still only a step. In fact, it is a logically necessary consequence of eternal progress that our species becomes extinct."

Tipler's appeal to "a logically necessary consequence of eternal progress" sounds, however, rather old-fashioned indeed, something the postmoderns for sure reject" as another metanarrative no longer possible. That said, the point is, To the question, Why humans at all?, the answer now is, Humans are not necessary

"Tipler, in his book The Physics of Immortality (1994:154 & ch.4), tries to synthesize theology with physics through the Omega Point Theory, in which it is assumed that the universe is closed and that intelligence life (understood here as all thinking machines, including humans and their successor, that is, those of artificial intelligence) will gain greater and greater control of all matter and energy sources in the universe before their control becomes total at the Omega Point, where, however, the universe will also come to an end (of course, not until some billion years from the present). And the notion of God becomes relevant here, for Tipler, since his idea of God is understood as a completion or, in the parlance of the German theologian Wolfhart Pannenberg which Tipler quotes, "perfection of everything for which man believes he is destined."

Surely, "this idea of God as a completion is standard in theology" --, in light of its tone concerning a linear conception of time which culminates in the realization of a destiny of some kind or of a teleology of some progress, before a final point or an ultimate end.

But Tipler's eschatological concern in synthesizing theology with physics precisely constitutes the Achilles' heel of his argument. The reason is simple, since the very claims that the universe is closed (that is, not open nor flat) and that intelligence life will eventually engulf the whole universe and will eventually gain total control of it remain to be proved. After all, intelligence life might eventually destroy itself sooner through a nuclear winter or a comparable natural calamity --, nor is it yet conclusive among astrophysicists that the universe is closed. But Tipler needs these two assumptions to make his eschatological argument coherent.

Even if Tipler's two-fold claim (that the universe is closed and that life will eventually engulf the whole universe) were plausible, his idea of God as completion of a destiny would still remain problematic, since we do not know for sure about the validity of the idea of God as completion of some destiny of intelligence life until the final state of space-time (or sometime near the Omega Point) is reached. But then, the analogy of a lottery by John Gribbins (1989:273) and Martin Rees (as will be discussed shortly) is useful in this context: that any argument of human specialness or destiny which is based on hindsight proves nothing, since the idea of a final end is used to ignore historical alternatives, while the final end might just result from the accumulation of random coincidences at the start of the Big Bang (or from some other chanceful events). And Robert Merton's well-known argument (1968:ch.3) against the postulate of "functional indispensability" is worth repeating, in that any concept of this kind ignores "functional alternatives" and is thus essentially problematic.

See also footnotes #54 and #79. For further information of Tipler's argument, see especially chapter 4 of his book on the classical Omega Point Theory.
A Final Thought: No God, Nor Solace, and After Postmodernity (contingent), with neither Fate nor Destiny. Carl Sagan’s persuasion is of relevance here: that in a universe inhabited as it is as much by billions and billions of stars -- 100 to 200 billions of them in our Milky Way galaxy alone (E.Regis 1990:266) -- as by billions of planets, many of which are quite likely life-supportable, there is this small species by the name of Homo sapiens sapiens, who have the pretense, in their various spiritual creeds, to imagine themselves as somehow special, as somehow the universe’s center, as somehow the Chosen, as somehow more significant than what culture has shaped them to thus be. This false pretense is preposterous beyond human self-respect.

The legacy of social rationalization in modernity (and now postmodernity), with its Nietzschean hallmark qua the death of God, thus gradually creates a new god, potentially endowed with tremendous technological power at its disposal, or to appropriate a phrase from Nietzsche (G.Deleuze 1983:154), “the Man-God,” rather than “the God-Man” before. But Nietzsche’s challenge is, “Man is something that should be overcome. What have you done to overcome him?” (E.Regis 1990:146,175) Or as Freeman Dyson’s 5-year old adopted stepdaughter once asked him, or as the story was so told, “Did God really make you like that? Couldn’t he have made you better?” The idea of a superhuman, however fanatical, can be traced as far back as to the 2nd century Greek satirist, Lucian of Samosata, when he spoke of a hyperanthropos, a more-than-human, a hyperhuman --, thus underlines as this does an ancient dream of something better than human nature as it is. (E.Regis 1990:276)

And in medieval times, a legend had it that the Rabbi of Prague molded a statue of clay, placed the unspoken name of the Almighty on its forehead, and gave it life, known as Golem. Yet as Golem grew both in size and weight, and performed incredible tasks, the townspeople came to fear it, erased the first letter of the name on its forehead, and thus stilled it forever. (W.Kuhns 1971:15) Norbert Wiener, the prodigious founder of cybernetics, thus had the good sense to have one of his books on the relationship between humans and machines entitled God and Golem, Inc. (1966). David Hume, Nietzsche, Hitler --, they all
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were not happy with the nature of humans as they understood them to be. Or
William Burroughs' point is blunt enough: "if you look at the human organism as
some kind of biological artifact...just about everything we know of seems to have
been a basic mistake, biologically speaking. The dinosaurs were a mistake; maybe
the way we've evolved sexually is a mistake; maybe the development of the human
species is a mistake, and now we're about to move out of some kind of larval
stage into something that's inconceivable from our present point of
view." (L. McCaffery 1992:50)

A likely possibility, I suggest, is now technologically forthcoming in
after-postmodernity: that humans can come to make themselves in their own imagery
--, and in due time, come to recreate themselves, with the helping hands of
genetic, nano-, robotic, clonal, information, neurobiological, cryonic, mental-
downloading, and other technologies not currently conceivable, into a new type:
perhaps an admixture of cyborgs, humanoids, clones, robots, thinking computers,
genetic-engineered beings of a new type, coupled with something else beyond our
present technological imagery. This for sure is a long shot from earlier
technologies which, primitive though they were, yet built a good foundation for
later breakthroughs: that is, what William Kuhns (1971:116-7) calls the
transformation of technological environments from "an ecology of goods
(production, facilities, factories, etc.)" as in the Industrial Revolution,
through "an ecology of man" (transportation, architecture: the steamship, the
locomotive, the airplane, the automobile)" as in the Second Industrial Revolution
(overlapping with the first), to now "an ecology of information" (communication
media: the telegraph, the telephone, radio, TV, and the computer)" as in the
Third Industrial Revolution (again roughly put). And with a further stretch of
the imagination, a fourth ecology, that is, an ecology of life creation, is in
the making for the not-too-distant human future, in light of the developing
technologies as indicated before (genetic, nano-, robotic, clonal, cryonic, or
else).

Each phase of this technological advance reveals something interesting: a
Further extension of human basic organic functions, or as Marshall McLuhan, Edward Hall, and Buckminster Fuller had pointed out, even if solely as a very rough metaphor, a car is the foot aided by an engine and wheels, a book extends the eye, the rifle stands for the hand powerfully speeded up, the radio symbolizes the tongue distantly more vocal (W. Kuhns 1971:119, 185), or a supersmart computer is the mind faster.

