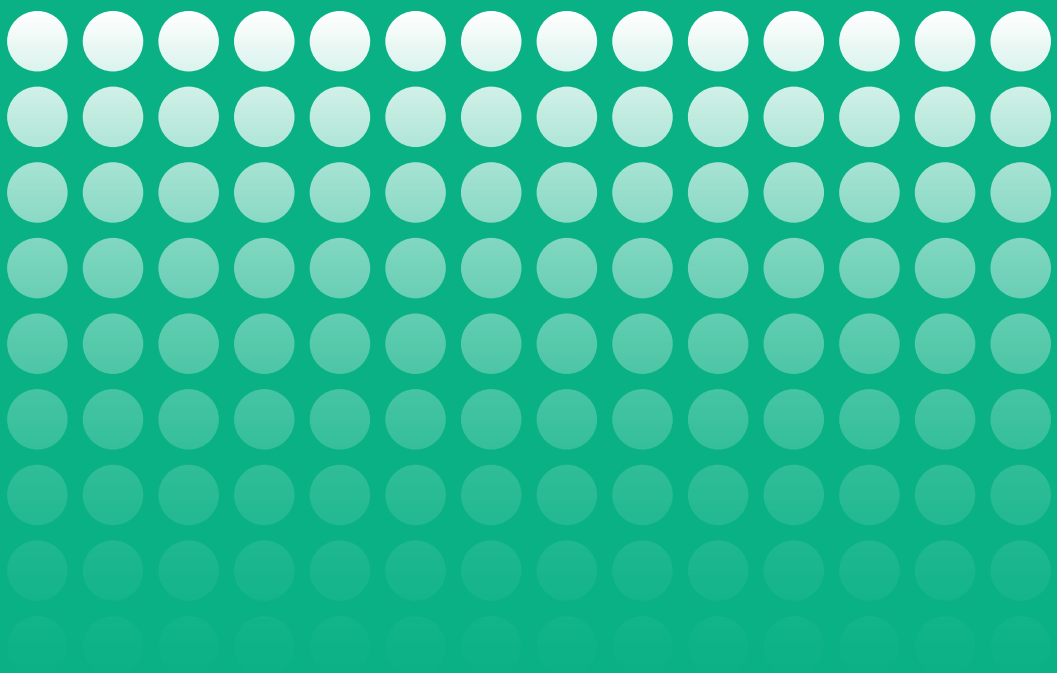
Ljubomir Hristić

Politics of Culture and the Modernity

Society and change



Ljubomir Hristić

POLITICS OF CULTURE AND THE MODERNITY
Society and change

Izdavač
INSTITUT DRUŠTVENIH NAUKA
Beograd, Kraljice Natalije 45

Za izdavača
Dr MIRJANA RAŠEVIĆ
Direktor Instituta

Recenzenti
Prof. dr ALEKSANDAR BOŠKOVIĆ
Dr BOJAN TODOSIJEVIĆ

Priprema i štampa
JP „Službeni glasnik“

Tiraž
400 primeraka

ISBN 978-86-7093-154-1

Ljubomir Hristić

POLITICS OF CULTURE AND THE MODERNITY

Society and change

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ECONOMY AND CULTURE

Adam Smith's characteristic liberal position asserts the collective propensity of people to barter and exchange. Natural laws of fiscal exchange would operate smoothly, benefiting all who can't help but engage in them, if only it weren't for the interference of human institutions.[1] Regime does have a legitimate role in maintaining a legal system to enforce contracts and in protecting citizen's liberties. However the necessary evil of social control is kept analytically distinct from the sphere of exchange, wherein social consequences (for good or ill) are justified for the sake of frictionless production. Reciprocal trade remuneration all parties. Any social custom or institution, especially a mercantilist government, which threatens to impede trade, is bad for the economy and therefore bad for the people involved. The accumulation of individual, self-interested acts produces an "invisible hand" which ensures social benefits for all. Modernity in this early formulation for economic liberals is the coupling of exchange relations and social relations, the latter constraining the former from its natural outward expansion into a global market.

For Smith, the driving force in the capital accretion process is the division of labor. In his famous pin-factory example, specialization of tasks radically increases output. Workers are able to advance their skills by concentrating on fewer tasks, and supplement their own strength with the strength of machines.[2] The principal advance, however, is a social one. The division of labor relies on a disciplined, timed coordination of multiple tasks toward a single end. This societal arrangement of coordinated, timed discipline at the site of production precedes and makes possible specialization and the exploitation of technology.

---

1 When the "natural" expansion of economies does not occur, it is because "human institutions ... thwart ... those natural inclinations." Adam Smith, *The Wealth of Nations* (edited by E. Cannon. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1976 (1904) p. 403.

2 See Robert Heilbroner, *The Nature and Logic of Capitalism* (New York: Norton, 1985) pp. 154–55.

The economic liberal position fails to identify the inherent social nature in the organization of production. Social structure is the scaffolding of human interaction, one vector of which surely is economic, but as a totality constitutes a complex life-world, which, at base, is neither social, economic nor cultural, but an blend of all these. Social formations are historically contingent, based not only on positive, identifiable features, but also on often conflicting interpretations of remembrance, dreams, visions and nightmares of cycles, progress, regress and stagnation. Smith's project was to place economics at the core of human nature, and this we must view as a declaration arising from his period, not a transhistorical truth.

In the same light we can address the classic leftist position, which considered the relations of manufacture as one half of a dialectic, inextricably paired, for good or ill, with social relations. Production relations, while conforming to patterns of laws or tendencies, do not at the bottom evolve on their own but rather could not exist apart from the social relations of the people who engage in them.

The movement of history then rests in a dialectic route of the co-development and contradictions of material capabilities and social relations.

Marx's early position, like Smith's, placed production relations as the basal component of historical movement and progression:

> History is nothing but the succession of the separate generations, each of which exploits the materials, the forms of capital, the productive forces handed down to it by all preceding ones, and thus on the one hand continues the traditional activity in completely changed circumstances and, on the other, modifies the old circumstances with a completely changed activity.[3]

For Marx, as for Smith, socio-economic human history develops in linear progression towards an improved human existence.

Unlike Smith, Marx found economic relations and social relations not simply to conflict, but to erupt in epochal crises from which a social formation would transcend its own logic. Applying Hegel's metaphysics to the material world, the internal contradictions of a social formation, thesis and antithesis, would arrive at an irreconcilable crisis and create a new and transcendent synthesis. So capitalism was the child of feudalism's fall.[4]

---

3 Karl Marx, *The German Ideology* (NY: International Publishers, 1947) p. 38.

4 See Hristić, Lj. Antropologija folklora u delu Ričarda M. Dorsona, Belgrade, Srpski genealoški centar, 2009.

A more mature Marx, however, articulated a multifaceted historical materialism with a closer eye to how the meaning of events gets manipulated:

> Men make their own history, but they do not make it as they please; they do not make it under self-selected circumstances, but under circumstances existing already, given and transmitted from the past. The tradition of all dead generations weighs like an Alp on the brains of the living. And just as they seem to be occupied with revolutionizing themselves and things, creating something that did not exist before, precisely in such epochs of revolutionary crisis they anxiously conjure up the spirits of the past to their service, borrowing from them names, battle slogans, and costumes in order to present this new scene in world history in this time-honored disguise and this borrowed language.[5]

Historical memory can be manipulated, disguising regression a progression, and cloaking revolution in the pretext of tradition. It would seem then that Marx has tempered the dominance of production relations by allotting, not purely social relations, but the social (re)production of *meaning* a primary place in the movement of history.[6]

Does cultural (re)production though, become a measure of societal development in and of itself? For Marx, the response has to be no. His schoolwork on the Asiatic despotism is a case in point. He concluded that it is *not* religion that makes Asia different from the West, but the lack of private ownership of land that makes religion different. As Marx wrote in a letter to Engels in 1853, he took the key to "all the phenomena of the East (...Turkey, Persian and Hindustan) to be that they knew *no private ownership of land.* This is the real key to oriental religion as well."[7] Though the dialectic of historical movement contains both production relations and social (false or class) consciousness, societal progress ultimately rests on some measure of material advance. The locus of such a measurement is found at the situate of production, and only secondarily in the culture of social (re)production.

---

5 Karl Marx, "The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Napoleon" in *The Karl Marx Library, Volume I: On Revolution* (edited and translated by Saul K. Padover, New York, etc.: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1971) p. 245.

6 Raymond Williams has argued for the latter reading of the base/superstructure heuristic, whereas Ira Katznelson decries this as an abandonment of the base/superstructure dialectic and a dangerous erosion of "Marxism's central ontological claim and its theoretical apparatus." Raymond Williams, "Base and Superstructure in Marxist Cultural Theory".

7 Cited in Massimo Quaini, *Geography and Marxism* Trans. Alan Braley. (Totowa, NJ: Barnes & Noble Books, 1982) p. 47.

Weber took culture as a central issue, and provides a third viewpoint from which to examine the complexities of modernity. Weber explored the aesthetic standard predating and supporting the rationality specific to capitalism. He emphasizes the cultural meaning that prefigures and constitutes equally the subjects and objects of socio-economic relations. Economics recedes before the social meaning that gives it substance:

> Hence in a universal history of culture the central problem for us is not, in the last analysis, even from a purely economic view-point, the development of capitalist activity as such. It is rather the origin of this sober bourgeois capitalism with its rational organization of free labor.[8]

This "rational organization" is the *a priori* mentality that presaged the social reorganization of Smith's pin factory.

The *ancien regime* was, more or less, a spiritual, Catholic world with set social orders — those who pray, those who fight, those who work[9] — arrayed in a pyramid, pointing up towards paradise. Protestantism dismantled the hierarchy while preserving a unifying spirituality. This lent itself to a decentralized, but communal aestheticism which prefigured the widespread, secular rationality of full-blown capitalism. Weber's renowned extrapolation from Benjamin Franklin's biography reveals the similitude of the protestant ethic and the spirit of capitalism"[10] The significance of virtue is its utility[11]; the maxim of rationality is *industriousness*[12], as Franklin implores: "Remember, that time *is* money."[13]

Weber pursued comparative studies of so-called world religions. He found that each religion provided a focusing lens that gathered the multiple, local

---

8 Max Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* Trans. Talcott Parsons (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1958 [1904–5]) pp. 23–4.

9 Georges Duby, *The Three Orders: Feudal Society Imagined*. Trans. Arthur Goldhammer. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980 [1978]. The word *labor* was interchangeable with *dolor,* pain. Duby, p. 49.

10 "This it was which inevitably gave every-day worldly activity a religious significance, and which first created the conception of a calling in this sense." (Max Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (Trans. Talcott Parsons, New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1958 [1904–5]) p. 80) . The social pox which had plagued manual labor and industry was removed by Protestant doctrine.

11 "The earning of money within the modern economic order is, so long as it is done legally, the result and the expression of virtue and proficiency in a calling; and this virtue and proficiency are . . . the real Alpha and Omega of Franklin's ethic..." Weber, p. 54.