The end result of this is a continuous enhancement of human power, to the point, as feared by Samuel Butler in *Erewhon*, that "[i]n the course of ages we shall find ourselves the inferior race. Inferior in power, inferior in that moral quality of self control, we shall look up to them as the acme of all that the best and wisest man can ever dare to aim at. No evil passions, no jealousy, no avarice, no impure desires will disturb the serene might of those glorious creatures." (W. Kuhns 1971:22-3) This fear, if only to thereby remind us of Dr. Frankenstein's monster, is something Norbert Wiener did not fail to notice, as he was rightly concerned with the increasingly delicate relationship between humans and machines (the computer especially): "Complete subservience and complete intelligence do not go together. How often in ancient times the clever Greek philosopher slave of a less intelligent Roman slaveholder must have dominated the actions of his master rather than obeyed his wishes." (W. Kuhns 1971:218)

Or in *Colossus: The Forbin Project*, a similar "techno-paranoia" (D. Porush 1985: ch. 5) of machines taking over the human world is best illustrated by a dialogue between Colossus, the machine, and its creator, Dr. Charles Forbin (P. Schelde 1993:137),

*Forbin:* "The difference is I'm human, not a machine."

*Colossus:* "I am a machine, vastly superior to humans."

*Forbin:* "You began in my mind, I created you, remember?"

*Colossus:* "Yes, what I am began in man's mind, but I have progressed further than man."

Surely, utopian the future will not be. Yet, a new type of species, should
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it come someday, will evolve, as indicated before, in such a long eon of evolutionary times that this techno-paranoia, when applied to the context of posthuman species, may not be warranted, since by the time humans evolve to such an advanced level (as to create a machine so superior) that they will already have themselves progressed further than current humans (and will thus be posthumans of some sort themselves, perhaps cyborgs of some sort by then) --, any more than Homo sapiens neanderthalensis should fear of their being evolutionarily taken over by Homo sapiens sapiens in due time (since the former had already progressed by the time of the latter further than what they once were in the evolutionary process).

So will there be what the cyberpunks fantasize as "Homo Cyberneticus" (A.Ross 1991:162), or what Ed Regis (1990) understands as the postbiological species, or what Joseph Deken (1986) refers to as silico sapiens? Whatever it might be --, this is not to deny that, in a world of post-Homo sapiens sapiens, what conflicts these posthumans have towards each other (perhaps posthuman machines versus posthuman cyborgs, or else?), how superior they are to humans, what peculiar characteristics they will take, or other probings of similar matter no one at present can say for sure, just as Steven Jones's suggestion is good for thought, that the very idea of a superhuman with superhuman strength or ability more plays to our fancy than reveals what will be.

A small dose of imaginative exercise is good for thought, however.

Arthur Clarke in The City and the Stars imagines a future time when a computer being becomes possible, through the reading out the content of a subject's mind and transferring it into a memory bank. (E.Regis 1990:150-1) Frederick Pohl is a little more modest, suggesting instead that the same purpose can be achieved by starting educating a supersmart computer, bringing it up as though it were a child. Bob Truax's idea is more provocative: why not getting rid of the human body and replacing it with something else stronger, better designed, more perfectionable, and more durable in lifespan? (E.Regis 1990:153-4) In fact, as early as 1641, Rene Descartes already suggested that the human body "be
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considered as a kind of machine, so made up and composed of bones, nerves, muscles, veins, blood and skin, that although there were in it no mind, it would still exhibit the same motions which it at present manifests."(D.Porush 1985:3)

And how about the mind? It too is to be treated as an information system, to be copied, saved, retrieved as needed, and further improved." Just think of this more futuristic technological possibility: a subject has just been wheeled into an operating room. A brain surgeon stands nearby, together with a computer waiting to become a human equivalent, lacking only a program to run.(E.Regis 1990:158-9,162-3) The patient is fully conscious, with only the skull anesthetized. The surgeon then opens the cranium and starts taking data from the first layer of brain cells which are to be entered into the computer nearby, and the process continues until all of the data are downloaded into the computer. Or, alternatively, a super-brain can be created, as Olaf Stapledon suggests in Last and First Men, through selective breeding -- and the manipulation of genes in test-tube germ cells, of fertilized egg cells in the lab, and of the growing individual itself.(D.Halacy 1974:180)

Or, "[s]uppose in the future," Hans Moravec writes, "when the function of the brain is sufficiently understood, your corpus collosum is severed and cables leading to an external computer are connected to the severed ends. From what it learns by eavesdropping, it constructs a model of your own mental activities. Ultimately...your mind would find itself entirely in the computer." And Thomas Bass (1995:114,117) -- who, together with Ron Rivest and Adi Shamir, are the inventor of public-key cryptography, a new way to encode information, which is increasingly used by high-tech industrial corporations all over the world -- proposes the possibility of constructing a superbrain, in what he calls the "DNA supercomputer," in that since DNA can be genetically altered to make it think faster and solve more complex problems per unit of time through imitating the

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9. Marvin Minsky (1995), the founder of artificial intelligence, recently suggests that humans can also be treated as "tele-robots", and "the time through the sensor-brain-muscle loop is ~0.2 seconds."
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binary codes of 1's and 0's as used in computers (as opposed to the relatively cumbersome four-letter alphabet used by DNA). This supercomputer would exist in the molecular level and could solve some of today's unsolvable problems.

Or consider Moravec's Bush Robot -- a postbiological being with many numbers of arms, legs, and other flexible limbs, each of which is connected with photoreceptors far more sensitive than those ever had before on Earth, and whose limbs could branch out into smaller and finer limbs, like the twigs of a tree, whenever needed. (E.Regis 1990:169-70)

Or Thomas Pynchon imagines a hybridization of human and machine, the android,79 with many artificial replacements for the original human parts (a prosthetic eye, a plate in the skull, artificial legs and arms with an authentic appearance, or else) --, or, alternatively, the automaton (sewn into the flesh with "a miniature electric switch" connected to electric wires running "from its terminals up the arm, disappearing under the sleeve"), who can even absorb X-rays, gamma rays, and neutrons, or take the worst falls without suffering damage. (D.Porush 1985:119) In John Barth's universe of machines, these superior beings can take human mannerisms and physiognomies but perform superhuman deeds (seeing in the dark, hearing unusual noise, walking on water, flying, changing colors, or else). (D.Porush 1985:149-50)

79. Maureen Caudill (1992:3-5) takes the trouble to specify the minimal requirements that an android must have in order to be complete and intelligent, in that:
(1) it must be able to see and interpret what it sees,
(2) it should have a more or less human shape,
(3) it must be able to move itself around,
(4) it must be able to pick up and carry objects of reasonable size with its hands and arms,
(5) it must be able to remember important information,
(6) it must be able to accept training so that it can learn to perform the tasks we want it to do,
(7) it must also be able to learn directly from its own experience (since we cannot possibly forecast all situations it will encounter),
(8) it must be able to solve at least simple real-world problems and cope with unexpected situations,
(9) it must have sensory input devices that can cope with real-world inputs other than vision, such as sounds, touches, and so on,
(10) it must be able to communicate with people in English (or some other human language),
(11) it must have a reasonable amount of common sense, or general knowledge about the world,
(12) it should understand and obey basic principles of the social world.