12 Weber, p. 52.

13 Weber, p.48, quoting from Benjamin Franklin's *Advice to a Young Tradesman* (1748, Sparks edition, II) pp. 87.)

explanations for injury, pain, death, birth, harvests, etc. and lifted them out from the cacophony of everyone's everyday and into the heavens. There, a single, abstract source — call it God, and later, rationality — provided encompassing, universal explanations.[14] The world was becoming disenchanted. In the lead was the West where Protestantism had subverted the social hierarchy in religious organization by granting spiritual

Weber rejected both a strict economism of Smith and the conflict-driven teleology of Marx. He nevertheless held the ethnocentric view that Western rationalization and disenchantment of belief systems sat atop the pinnacle of a hierarchical, universal world history.[15] Rationality for Weber, is a process, stripped of content — there can be a "rationalization of mystical contemplation,"[16] just as other human fields of enquiry, like law, have their logics. It is, however, the specific aesthetic, individualistic rationalization of the West that has consolidated its supremacy in world history. The dilemma for Weberian analysis then, is his pluralistic reading of the rationality of cultures, which tends to relativism, and his conception of a global movement of history which tends toward universalism. The tension in Weber's analysis is more than an ambivalent reading of history; it is itself evidence of a Janus-faced modernity. Smith argument rests on transhistorical truths (self-interest), the presumption of the individual (e.g. specialization) and a focus on material life (exchange). He gives little account of subjective meaning or ideology, because his account of individual behavior and exchange relations is posed as transhistorical universalism. His interest in society is either its role in protecting or retarding economic growth, or as the (unitary) object which could stand some material advance.

Marx emphasizes transhistorical truths (justice)[17], society (classes), and materialism (production and organization thereof). While Marx gave far more consideration than Smith to ideology, subjective meaning and society, such normative constructs and local knowledge are figured as "superstructure," a source of both false consciousness (religion or bourgeois culture) and class

---

14 See Hristić, Lj. Antropologija folklora u delu Ričarda M. Dorsona, Belgrade, Srpski genealoški centar, 20099 significance to everyday life, followed by a secularization of (Protestant) individualism itself. Having added dignity to labor, and validated an infrastructure of autonomous individuals/producers, religion put its stamp on the cultural organization of free labor that modern capitalism is predicated upon.

15 R. J. Holton, *Cities, Capitalism and Civilization* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1986) pp. 56–57.

16 Weber, p. 26.

17 Norman Geras, "Bringing Marx to Justice" *New Left Review* No. 195, Sept./Oct. 1992.

consciousness. The superstructure, however, remains secondary to material relations, which are the true measure of historical development.

Weber's analysis rests on subjective meaning (cultural relativity), transhistorical laws (tendency to rationality), society (social construction of reality) and ideology (belief-systems). While Weber does emphasize individualism as a core element in the modern world, it is an *ism* inherited from religion; the cult of the individual therefore is, paradoxically, socially constructed. His investigations are primary from the totality to the specific.

Underlying the emergence of a modern economic rationality is what we may pose as the modern dilemma: do objective forces, make our world, or do we? Do objective criteria stand outside of history, or are they merely part of a reality we constitute as we live it? Is subjectively created meaning merely a false consciousness, or a legitimate survival strategy?

In these three thinkers we find the axes of modern social thought. The primacy of individual agency, the primacy of the dialectic of production/social relations, and the significance of subjective meaning.

To understand modernity, it is essential to examine the relevant historical period in the West. The following section will examine the cities and the rural-urban nexus as the relevant economic and social delimitations in identifying the historical emergence of modern conditions.

POPULATED AREAS

The catalytic site for the most drastic changes in social relations and productive relations has been the city. This section will examine the feudal town and its legacy for the capitalistic city.

After the fall of Rome, towns first developed at interstices of long-distance trade. Whether these towns were engaged in capitalistic practices, however, remains a disputed issue. Historian Fernand Braudel states that "Capitalism and towns were basically the same thing in the West."[18] Cities then appear as an alien graft, or an island, amidst feudal society. To the contrary, Ira Katznelson contends that feudal towns were in a distinctly feudal relation to the countryside: towns enjoyed the advantages of long-distance trade, juridical privileges, and security, where the countryside had none of these.[19] Henri Pirenne

18 Fernand Braudel, *Capitalism and Material Life. 1400–1800* (Trans, by Miriam Kochan, NY, etc.: Harper & Row, 1973 [1967]), p. 400.

19 Katznelson, pp. 167–171.

tells us that "Freedom, as the middle class [populating the towns] conceived it, was a monopoly.

Nothing was less liberal than the caste idea which was the cause of its strength until it became, at the end of the Middle Ages, a cause of weakness."[20] Like vassal to liege lord, so country to city, and so the cities to the preoccupations of regional lords.

Likewise the system of cities — manifested in long-distance trade itself — was subordinate to the political system of segmented kingships, duchies, etc. The geography of state-building and commerce were rarely coterminous[21], however, so traders had before them the opportunity to operate outside of the direct control of (proto-) states. That they ultimately had to engage them however tips us off to the fact that trade in and of itself cannot escape the stamp of political/social organization.[22]

Activities — like exchange — do not exist in isolation, apart from the social structure which imparts them with meaning. Exchange is not exchange is not exchange. If social capital is based on kinship and coercive capability, and only secondarily (if that) on the leverage borne of a storehouse full of goods or contacts with distant suppliers, then we must consider medieval cities to be deeply feudal. While we should avoid reification of "social structure" (preferring the term social formation) and presume that everything fits harmoniously into a seamless system, we would be wrong to consider cities as an alien graft on feudal society. This denies the prima facia coevalness of cities with other feudal institutions, and more importantly, it ignores the integration of cities in the existent political order, however decentralized its multiple arrangements were.

We might view the debate over the nature of feudal towns as a debate between the liberal and cultural marxist positions mapped above. The liberals would separate economic function from social order; the marxists insist on their inseparability. The lens of subjective meaning warns them both from anachronistically presuming the supremacy of economics in the feudal age.

---

20 Henri Pirenne, *Medieval Cities: Their Origins and the Revival of Trade* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1969 [1925]) pp. 213–14.

21 Charles Tilly, *Coercion. Capital, and European States. AD 990–1992* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1992) p. 51–54.

22 Tilly typologizes the evolution of the relations between states and capital from medieval *patrimonialism*, to *brokerage* in the fourteenth to eighteenth century, followed by *nationalization* and then *specialization. Ibid.,* p. 53. This trend seesaws between one pole of an economic sphere, subordinated to a coercive political structure, and the other of a relatively autonomous economic sphere.

Nevertheless, towns of the middle ages can be seen as relatively independent spaces for the practice of proto-capitalistic behavior, and the site for the origination of the dream of liberty. Merchant capitalism first thrived in and feudal cities and propelled an emerging class of townsmen into competition (and collusion) with a landed aristocracy.

Additionally, the cities provided an outlet for those who would not suffer direct feudal domination. Escaped slaves, writes Adam Smith, could win their freedom merely be remaining in a city for a year.[23] And so to the city's new middle class was reserved the mission of spreading the idea of liberty far and wide and of becoming, without having consciously desired to be, the means of the gradual enfranchisement of the rural classes.[24]

The notion of freedom, at first indicating freedom from feudal restrictions, was transformed into freedom for private profit and accumulation.[25] If the actual feudal city on the ground was not "the lineal ancestor of the early modern city, nor was the early modern city the lineal ancestor of the industrial-capitalist city,"[26] these early sites nevertheless provided the vision for the creation and habitation of a space where, in the long transition to modernity, a new individualism could thrive.

TRANSFORMATION

In Europe west of Russia, the 100 years between 1790 and 1890 witnessed cities of over 10,000 people swell from housing ten percent of the population to twenty-nine percent.[27] In the United States, population growth in the late nineteenth century was predominantly in the ten largest cities.[28] Agricultural and transportation improvements presaged the growth of cities.

---

23 Adam Smith, pp. 422, 427.

24 Pirenne, p. 214.

25 Lewis Mumford, *The City in History* (New York: Harcourt, Brace Jovanovich, 1961) p. 415.

26 Katznelson, p. 176. I.e., of Britain's largest ten towns in 1851, six were essentially factory towns. Only three — London, Edinburgh, and Bristol — had been significant urban centers before the eighteenth century. On the other hand, in France, which underwent a slower rate of urbanization, only one of the 25 largest cities in 1851 had not been a chartered city and commercial center for centuries.William H. Sewell, Jr., *Work and Revolution in France; The Language of Labor from the Old Regime to 1848* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980) p. 154.

27 Charles Tilly, *Coercion. Capital, and European States. AD 990–1992* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1992) p. 50.

28 James E. Vance, Jr., "Human Mobility and the Shaping of Cities" in *Our Changing Cities* (edited by John Fraser Hart, Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1991) p. 72.

The century 1825–1925 has been called "A century of transportation revolution." Before 1825, the two human legs were more or less the only mode of transport in cities. This was reflected in virtually universal urban morphology of narrow passageways and generally cramped space for circulation.[29] The limits to the size of American cities expanded first in the northeast after about 1825 with the development of new forms of transportation.[30] It is estimated that about four miles is the upper limit for "'spontaneous' urban cohesion" before the development of mass transportation.[31] In Victorian London, as early as 1845 it was projected that railways could offer reduced fares for the working class so as to "diffuse" London's dense population into "rural abodes."[32] This would release the pressure of urban density into railway-accessed suburbs. After 1925 most people in urban areas used assisted transport via technology.[33]

Improvements in agriculture presaged the growth of cities. Such improvements first arose around those large cities in northern Italy and Flanders which relied on imports of large quantities of food. The improvements did not become widespread however until after the British industrial push of the late eighteenth and nineteenth century. From there they spread to France"[34] and elsewhere.

In Britain, the rationalization of agricultural production presaged the migration of the peasantry from the countryside into the cities.[35] A variety of rather simple technological improvements — fertilizer, crop rotation and new crops — and an expansion of cultivated areas combined with a massive social transformation to drive peasants off the land.[36] The Enclosure acts (at full force about 1760 and ebbing toward 1832) concentrated agricultural land in

---

29 Vance, p. 69.

30 David Schuyler, *The New Urban Landscape: The Redefinition of City Form in Nineteenth-Century America* (Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986) p. 149ff.

31 Eric Hobsbawm, "Labour in the Great City," *New Left Review* (No. 166, Nov.–Dec. 1987) p. 41.

32 H. J. Dyos, "Railways and housing in Victorian London," *Exploring the Urban Past: Essays in Urban History by H.J. Dyos* edited by David Cannadine and David Reeder (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982) p. ill.

33 Vance, Jr., p. 71.

34 Marc Bloch, *French Rural History: An Essay on Its Basic Characteristics* Trans. Janet Sondheimer (Berkeley and Los Angeles, CA: University of California Press, 1966) p. 217.

35 Eric Hobsbawm, *The Age of Revolution. 1789-1848* (NY: Mentor, 1962) pp. 67-69; Karl Polanyi, *The Great Transformation: The Political and Economic Origins of Our Time* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1957 [1944]) p. 92.