While many of these requirements have yet to be mastered --, the advance in research on AI, neural networks, and cybernetics (among others) have already gone a long way towards an eventual fulfillment of them.

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In light of this vision of androids and automatons which will be stronger, more durable, and less susceptible to disease and injury than humans, Maureen Caudill (1992:205,216-8) therefore asks some highly interesting questions,71

Someday in the not-so-distant future we will awaken to a world that is radically different from the one we know now. We will be sharing our world with the products of our own imagination, androids. What will life be like then? What will happen to our society when we share it with people-like machines? And how soon will all this happen?....Will they become prey to the evils in mankind as well as our virtues?....Are they eligible for citizenship?....Can they be managers and supervisors in a factory?....Should it be legal to have a sexual relationship with an android?....Would you marry one?....[C]ould an android become a Catholic priest? A Jewish rabbi? A nun? Could an android be a prophet?

Thought-provoking questions these are, indeed. And in Michael H.Hart’s estimate (1985:283), when the safety of genetic engineering is established, its use could produce major structural or biochemical changes in humans and would in fact produce a new species in a few hundred years. However, the technological transformation of humans into posthumans will likely take at least three general forms of development, namely, in artificial parts (limbs, organs), in the transplantation of living tissues and organs, and in the duplication and alteration of human genetic structure. (D.Halacy 1965:38) Amazing progress has already been done in all three of the areas, as Halacy’s Cyborg -The Evolution of the Superman had shown. (Section 2.3)

When combined with such technological breakthroughs as in cryonics (the

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71. Caudill’s optimism is based on her belief on the exponential rate of progress in technology (especially in computational technology). As she argues, "computer technology is racing ahead at the steady rate of a 1000-fold increase in performance every twenty years, and shows no sign of slowing. It is inconceivable that improvements in computational technology will not quickly find their way into the design of current androids. Thus, a mere twenty or so years after that first moronic android, we should expect its successors to be 1000 times as fast, smart, and capable. So the android 'Adam' with an IQ of 1 is likely to be succeeded within a single human generation by 'Adam X' with an IQ of 1000. (The IQ of the 'average' human being is 100 ± 10 or so IQ points.) Even if computer technology development slows drastically, to, say, a 100-fold improvement every twenty years, that still means that the android constructed a mere single human generation after the original one will have a measure of intelligence very comparable to that of the average human being." (215)
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rejuvenation of life for a future time, as is already the case (D.Halacy 1965:132,134) in preserving sperm, blood, organs, and such animals as bats, hamsters, galagos, and mice), nanotechnology (an army of robots in the size of an individual molecule programmed to reconstruct matter for infinite purposes, as in repairing dead cells in the body), clonal/genetic engineering (an artificial construction of new life, especially with the completion of the genome project, and in light of the entirely possible accomplishment of cloning in humans, as Joshua Lederberg (D.Halacy 1974:159), the Nobel Prize laureate in medicine, claims), and the downloading of information in the mind --, if realized, the result would create a new world of life construction never had before, something which the fictional Dr.Frankenstein so much dreamt of: that is, to create life without the help of the divine nor of the feminine.(P.Schelde 1993:219)

Welcome to the posthuman world.

7.4 The Post-Human World After Postmodernity, and the Loss of Human Privilege

These technological fantasies, as a note of caution, might never come to real life for sure, nor are the potential abuse of them for totalitarian purposes, or what Joe Weizenbaum calls "a horrible prospect morally equivalent to the Holocaust," to be discounted at the outset.(E.Regis 1990:284-5)

"We have all these people who are really unnecessary, and supposedly we are going to be made more biologically efficient and more intelligent," William Burroughs thus observes but then critically asks, "Who’s going to make the definition of intelligence and efficiency? Who’s going to implement them?"(L.McCaffery 1992:39) Even Wiener’s dream of cybernetics, from the Greek work kubernetes, or "steersman" (N.Wiener 1967:23), that is, of a model for successful movement and control of information between humans and machines, without one overcontrolling the other, for maintaining political, economic, and
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cultural stability, is not without its critics, as Jarislov Bronowski soberly observed back in 1964 (shortly after Wiener's death), "the heroic dream is over. Cybernetics remains in the best sense a fundamental idea as well as a popular one, but it has turned out to be less embracing and, in an odd way, less interesting than we had hoped 20 years ago when it was conceived." (W.Kuhns 1971:214,217) This for sure is no good news for the fans of "Homo Cyberneticus" fantasized.

And in due time for sure, a similar sense of sober awakening will likely visit other technologies as well. If we have learnt anything from the human experience as it has thus been, there is no utopia to be had, neither is there, therefore, good reason of why a posthuman civilization is somehow exempt from being ambivalent as well, that is, from its own posthuman civilizational discontents. Yet Moravec's reply, for instance, in his defense, is not unreasonable either: that the prospect of mental downloading is not without its liberating aspect (as is true of everything), as people could erase parts of their unpleasant memories if they wanted to, and after all, what is wrong with evolution if done intentionally, rather than leaving it to Nature to decide our fate as has thus been since the dawn of humans?

True --, everything has two sides to be considered.

The same caution applies to the argument of technological impossibility (that the very idea of a posthuman species is a pure fantasy). Yet it is not as self-obvious as it may appear. (E.Regis 1990:239-40,244,265) Auguste Comte once thought, back in 1844, that it would never be known what the stars in the sky were made of, but the invention of spectroscopic some years later revealed the very impossible: the stars' chemical composition. Or Lord Rutherford, who discovered the atomic structure, once claimed in 1933 that nuclear fission were beyond human reach, a mere "moonshine" --, yet the creation of the atomic bombs in the last days of WWII precisely proved him wrong. Or in 1926, A.W.Bickerton triumphantly proved that chemical rockets could never escape the earth's gravitational pull: "This foolish idea of shooting at the moon is an example of
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the absurd length to which vicious specialization will carry scientists working in thought-tight compartments" -- a view also shared by Dr. Lee De Forest, the inventor of the vacuum tube, who once confidently predicted that reaching the moon is not something to be had, "regardless of all future scientific advances." Yet the Russian launch of Sputnik and the American landing on the moon only made them look like fools. Or Albert Einstein ruled out the possibility of anything going faster than the speed of light, according to his theory of relativity. Yet many scientists are no longer as sure of this as they used to; Stephen Hawking and Bob Forward, for instance, suggested the contrary: that something can indeed go faster than the speed of light.²

Arthur C. Clarke's critique of "failure of imagination" or "failure of nerve" of some scientists is perhaps quite useful here, in that "when a distinguished but elderly scientist states that something is possible, he is almost certainly right. When he states that something is impossible, he is very probably wrong." (H. Stine 1984:18) The didactics here is, As is true as much of all science fiction as of scientific claims, the future seldom takes the exact form as predicted by its zealous predictors, as Roderick Seidenberg (1950:173) rightly observed, "The future, we are always discovering, bears only a faint and superficial resemblance to the bold prophecies ventured on its behalf" -- yet, and this is the important point, their imaginative silhouette of a technocratic future, as science fiction writers cannot be good ones without being what Gregory Benford calls "a good observer" (L. McCaffery 1992:13), helps us conceive of something emerging for a future age, even if not yet fully seen on our present horizon. And in the case of a coming, perhaps, posthuman species --, their particular features, however, no mortal in our time knows for sure.