36 Barrington Moore, Jr., *Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy: Lord and Peasant in the Making of the Modern World* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1966) p. 25.

the hands of the few. Their larger land holdings proved fertile ground for the application of the new agricultural techniques, and brought great profit to the landowning class." The elimination of the Commons transformed the peasantry into tenant farmers, hired hands or migrants to swell city populations.[37]

We should be careful, however, not to equate the end of serfdom with the disappearance of feudal relations in the countryside. In 1807 Prussia abolished serfdom on private estates and removed all restrictions on the sale of land, the measure to take effect in 1810.[n38] The existence of a market for land, however, while necessary, does not itself signal the abolition of feudal relations. Nor is production for profit rather than use-value a sufficient criterion — such behavior by traders has always existed. Socio-economically, what marked premodern from modern society was the development of "price-making markets."[39] And more specifically, markets for the basic factors of production: capital, land, and labor.

One necessary aspect of the transition to industrial production was the invention of the capital goods sector. While technological advances in grain or weaving could easily imagine at least potential markets, "no such market existed, e.g., for heavy iron equipment such as girders."[40] After its invention around 1825, the railway provided the impetus for developing the capital goods market. In Britain it acted like a sponge for investment from a yet untaxed, burgeoning middle class. As a result, the steel industry and coal mining took-Off.[41]

The commercialization of land had been developing since the fourteenth century, but "… until 1834 was a competitive labor market established in England; hence, industrial capitalism as a social system cannot be said to have existed before that date."[42]

As Perry Anderson persuasively argues:

> [I]t is evident that private extra-economic coercion, personal dependence, and combination of the immediate producer with the instruments of production, did not necessarily vanish when the rural surplus ceased to be extracted in

37 Moore, Jr., p. 23.

38 Reinhard Bendix, *Kings or People. Power and the Mandate to Rule* Berkeley, etc.: University of California Press, 1978) p. 417.

39 Karl Polanyi, et al., *Trade and Market in the Early Empires: Economies in History and Theory* (Chicago: Henry Regnery Company, 1971 [1957]) p. 241.

40 Hobsbawm, *Age of Revolution*, p. 62.

41 Hobsbawm, *The Age of Revolution,* pp. 62–67.

42 Polanyi, *The Great Transformation*, pp. 79 and 83.

> the form of labor or deliveries in kind, and became rent in money: so long as aristocratic agrarian property blocked a free market in land and factual mobility of manpower – in other words, as long as labor was not separated from the social conditions of its existence to become 'labor-power' – rural relations of production remained feudal."[43]

After 1834, a true market for labor was created in England with the repeal of the Speenhamland law — a law which had attempted to safeguard paternalistic village life by supporting the unemployed poor at a bare-subsistence level, but instead effectively transformed the peasantry into an industrial reserve army of workers.[44] The feudal organization of social life which had combined economic and social organization was rent asunder. The capitalist enterprise had won control over economic relations. The rest of the domain of public life was left to a collective negotiation among individuals and the emergent centralized state.[45]

A similar pattern followed in France, though the "impulse toward commercial agriculture [in the seventeenth and early eighteenth century] was weak in comparison to that in England, not only among the nobility but in France generally."[46] Certain improvements in agricultural techniques were made. Farmers began to cultivate those fields traditionally left fallow for a year with clover and other legumes upon which cattle could graze. This dramatically increased output. Enclosure movements, as in England, besieged common lands, but the movement lost its main thrust by 1771.[47] Where England had massive population growth to spur urbanization and hasten land enclosure, population growth in France was more gradual. There peasant agriculture had more time to adjust tactically to social threats from technical improvements or enclosure movements because rising demand was more tractable than in England.[48] However, though the short run jolts were less shocking, they were no less effective in the long run. France's less disruptive pace eased but could not. halt its transformation from its pre-modern, feudal past into an industrial, capitalist world-system, led by the British.

---

43 Perry Anderson, *Lineages of the Absolutist State* (London: Verso, 1974) p. 17.

44 Karl Polanyi, *The Great Transformation*, pp. 86.

45 Katznelson, pp. 180–182.

46 Moore, Jr., p. 45.

47 Moore, p. 64.

48 William H. Sewell, Jr., *Work and Revolution in France: The Language of Labor from the Old Regime to 1848* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980) pp. 149–154.

The rationalization of land meant that more people were better fed and more food was available to support a swelling population of nineteenth century city dwellers no longer engaged in rural life."[49]

PRODUCTION

Protoindustrialization emerged as an agent of social change in many European regions from the sixteenth to eighteenth centuries, including the hinterlands of Milan, Lyon, and Manchester. During this period, rural labor was proletarianized in that they worked for wages and utilized means of production owned by capitalists, though they generally remained in households and small shops."[50] As late as 1830, "the characteristic industrial worker worked not in a mill or factory but (as an artisan or 'mechanic') in a small workshop or in his own home, or (as a labourer) in more-or-less casual employment in the streets, on building-sites, on the docks."[51]

The development of industrial machines presaged new social forms of organizing labor in supervised factories. It would have a wrenching effect on workers' lives. Industrial machines could perform complex tasks at amazing speeds, thus effectively deskilling workers. Human tasks would be reduced to a few, specialized machine-builders and repairmen, and a mass of unskilled workers who fed the machines raw materials for processing. The polarization of labor would widen even further when machines start building machines. Marx found this division of labor between mental and physical tasks equal in effect to private property, the former referring to activity, the latter to the product of activity.[52] The privatization of specialized knowledge comes at the expense of those left out of the fold.

By the 1850s In the United States dozens of important industries, from textiles to firearms, pianos to hairpins were mechanized. This new kind of work was "specialized, repetitious, machine-paced, and often, deafeningly simple."[53]

---

49 Bloch, pp. 213–219.

50 Charles Tilly, *Capital, Coercion and European States* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1990) p. 49.

51 E. P. Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class* (New York: Vintage Books, 1966 [1963]) p. 235.

52 Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *The German Ideology* (New York: International Publishers, 1947 [1846]) pp. 20–22, 43, 50.