². The British physicist Stephen Hawking (1993:80) at Cambridge University suggests, in his work on black holes, that black holes are not really black, since it is possible for a particle to travel faster than light, as implied in Feynman's work on quantum mechanics, especially on the latter's concept of sum over histories (which says that particles can take any path through space-time). Although the probability is low that the particle can go a long distance at this faster-than-light speed, but it can go faster than light for just far enough to get out of the black hole.
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Their meanings of life, death, sexuality, identity, being, and belonging will likely have different meanings, ostensibly, from those currently existing. (E. Regis 1990:162) But then they have to figure out what their future, which is posthuman and thus no longer ours, is to be. Their posthuman history and civilization begin, just as the humanly ours end. And whether or not a posthuman civilization is more liberating when compared with ours, whether or not the posthuman history is happier, whether or not these posthumans eventually kill each others off in an immensely annihilating star war of the future, or whether or not there will come a time when the Milky Way will eventually burn out (as many astrophysicists predict it will, as a matter of time) and collapse together with everything in it (and thus end as much space and time as these post-humans in this part of the universe) --, enquiries of this kind are more of their worry than ours, any more than it was the dinosaurs' concern of whether or not there would remain sufficient trees, fruits, and preys for current animals on this planet Earth to be well fed centenaries after the former's extinction.

To say that enquiries of this order is more of their worry than ours does not mean that we need not think about it, nor is this to necessarily imply the disappearance of humans as an organism, as impossible though the possibility cannot be ruled out either, but merely the end of human history as a dominant presence on Earth, as William McLaughlin in *Interdisciplinary Science Reviews* (1983) argues, "Judging that the current direction in machine design is not a dead end...the close of the 21st century should bring the end of human dominance on Earth." (O. Hardison 1989:333) The date is speculative for sure, yet the didactics here is, That the presence of a higher species need not entail the destruction of lower ones, "as witness the flourishing of protozoans, horseshoe crabs, butterflies, and golden retrievers on the same planet as man" (in Hardison's parlance), though there might not be many humans left by the endline of this evolutionary process. And even should a minority of them remain, they would likely be by then quite different from current humans and thus constitute posthumans of a different category (as an illustration --, cyborgs, as contrasted
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This is not to deny, no doubt, that the posthumans will have much greater control of the environment as never had before, if solely because of the trend towards greater use of intelligence (through the rise of science in modern times) as opposed to the reliance on instincts, since "intelligence has a far greater range and power of penetration: if the instincts enable the organism to adapt itself to the environment [and] obey nature, intelligence penetrates to the laws of nature [and] therein lie its freedom and its power." (R. Seidenberg 1951:58) Nor will they, insofar as those who are silicon, be as mortal as humans, as O. Hardison (1989:348) thus suggests:

Silicon life will be immortal. The farthest reaches of space will be accessible to it. For silicon beings, 100,000 light-years will be as a day’s journey on earth, or, if they wish, as a refreshing sleep from which, when the sensors show the journey is over, they will awaken with no sense of passage of time or -- what is the same thing -- with visions "Of what is past, or passing, or to come."

Yet something cautious is good for thought here: that there is no utopia nor dystopia to be had. If the postmodern spirit has taught us anything, any talk of either a utopia or a dystopia is better received with a healthy dose of skepticism, or treated as another metanarrative struggling for rebirth once more in an age where there is no room for it.

The extraordinary feat of walking on the moon was only a first step, small as it is for the astronaut Neil Armstrong yet giant as it is for humans, towards an eventual return to the stars, the original home of all things, the ultimate frontier of human expansion. Already, current works on creating artificial gravity in space (through spacecraft designs, physiological countermeasures and solutions to problems of long duration weightlessness), challenging though the

Good examples of these problems include, as Laurence Young (1995) points out, the alteration of human bones, muscles, blood circulation, spatial orientation and metabolism. One obvious countermeasure for artificial gravity is to rotate the spacecraft, but this has never been tested in space to the point of determining the required gravity level, radius, spin rate, or exposure frequency to avoid deconditioning. More progress on this is therefore needed.
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The success of creating artificial gravity of some sort is therefore crucial to the future of human expansion in space. But Young is confident that this will be accomplished within a decade or so, timely enough for the human space exploration of Mars, which is so much talked about in these days of ours.
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will no longer be the ultimate home of humans, or of what Buckminster Fuller
calls the perpetual travelers in a spaceship earth not locked in one space
(W.Kuhns 1971:222), nor are the Earthlings permanent in their historical
presence.

This talk of a human supersession, obviously, is no friend of the human
heart, so much coached as it has been for so long by all great world religions,
the Abrahamic legacy (as shared by the Christians, Jews, and Muslims) most
especially, that somehow there should be a more dignified telos of human
existence than this technology-driven transformative business. I am not unaware
of this spiritual disquietude among my fellow humans but cannot conclude other
than what the end of my inquiry thus leads me to: that humans are nothing, in the
end. If the moderns, with the helping hands of Science, come to succeed God, now
that It is dead, with euphorious expectations (as stated in the introductory
Section 0.1, "A Beginning Thought") --, this is an illusion, however, for those
after modernity (and will be so after postmodernity as well).

Bruce Mazlish's thesis on four great cultural revolutions since the
Renaissance, that is, since the dawn of modernity, is instructive here: that what
used to give humans (the ancients especially) their humanness, unlike other
living beings, that is, being the center of the cosmos, being non-beastly, being
rational, and being self-conscious --, have since been challenged, one by one,
first by the Copernican revolution (thereby destroying the human cosmic
privilege, in that the earth is not at the center of the universe), then by the
Darwinian revolution (thereby destroying the human biological privilege, in that
humans indeed descended from the beasts") and by the Freudian revolution
(thereby destroying the human cultural privilege, in that civilization is founded
on instinctual impulses commonly found among primitive and uncivilized animals),
and now by the coming cybernetic revolution (thereby destroying the human

"1. Jane Goodall, in "Next of Kin: Looking At the Great Apes" (1995), is a recent exemplar of those
who argue that humans and apes, for instance, have more in common with each other than our institutional
prejudice (in regarding apes as a symbolic standin for aberrant human behavior) wants us to believe. The
great apes, after all, can reason, use tools, love and care, have personality and emotions, and share
many genetic traits which have often been attributed in the old days solely to humans.
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cognitive privilege, in that thinking machines will one day challenge the very human act of thinking as well). (D. Porush 1985:197-9) As Mazlish (1993:201) puts it, "The first and most fundamental thing that must be said of humans is that they are evolutionary beings....The other fundamental statement that must be made about humans as evolutionary beings is that what they are is a particular combination and degree of traits, many of which individually will be shared with others animals (and later, machines)."