53 Daniel T. Rodgers, *The Work Ethic in Industrial America. 1850–1920* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1979 [1974]) p. 67.

Repetitious, specialized tasks, wrote Adam Smith, made industrial workers:

> as stupid and ignorant as it is possible for a human creature to become. The torpor of his mind renders him, not only incapable of relishing or bearing a part in any rational conversation, but of conceiving any generous, noble, or tender sentiment, and consequently of forming any just judgment concerning many even of the ordinary duties of private life.[54]

Smith's remark heralds the nineteenth century's deterministic, instrumental view of technology's effects on human character. Though repetitious, simple tasks might dull one's physical dexterity, it does not necessarily speak to the question of intellect – As Gramsci notes on the disassociation that a scribe must have with his text:

> the brain of the worker, far from being mummified, reaches a state of complete freedom. The only thing that is completely mechanicised [sic] is the physical gesture; the memory of the trade, reduced to simple gestures repeated at an intense rhythm, "nestles" in the muscular and nervous centers and leaves the brain free and unencumbered for other occupations.[55]

Gramsci's statement perhaps exposes his own predilection for worker's agitation, but it is useful nevertheless in pointing out the indeterminate effect that technology and industrial organization will have on human thought and volition.

For Smith there was no indeterminacy. The worker's idiocy was the price of specialization: "His [the laborer's] dexterity at his own particular trade seems... to be acquired at the expense of his intellectual, social and martial virtues... unless Government takes some pains to prevent it."[56]

Beyond the question of intellect, Smith was certainly wrong in predicting that industrial organization would cause a diminution of "martial virtues."[57]

---

54 Adam Smith, *The Wealth of Nations* (edited by E. Cannan. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1976 (1904)) Vol. II, pg. 303.

55 Antonio Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks* edited and translated by Quintin Hoare and Geoffrey Nowell Smith (New York: International Publishers, 1971) p. 309.

56 Adam Smith, p. 303.

57 Robert L. Heilbroner, *The Nature and Logic of Capitalism* (New York and London: W.W. Norton, 1985) pp. 157–58.

century labor strikes and protests should alert us to that error. What is striking is the persistence over time of Smith's moral concern and mechanistic reading of a causal logic between the organization of work and the worker's character.

It is imputed a century later in a bureaucrat's formulation of mechanization. "Better morals, better sanitary conditions, better health, better wages," wrote Carroll D. Wright, chief of the Massachusetts Bureau of Statistics of Labor, in 1882, "these are the practical results of the factory system, as compared with what preceded it, and the results of all these have been a keener intelligence."[58] Wright's paper, originally given as an address before the American Social Science Association, bore the title "The Factory System as an Element in Civilization." This sentiment is echoed by novelists of the day. The hope existed that the nature of industrial production itself might discipline the masses: "middle-class writers [who] often found a small but vital measure of reassurance in the hope that the simple, repetitive processes of industry were slowly impressing order and discipline on the factory population."[59]

Where Smith says industry comes at the expense of intelligence, Wright says it produces a "keener intelligence." Gramsci's comment alerts us to how clearly both Smith's lament and Wright's praise overstate the causal relation between work and human character. What underlies both positions is an abiding, positivistic belief that material relations determine social behavior. This enlightenment predilection linking technology with both the advances and the poverty of modernity will be taken up in Part II. For now, we may conclude that we should read Smith's and Wright's comments not as facts but rather as interventions in the contested terrain of the relations between industrial organization and the hope for a just and moral society.

The historical record denies any sheer dominance of industrial organization sweeping over traditional craft production. Industrial organization advanced piecemeal. The first industrial firms were amalgams of craft and artisan practices employing new techniques, rather than mass-producing firms.

It is a mistake to equate the development of industrial production with mass production. Mass production is defined as the large-scale production of

---

58 Alan Trachtenberg, *The Incorporation of America: Culture & Society in the Gilded Age* (New York: Hill & Wang, 1982) p. 42.

59 Daniel T. Rodgers, *The Work Ethic in Industrial America: 1850–1920* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1978 [1974]) p. 71.

identical goods which relies on a hierarchical production process which arranges people who perform specialized, limited tasks, or, at the extreme, single, repetitive tasks, and whose performance is evaluated by hours clocked rather than output realized (the pace of the machinery determines output). Strict hierarchy on the shop floor and alienation from the finished product are the social features associated with mass production. This production process which did indeed come to dominate certain industries in the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries, was merely one trajectory among others when industrial techniques and new sources of fuel were first developed and applied.[60]

Small firms that experimented with new technologies often stayed small; large firms that employed sophisticated technologies did not necessarily produce identical goods in mass quantities.[61] Often, production techniques were instead a "simple aggregation of individual trades in which everyday work preserved its artisanal appearance."[62] Though the introduction of large industrial machines did precipitate an influx of unskilled labor, it also required skilled, and consequently highly paid, artisans to build and maintain them. Indeed, the introduction of factories did not reduce but multiplied the number of artisans during the first two-thirds of the nineteenth century.[63] Wide fluctuations in demand meant that such agglomerations of artisans formed and reformed over time, working under different entrepreneurs. The "constant" in a firm might be the mill building rather than any industrial process that goes on inside it.[64] Those workers displaced by the productivity gains of new machines, notably in textiles, were typically rural, and so were faced with yet another impetus for migration into the cities.

Family firms were a common organizational alternative which took advantage of new technologies, but which might defer from mass production. In 1850 Roubaix, France, Alfred Motte established a confederation of family firms, each supplying a finished good as part of a larger production process.[65]

---

60 Charles Sabel and Jonathan Zeitlin, "Historical Alternatives to Mass Production: Politics, Markets and Technology in Nineteenth-Century Industrialization" *Past & Present* No. 108, August 1985. For a sense of perspective, it should be noted that as late as 1847, 58% of the motive power needed by factories was supplied by water. Fernand Braudel, *The Identity of France. Volume II: People and Production*. Trans. Sian Reynolds (New York: Harper Collins, 1990 [1986]), p. 521.

61 Sabel and Zeitlin, p. 142.

62 Y. Lequin, "La Formation du proletariat industriel dans la retion lyonnaise au *XIX*^{atte} siecle: approches methodologiques et premiers resultats", *Le mouvement social*, xcvii (1976), p.

63 Sewell, p. 155.

64 Sabel and Zeitlin, p. 149.

65 Sabel and Zeitlin, p. 151–152.

This industrial putting-out system featured flexible resource use, decentralized, reliable production oversight and job-training in the family setting, all of which 125 quoted in Sabel and Zeitlin, p. 151. would tend to minimize overhead costs, eliminate the costs of hierarchy, and perhaps induce better quality by cultivating competition among the firms in his network.

We can analyze the historical trajectory of these alternatives to mass production on a continuum marking the shift from the laborer as a subjective to an objective part of the production process.[66] The first step in the evolution of modern production was the putting-out system where a capitalist would provide raw materials to a decentralized stable of laborers who control the actual work process, typically in textiles. Only later did capitalists bring workers under a single roof.

For France and elsewhere, Fernand Braudel traces the concentration of labor under a single roof to the early eighteenth century, well before the introduction of industrial machines. Additionally, "[i]t was quite normal in fact for a *manufacture* [a concentration of skilled laborers using traditional, i.e. preindustrial, tools] in France or elsewhere to be accompanied by a putting-out system, with its string of little *ateliers.* [For example,...] in the late eighteenth century, Van Robais was employing 1,800 workers on a single site in Abbevelle and another 10,000 working at home."[67] In fact, French handicraft and artisan arrangements were able to adapt and profit far longer than their English counterparts: "The success of French industrial growth in the nineteenth century was largely a matter of maintaining and developing France's superiority in highly skilled, high-quality handicrafts."[68] Until quite late in France, artisanal expertise was harnessed by capitalist control over the organization of production without the artisans losing control over the actual labor process.

Nevertheless, the advantages of centralized production accrued primarily to the capitalist. Better supervision of labor, standardized quality of output, and primarily, in the longer run, the practical elimination of dependence on autonomous, fickle laborers added to the rationalization of production.[69] Remember,

---

66 Michael Burawoy, *The Politics of Production* (London: Verso, 1985) p. 89.

67 Braudel, *The Identity of France*, p. 518.

68 Sewell, p. 153.

69 Stephen A. Marglin, "What Do the Bosses Do? The Origins and Functions of Hierarchy in Capitalist Production" in Anthony Giddens and David Held (eds.) *Classes. Power, and Conflict: Classical and Contemporary Debates*. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1982. See also Oliver Williamson who argues that firms incorporate those processes to minimize transaction costs, reduce risk and preempt opportunism. Oliver E. Williamson, "The Modern Corporation: Origins, Evolution, Attributes" in *Journal of Economic Literature* Vol. XIX, December 1981.

time *is* money. Factory regimes outpaced putting-out systems and cottage industry by standardizing production levels, reducing embezzlement and disciplining time-use, all by bringing "work under supervision, whether in factories (initially in textiles) or in large shops."[70] Finally industrial tools were developed which intervened in the actual process of production. Laborers became mere adjuncts to machinery, in effect becoming part of the machinery. Workers underwent the transition from subject to object, transferring autonomous control over the production process to subordination to the production process, from being an autonomous, creative producer to a dependent wage earner.

The complete objectification of workers in the labor process is expressed in the Lynds' study of Muncie, Indiana.[71] The Lynds' main purpose was to study the effects of industrialization on community life. They begin their study in 1890 because of the Gas boom. Between 1890 and 1924, the population of Muncie tripled (from 11,000 people to 35,000). Most of the incoming population had migrated from the surrounding countryside, and had not emigrated from foreign lands.

While some scholars have posited institutionally sanctioned *mobility* as the crucial variable in the explanation for "the pervasive strength of the industrial system in subverting social systems and surmounting or penetrating the natural barriers that a balanced nonindustrial system possesses,"[72] the Lynds' detailed study of Muncie Indiana reveals a further necessary component. The Lynds show that it is not just mobility, but rather the orientation toward mass-produced commodities as symbols of mobility coupled with willingness to perform specialized occupational roles in order to be able to purchase these commodities, that constitutes the mainspring of the American industrial community. Here, mass production and mass consumption appear as interrelated phases in a recurrent cycle so that motivation to perform roles demanded by the former is maintained by providing access to goods which are prerequisites for desired life styles.[73]

The local factories' introduction of machines and assembly-line techniques occasioned the complete breakdown in Muncie's craft hierarchy, and propelled mass migrations from Muncie's rural periphery. In Muncie, modern unions

---

70 David S. Landes, "Debate: The Ordering of the Urban Environment: Time, Work and the Occurrence of Crowds, 1790–1835" *Past and Present*. (No. 116, August 1987) p. 194.

71 Maurice Robert Stein, *The Eclipse of Community: An Interpretation of American Studies* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1960) pp. 49ff.

72 Stein, p. 50 quoting Wilber E. Moore, *Industrialization and Labor*. Cornell University Press, Ithaca, New York, 1951.

73 Stein, p. 51.

did eventually replace traditional craft organizations, but as a means to collectively bargain with capital interests in the accumulation process, not to recreate the convivial ties of preindustrial trades.