Already, the species of smart robots (with advanced computers) currently available speaks a "language," has a "memory," uses "logic," "reasons," "understands" (Fortran, Lisp, or else), "plays" (chess, checkers, or poker), "talks," has "arms" and "fingers," and "sees" and "touches" objects (O. Hardison 1989:319-20) Norbert Wiener (1967:80) long ago wrote: "if we could build a machine whose mechanical structure duplicated human physiology, then we could have a machine whose intellectual capacities would duplicate those of human beings." And David Porush (1985:70) therefore suggests,

Self-consciousness is precisely that aspect of human intelligence that focuses and polarizes any debate about the differences between humans and machines. Descartes, who was as responsible as any philosopher after Pythagoras for a mechanistic view of the universe, told his students that he would believe a machine was human "when it told me so itself." The history of human-imitating machines, of artificial intelligence devices, can be traced along the line of progress that has brought machines to approximate ever more closely to the expressions of human self-consciousness: movement, perception of data, learning, speech, and thought itself. In turn, philosophies committed to the presupposition of human freedom have been pushed into ever more narrow sophistries in their definition of what, precisely, constitutes human self-awareness.

John Searle (1984:ch.2), for instance, precisely offers a philosophical argument of this sort, in that however perfect a thinking machine can produce a computer simulation of thought, it only follow rules as pre-programmed and thus does not humanly "understand" things. In Searle's thought experiment, a person who knows no Chinese is brought into a closed room where he is asked to answer incoming
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questions written in Chinese with certain syntactical rules given to him, such as the one which might say, "Take a squiggle-squiggle sign out of basket one and put it next to a squoggle-squoggle sign from basket number two." (J. Searle 1984:32) In due time, the person will be able to answer questions, even without understanding the meanings of the Chinese words, in an intelligible way which can hardly distinguishes him from a fluent native Chinese.

The didactics here is that a computer, however sophisticated, can master only syntactical rules but not the semantic dimension. In other words, what is essentially human (which is what Joseph Weizenbaum in Computer Power and Human Reason refers to as uncodable, something specifically biologically human, as in human self-awareness and subjectivity) is beyond the reach of present and future thinking machines. (S. Turkle 1984:310-11) But Searle's argument is problematic in three ways.

(a) Firstly, Searle, in a fundamental way, assumes what he is supposed to prove: that is, such a person in the thought experiment is assumed to be able to use solely the syntactical rules available to him to answer (in such a meaningful way as to make him hardly distinguishable from a fluent native Chinese) questions in Chinese which he knows nothing about. Yet, whether or not this imaginary person could do so remains to be proved!

After all, the main challenge is, How can someone who does not know the meanings of the words he is using can yet engage in a meaningful conversation with someone else who asks him questions --, even with the benefit of syntactical rules? If A says to B, "The car eats summer school" --, this for sure is syntactically correct but is meaningless. Without grasping the semantic dimension of words, A cannot engage in a meaningful conversation with B for long. But with the benefit of syntactical rules, the person in the thought experiment might by pure chance make up a meaningful sentence, but this could happen only once for every thousand or so sentences he has ever assembled. But no one is inclined to call this person a native speaker if the person only makes a meaningful sentence once in every thousand or so utterances. And such a meaningful sentence, even if
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forthcoming, might not even be responsive to what someone else is asking. This is very much like A who, in response to question "How are you?" posed by B, non-interactively responds, "The earth is not made of cheese."

Now this may not be fair to Searle. Suppose, therefore, there are infinite syntactical rules (for all conceivable situations) available to the person in the thought experiment to play with. What difference will this make anyway? The person will still require such a long time (in order to digest these infinite syntactical rules) before the questions asked in a conversation are meaningfully answered (presumably of course). Even then, it is not even clear how long this person can sustain a meaningful conversation before it is to be easily detected that the answers received are not often interactive at all in the human (or native, if you prefer) way. It remains therefore to be proved that the person in the thought experiment can do what is merely assumed in the experiment.

This should not be surprising, however, since whenever a philosopher comes up with a thought experiment, the chance is that he does not have any empirical evidence to prove what he wants to prove and is thus forced to appeal as a last resort to something fictional and mysterious which proves nothing. The person in Searle's thought experiment and the situation in it do not exist in real life. Frank Tipler (1994) makes the same critique against Searle's claim, in that for the person in the thought experiment to do the trick, he would need some infinite amount of information and of time to process it if a meaningful conversation over time with a native speaker can be sustained, in the mere presence of syntactical rules (with no mastering of semantics) --, which is beyond the ability of any human being. Tipler's claim, of course, is that thinking machines (both humans and those of artificial intelligence) cannot sustain a meaningful conversation just on the basis of syntactical rules and that artificial-intelligent machines will eventually reach the level of sophistication when they become intelligent and are able to master not just syntactical rules but also semantics for more competent language use.

A desperate response of this nature (as in Searle's thought experiment) is
nothing new either --, just another romantic protest under post-modern conditions. (S. Turkle 1984:311) Just as the 19th-century Romantic movement (Sections 1.2 & 6.2) fiercely reacted to the hegemonic triumph of science and instrumental rationality by appealing to human feelings of various sorts (the "law of the heart"), a new romantic gesture (in stressing what is uniquely biologically human as opposed to what is mechanical, simulational in machines) can now be had in response to the continuous spread of instrumental reason in our information age as exemplified by the omnipresence of computer (linear, logical, and rule-governed). The cybernetic and AI revolutions increasingly accentuate this tension all the more.

(b) Secondly, what is human consciousness (be it cognitive, emotional, or sensual) is by no means automatic or innate but involves a complete neural network of the whole brain within the context of a long learning process of life experience and training, as recent advance in neurobiology shows. (P. Churchland 1995:320-22) Thus if the relatively primitive thinking machines of our time have not yet reached the state of self-consciousness, it is largely due to the lack of an equivalent complete neural network in its totality as is in the human brain and to the absence of an equivalent long learning process of experience and training.  

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The technologies of information processing, artificial technology (AI), and neural networks should not be confused with each other.

Firstly, the technology of information processing is different from that of AI. (B. Mazlish 1993:192-3) The first is a matter of pure logic which is embodied in a computer that follows the rules as preprogrammed. In emergent AI (especially the more sophisticated one), a network of independent elements, instead of rules as such, is set up, to the effect that their interaction produces intelligence. The machine (AI) is allowed to learn, not just following nothing but rules. Searle's argument has in mind the more primitive technology of information processing but does not apply to more sophisticated AI.

Secondly, the technology of AI, in turn, should also be distinguished from that of neural networks. (M. Caudill 1992:12-20) A neural network's structure is based on that of true biological neurons. It has a large number of tiny local processing nodes (neurodes) that have connections to other neurodes. Like biological neurons, each neurode has many incoming connections but only a single outgoing signal which can go to a lot of other neurodes. The "intelligence" of a neural network therefore consists of the connections and pathways so understood, not the neurodes themselves.

Consequently, a neural network is different from artificial intelligence (AI). Unlike AI, a neural network does not compute anything, does not run a program, and does not follow a sequence of instructions. Instead, it reacts to an input stimulus by generating a pattern of activity in the network --, in special relations to four major categories of problem-solving, that is, (a) pattern matching, (b) categorization, (c) functional mapping, and (d) process control. (M. Caudill 1992:18-19)

(a) Pattern matching is the ability to fill in missing or incomplete patterns so that its entirety is perceived (as in recognizing a friend's face, even when the friend has never
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A major implication here, as Paul Churchland (1995:252) wastes no time to stress it, is that when technology reaches a much more sophisticated level than it was the case in Searle's time, it will be a matter of time before a thinking machine, in duplicating the structure of the human brain (whose cognition, for instance, now is no longer to be reducible solely to computations and brain processes ---, nor is it to be reducible to the language-centered viewpoint as people, like Searle, had traditionally falsely assumed), can become conscious through a long learning process of experience and training.

Surely, this prospect may never happen in practice, since it is extremely complicated to simulate total human intellectual capacity; just think of all of the possible interactions among different computational systems in the brain, which are to be well understood before any prediction (or simulation) of brain's activities is possible. But without this total human intellectual capacity, Noam Chomsky argues, AI won't succeed, because language-using is not separable from it. (H. Putnam 1992:16-7)

Yet Chomsky's tone sounds too pessimistic. To be sure, a simulation of total human intellectual capacity won't happen in our lifetime, with the

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been seen in the same fashion, pose, or expression). (b) In categorization, objects and concepts are grouped by their relative similarities or differences (as in similes and metaphors, "My love is like a red, red rose"). (c) Functional mapping refers to the ability to detect a relationship between two sets of something solely based on a collection of examples. For instance, a relationship might exist between 2 in the domain and 4 in the range, and between 5 in the domain and 25 in the range ---, in that the number in the range is the square of that in the domain. (d) And in process control, a state of something is maintained in an appropriate fashion in all times. A good cook, for instance, will constantly check on the sauce, adjusting the heat of the burner, stirring the pot, and so on --- until the taste is just right.

These four major categories of problem-solving which neural networks are good at solving require a certain process of training and learning in the subject. And when fully trained, the subject will act in an instinctive or unreasoning way in his responses to situations --- as opposed to the subject in AI who cannot behave intelligently without reasoning through a problem to a solution. The intelligence of AI is different from that of neural networks.

The major implication here is that the combined advance in AI and neural networks (together with other relevant technologies) offers great promise to the eventual creation of a thinking machine which can reason, have emotions and instincts, and other human attributes. In the old days, Hubert Dreyfus (1979:286-7, 292) argued in What Computers Can't Do that a digital computer program cannot simulate total human intelligence since some intelligent activities are non-formal, that is, not rule-governed (e.g., perceptive guess, insight, understanding in context of use, and recognition of generic or use of paradigm case). Dreyfus is right insofar as thinking machines will require a different type of computer than the digital computer at the time. Yet the combined advance in AI and neural networks since then (and other relevant technologies in the future, to be sure) makes it conceivable that in due time a thinking machine will be able to acquire knowledge which is not rule-governed in a long process of learning and training.

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relatively primitive thinking machines currently at our disposal. But the continuous advance in AI and neural networks already promises realistic hope towards the eventual construction of a thinking machine (as shown in a recent conference, where a famous Turing Test, named after Alan Turing, on the category of whimsical conversation was carried out, with a split decision among the ten judges on whether or not the "thinking machine" hidden in a room was in fact a human or a machine).¹

The didactic here is that as AI and neural-network technologies become more and more advanced, it is increasingly harder to distinguish between a human and a machine in cognitive ability (and this has come a long way, indeed, as compared with the old days where AI technology was so primitive that no judge could be fooled of a machine as a human or vice versa). Joseph Deken (1986:232-4) predicts that robot systems (in what he calls the silico sapiens) will eventually reach the point of sophistication in the future that they will acquire many significant "human" traits (intelligence, consciousness/self-image, emotion, and personality).

That said --, a word of caution is not unforthcoming, in that there might be after all be some ultimate limits as to what thinking machines can acquire human traits. Joseph Weizenbaum (1976:208-9), for one, makes some interesting suggestions, in that no organism that does not have a human body can know things in the same way that humans know them, that there are things which people come to know only as a consequence of having been treated as human by other human beings, and that human communication can go beyond the "information content" of a message into the context of human expectations.

But this might well be question-begging. Why should, after all, a thinking machine need to acquire all the human traits there be? In other words, a thinking machine need not possess all the significant traits of a human --, such as the ability to mate and reproduce, which is so natural to humans (H.Putnam 1992:10),

¹ From a televised program by the Scientific American Frontier on Channel 35 (08/11/95).
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or else, to be sure. This then depends on the social functions as required in a future society, and therefore on how the handover of these functions to thinking machines is justified --, in which case the main issues may no longer be technological nor mathematical, but ethical (J. Weizenbaum 1976:227), political, or economic.

And therefore, so this is the third and last point --, how the act of thinking is to be understood also varies from one historical epoch to another. Searle's argument presupposes a thinking agent, a traditional "I," in order for thinking to be possible --, which, however, is precisely what the artificial intelligence scientist Marvin Minsky rejects as "pre-scientific" in the information age. (S. Turkle 1984:267) The information age is building a new culture, something of a new paradigm for thinking about people, thought, and reality which celebrates the process of creating new things, in blurring the Searlean gulf between the simulated and the real, or between the mechanical and the human (Section 2.3).

Or to re-use an old term (back in Section 3.3), the performative shift in how knowing is to be understood in a post-industrial society (especially within a late-capitalist context) creates a new ethos which glorifies building new things, inventing new ways of seeing things, and creating new modes of thought, as opposed to dwelling on the old philosophical neverland of truth-seeking, of verification, of reality in itself, and of foundationalism. Roger Schank, an artificial intelligence scientist at Yale, says it well (S. Turkle 1984:259),

We're addressing the same questions that Aristotle addressed....We have a different method of doing it. That method can be summed up in one word: process....In other words, the whole question of whether you really know or you really believe can be addressed in terms of what you do when you see the word "know." What do you do when you see the word "believe"? Under what circumstances? And when you reorient the question the way I just did, you change the question significantly. And this kind of change -- well, in my judgement, that is what the philosophy of AI [Artificial Intelligence] is all about. What I'm saying is, let's look at the old philosophical questions. Let's look at them
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in terms of what we do, in terms of how we approach and operate on these things rather than on truth. Truth is a nonmeaningful AI term.

Searle thus lacks a historical insight concerning the technology-driven future of modern humans (in the dual sense of the increasing sophistication of a thinking machine and of the cultural construction of the concept of humanness, besides the problematic of begging the question as discussed before), to the point that what is traditionally understood as essentially human, or uniquely biologically human, will become obsolete in due time.

'Cyborg' as a concept already blurs this distinction (Section 2.3), and its increasing importance as a historical presence in the farther future will magnify this obsolescence all the more --, just as artificial intelligences of increasing sophistication will further challenge the notions of truth and of humanness, in being developed to the point of consciousness and, if not, at least of thinking without a "I" as traditionally understood. (S. Turkle 1984:261) Thinking is increasingly no longer viewed as a uniquely human attribute, just as the distinction between the simulational and the real, between the imaginary and the authentic, or between the mechanical and the human (Sections 2.2 & 2.3) is likewise blurred all the more in the information age, and, to be sure, intensely more so in future technological eras.

Surely, the cybernetic, neural-network, and AI revolutions (as discussed above) are treated here solely as illustrative, complementary exemplars and are

77. Isaac Asimov's famous three "Laws of Robotics" to protect people against the robots may therefore become obsolete one day as well. The laws are,

1) A robot may not injure a human being nor, through inaction, allow a human being to come to harm.
2) A robot must obey the orders given it by human beings except when such orders would conflict with the First Law.
3) A robot must protect its own existence as long as such protection does not conflict with the First or Second Law.

Gary Drescher at the MIT Artificial Intelligence Laboratory proposes that robots are to be given laws for protection as well, such as "no consciousness without commitment, people's moral commitment to the life we have created." (S. Turkle 1984:261)

But as the distinction between the mechanical and the human becomes all the more blurred in a future age, even these laws, be they for robots or humans, are no longer meaningful. Cyborgs and superior beings with highly sophisticated AI to the point of consciousness, for instance, in future societies will easily blur the very distinction in question and thus render the laws problematic in application. We need to re-think this.
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by no means the only ones there be --, as will likely be joined by other technological revolutions in due time as indicated before (human-genetic, clonal, nano-, neurobiological, cryonic, or other ones not yet currently conceivable). But the important point is to understand how much what is human will be understood differently --, until it eventually becomes too obsolete after countless readjustments and is then to be passed over to something conceptually more appropriate in a future age: that is, what is post-human, and how it is to be understood in those future technological societies.

All human metanarratives, be they of the ancients, of the medievals, of the moderns, and now of the postmoderns as well (as analyzed in previous chapters), are to be deconstructed, with no other helping hands than those of Science, or the critical spirit of science, to be more exact. The idea of a posthuman world will only illustrate ever more clearly that, when the deconstructive process is carried to its logical conclusion, a dawning of a new consciousness that humans are nothing in the end will be recognized. So to the perennial question, Why are humans at all, or why is human suffering even? --, the answer now is, There is no why in the end, as there is nothing in the end, and thus neither god nor solace is needed in the end.

Steven Weinberg (1993:154), who won the 1979 Nobel Prize for physics, recently writes that,

whichever cosmological model proves correct, there is not much of comfort in any of this. It is almost irresistible for humans to believe that we have some special relation to the universe, that human life is not just a more-or-less farcial outcome of a chain of accidents reaching back to the first three minutes [of the Big Bang], but that we were somehow built in from the beginning....It is very hard to realize that this all is just a tiny part of an overwhelmingly hostile universe. It is even harder to realize that this present universe has evolved from an unspeakable unfamiliar early condition, and faces a future extinction of endless cold or intolerable heat. The more the universe seems comprehensible, the more it also seem pointless.
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This is so with an additional good reason (besides what have so far been said): that is, the search for the quantum theory of gravity (in synthesizing Einstein's General Theory of Relativity with Heisenberg's Uncertainty Principle), also known as quantum cosmology (M. Bartusiak 1995: 62-3), in contemporary physics precisely aims to understand the origin and fate of the universe (or of space and time) without the appeal to a divine being. Stephen Hawkings in A Brief History of Time (1988), for instance, argues for the dispensability of the notion of God, in that, if one asks what happened before the origin of the universe, then the question does not make sense, since space-time does not have boundary conditions: that is, "the universe would be completely self-contained and not affected by anything outside itself. It would neither be created nor destroyed. It would just be." (1988: 136)

And once the universe started with the Big Bang, it was developed from some sort of random initial conditions (1988: 126), which allowed thereafter only a small set of possible laws (including Heisenberg's Uncertainty Principle) that the universe must obey (1988: 174), if it is to be consistent with the way that things have been. Once humans come to know more exactly one day in the future how this quantum theory of gravity (or a comparable unified theory of physics) works, "it would be the ultimate triumph of human reason -- for then we would know the mind of God." (1988: 175) In this sense, I go beyond Mazlish's thesis on the anthropocentric illusion of humanness and add something more: that is, not only that the posthumans will outlive humans but also that the very temptation to find solace with a divine being (or God) in human finitude and mortality (as is the

78. Surely, the Big Bang theory is by no means guaranteed of survival in the future history of astrophysics, but at least it is more plausible than alternative theories. As John Gribbin and Martin Rees (1989: 22) suggest, "our satisfaction with the Big Bang model will ultimately prove as illusory and transitory as that of a Ptolemaic astronomer who, believing the Earth to be at the center of the universe, successfully fits a new epicycle to the motion of a planet. Nobody can go back in time to study the Big Bang theory.... The theory can never, of course, be 'proved,' but it is certainly more plausible than any equally detailed alternative model, and we certainly believe it has a better than even chance of survival."
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case in all great religions) can therefore be denied as well."

79. But the legacy of Romanticism is still with us in post-modern times. Patrick Glynn (1995:18), for instance, exploits the Anthropic Principle and misleadingly speculates on the possible divine/metaphysical design for the creation of life, as a rhetoric persuasion for the call of a post-secular society. To understand how Glynn, and Vaclav Havel (1995:48-9) for that matter, misleadingly abuse this cosmological principle for their spiritual concern, see Stephen Hawking's A Brief History of Time (1988), in its argument for a self-contained universe which was not designed nor created at the origin of the universe.

Edward Cornish's apt critique (1995:50) of the abuse of the Anthropic Principle for spiritual concern (as by Glynn and Havel, for that matter) is worth repeating: that is, "these ideas are more romantic than scientific. They reside in the misty regions of human thought where generally respected scientific findings and theories are conflated with poetic fantasies and mystical speculations...History shows us that metaphysical doctrines have only too often led to an intense conflict rather than increased harmony."

A question, Why does the universe bother to exist?, cannot be answered, since it already presupposes some conception of a God prior to the beginning of space-time, that is, a time prior to the beginning of space-time, which is ruled out by Einstein's general theory of relativity, as Hawking (1993:46) points out in Black Holes and Baby Universes. The reason is that space-time is distorted by the matter and energy in the universe (in the form of gravitational fields), and thus time cannot be defined beyond a certain point back in time. In this sense, the question is meaningless. (P.Davies 1983:217)

Surely, this is not to suggest that the theory of general relativity is irrefutable. After all, the search for a unified theory in physics and the work on high-energy physics already produce such interesting theories concerning "cosmic string" (for the kind that stretches across the universe) and "superstring" (for the kind particles may be made of) which go beyond them. (J.Gribben 1989:175-6) The point, however, is that, as compared with other equally detailed alternative models, the theory of general relativity is more plausible, even if not complete.

Maybe "our real problem," as Steven Weinberg (1993:191) sharply points out, "will not be to understand the beginning of the universe, or even to decide whether there really was a beginning, but rather to understand nature under conditions in which time and space have no meaning." That qualified --, this is not to support Glynn's and Havel's appeal to the Anthropic Principle; on the contrary, nothing thus said implies any possible divine/metaphysical design for the creation of life.

Moreover, such a question attaches too much importance to human existence in the Milky Way, as is often misleadingly argued by some people who abuse the Anthropic Principle. But this principle does not hold true at all for other universes which do not have intelligence beings, and thus it is too anthropocentric. Heinz Pagels, for instance, is highly critical to the Anthropic Principle: "The influence of the anthropic principle on the development of contemporary cosmological models has been sterile. It has explained nothing, and it has even had a negative influence, as evidenced by the fact that the values of certain constants, such as the ratio of photons to nuclear particles, for which anthropic reasoning was once invoked as an explanation can now be explained by new physical laws...I would opt for rejecting the anthropic principle as needless clutter in the conceptual repertoire of science." (J.Gribbin 1989:285-6)

Yet, the Anthropic Principle can take a weaker form, in acknowledging that the existence of human observers can affect on what they see around them. But this is highly banal, as John Gribbin and Martin Rees (1989:287) waste no time to point out. And any more pretentious role for anthropic reasoning is controversial enough. Steven Weinberg, for instance, insists that "I certainly wouldn't give up attempts to make the anthropic principle unnecessary by finding a theoretical basis for the values of all the constants." But to deny granting humans the specialness of their existence is NOT the same as denying the extraordinary opportunity for humans to spread life and consciousness through the universe in the distant future -- as is possible through interstellar migration and space colonisation. As Gribbin and Rees continues, "We should regard present life on Earth as the beginning of a process with billions of years, and perhaps a literally infinite timespan, still to run -- the greening of our Galaxy and beyond by forms of life and intelligence (not necessarily all organic) seeded from Earth."

For this reason (and others), alternative cosmological theories (away from the controversial Anthropic Principle), as discussed in Section 7.3, have been proposed, ranging from Closed Universe theory (that is, the universe contains enough matter to bring the density up to the critical density, so that it would probably recollapse eventually) to Open Universe theory (that is, the universe would be self-contained and expand forever). (M.Lemonick 1995:82; S.Hawking 1993:151-4 & 1988) After all, the Anthropic Principle does not square well with our current understanding of the nature of physical laws in the universe, in that, as Paul Davies (1983:217) tells us, they are in the way they have been because they are "the only logically possible physical principle."

A good lesson to learn here is, that science, since its dawn, has never failed to have
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There is therefore a price to pay for this ultimate triumph, in that the brutal truth confronting humans, much that their anthropomorphic pride disallows them to avow, is that they are nothing in the end (with no God there be to console them). As John Gribbins and Martin Rees (1989:273) sharply put it,

In most of the universes, life -- certainly intelligent life -- does not exist. Any universe in which our kind of intelligent life can arise must look rather like our Universe, since without the familiar coincidences and constants that life would not be there. We believe our Universe to be special because we inhabit it. But that does not mean that it is special in any deeper sense of the word.

A useful analogy is with a lottery. Suppose a million lottery tickets are sold, and then one number out of that million is selected. The holder of that number wins the prize, so that number seems special. But in a deeper sense it is no more special than any of the other numbers in the lottery. By the nature of the lottery, somebody must win, and each of the numbers has an equal chance of winning. It is only after the event that one number gains a special status. The holder may feel lucky as a result; but somebody had to get lucky!

Maybe the world is like that. There may be a multitude of universes that all start out sterile. Intelligence appears in some (or perhaps only one) of those universes as a result of the accumulation of random coincidences ("luck"). But there is no meaning to the coincidences, and that universe stands out from the rest as special only with hindsight, once intelligence has appeared to wonder over its own origins.

Once the anthropomorphic myth of human specialness is denied of its intoxicating appeal (in light of the random initial conditions at the start of space-time), it is easy to see, with what has so far been said, that the naked truth about humans is that they are nothing in the end, to be eventually superceded by posthumans in a future age (if not having themselves destroyed sooner in a

its enemies always on the lookout to abuse whatever it is in the name of science against science. See also Section 6.2 (especially the long footnote #54) and footnote #68.

85 We might be proud to be the creator of these post-humans as our successor. But Fredric Brown has this interesting comment (M. Caudill 1992: epilogue) to make in the form of a story (though it is fictional, the didactic point should not be missed):

"Dwar Ev... nodded to Dwar Reyn, then moved to a position beside the switch that would complete the contact when he threw it. The switch that would connect, all at once, all of the monster computing machines of all the populated planets in the universe ---...into the

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nuclear winter, or in a cosmological calamity as discussed before). If this
sounds too science-fictional and wishy-washy, think again of what G.Harry Stine
(1985:1), very critical as he is towards any idea of some super-smart computers
taking over the human world someday, yet thus admitted, "There are serious
forecasts by respected scientists who believe that human beings are creating
their own evolutionary successors."

I therefore find no better words to end this long journey of my inquiry
than what Freud (1957:143) used yestertime in Civilization and Its Discontent:
"My courage fails me at the thought of rising up as a prophet before my fellow-
men, and I bow to their reproach that I have no consolation to offer them."

supercircuit that would connect them all into one supercalculator, one cybernetics machine that
would combine all the knowledge of all the galaxies....
Dwar Ev threw the switch...stepped back and drew a deep breadth. 'The honor of asking
the first question is yours, Dwar Reyn.'
'Thank you,' said Dwar Reyn. 'It shall be a question which no single cybernetics machine
has ever been able to answer.'
He turned to face the machine. 'Is there a God?'
The mighty voice answered without hesitation, without the clicking of a single relay.
'Yes, now there is a God.'
Sudden fear flashed on the face of Dwar Ev. He leaped to grab the switch.
A bolt of lightning from the cloudless sky struck him down and fused the switch shut.
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