What the Muncie case reveals is the close connection between an ethos of mass consumption, mass production, and the complete subsumption of the worker to the imperatives of the labor process. The significance of this may be illustrated by an example taken from the American Civil War:

> During the American Civil War... – the Philadelphia textile manufacturers [organized along artisanal lines] formed volunteer units of the work-force, paid the wages of the absent workers, and led them into battle in defense of the republic. In contrast, the owners of the mass-production textile mills in Lowell, Massachusetts, threw their workers on the street at the onset of the Civil War in the expectation that the conflict would be swiftly resolved.[74]

Though during this transition of the nineteenth century counter examples can probably be found, it is significant that the relatively new national allegiance can garner support from the Philadelphia artisan-based craft, but does not find similar support in Lowell which has objectified the worker in the labor process.

Rationalization of the production process is unthinkable without specialization. The breakdown of production into its component parts for the purposes of making efficient the whole process makes war on the "traditional amalgam of empirical experiences of work."[75] Because "the finished article ceases to be the object of the work-process," it is now "the objective synthesis of rationalized special systems whose unity is determined by pure calculation and which must therefore seem to be arbitrarily connected with each other."[76] The complete objectification of labor in the labor process, as in Lowell, is it tune with the rationality of the profit-seeking capitalist (probably the only creature properly the subject to Mancur Olson's *The Logic of Collective Action*). Economic rationality provided a "moral pardon" to the hiving off the private, economic sphere from the public, social sphere"[77] The latter concerns are left to the state.

---

74 Sabel and Zeitlin, p. 154 relying on Scranton, *Proprietary Capitalism*.

75 Georg Lukacs, "Reif ication and the Consciousness of the Proletariat" in *History and Class Consciousness*. Trans. Rodney Livingstone (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1971) p. 88.

76 *Ibid.*

77 Robert Heilbroner, *The Nature and Logic of Capitalism* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1985) p. 116.

Above, we have identified the various forms of industrial organization under capitalism based on the degree that workers are subsumed by the labor process. We have also discussed some of the effects of this objectification of labor, though other aspects of this will be further explored below.

From putting-out to assembly line work, we map a continuum from the worker as subject to the worker as object. We shouldn't however overstate any inevitable trend towards complete subsumption of labor.[78] The modern condition is marked not only by constrained choices of activity given the domination of production by capitalist imperatives, but the introduction of an unprecedented range of possibilities of applying one's creative energies.

STATE-BUILDING

The intensification of exchange and industrial organization was not on their own sufficient propellants for the transition from feudalism to capitalism. As we saw, the creation of a mass market for labor was enacted at the political level. Like capitalism, the process of state-building at this time required the participation of enormous amounts of people. This section will investigate the process of "bringing the masses in."

The fiction of popular sovereignty was first wielded by the British Parliament to criticize Charles the first, after James I had attached divinity to the king's person.[79] The interests of the "people" were invoked when parliamentarians examined a king's decisions. Was the king acting with divine prudence or had wicked ministers led his corporeal self astray? Whatever forwarded the people's interests would be just. And yet, the "people" were *prima facia* excluded from the decision-making process. Until quite late, popular sovereignty had little substance: "Civil or political society was understood as a type of state dualistically organized with the "prince" on one side and "land" or "people" or "nation" on the other, with the latter terms denoting the privileged estates."[80] The common people had no place in public life.

---

78 Burawoy, p. 90.

79 Edmund S. Morgan, *Inventing the People: The Rise of Popular Sovereignty in England and America*. New York and London: W.W. Norton, 1988: "In endowing the people with supreme authority ... Parliament intended only to endow itself." p. 65.

80 Jean L. Cohen and Andrew Arato, *Civil Society and Political Theory* (Cambridge, MA and London: MIT Press, 1992) p. 87.

And yet by the eighteenth century, the "people" were paid more than lip service. In Britain, the "people" were invoked, depending on the speaker, as the working classes, to universalize their particular claims as the national interest, or, to the contrary, as a term to dispel class difference between labor and the bourgeoisie.[81] In Revolutionary America, the people's collective interests "against the supposed privileged interests of their rulers" were emphasized more even than private rights of individuals against the general will.[82] Article 3 of France's *Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen* (26 August 1789) places "[t]he source of all sovereignty ... essentially in the nation."[83] And in 1799, Napoleon Bonaparte invoked liberty and equality for the people even as he was overthrowing the Directory.[84] By 1870, "it became increasingly clear that the democratization of the politics of states was quite inevitable."[85]

The years around 1800 may provide a convenient turning point for this movement.[86] The cult of individualism, propagated in Adam Smith's liberalism (1776) and a secularized Protestantism, was now matched by the growth of nationalism as a collective, secular, spiritual, quasi-religion. The joint trajectory of individualism and collective consciousness both thrived on active, positive assertion by the common people.[87]

The democratization of public life was fundamental to the great transformation in the organization of production. The equality of man under capitalism has a slightly different ring to it than it does under nationalism. Equality under capitalism is in effect, universal interchangeability: a dollar in any pocket is still worth a dollar (the bane of the feudal privileged classes), and an industrial worker is worth any other industrial worker (the bane of the working class).[88] Equality under nationalism is the foundation for a normative, horizontally linked fraternity:

---

81 Geoffrey Crossick, "From gentlemen to the residuum: languages of social description in Victorian Britain" in Penelope J. Corfield (ed.). *Language. History and Class* Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1991) p. 157.

82 Gordon S. Wood, *The Creation of the American Republic 1776–1787* (New York and London: W.W. Norton & Company, 1969) p. 61.

83 *Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen* reprinted in *Readings in Western Civilization. Vol. 7: The Old Regime and the French Revolution* edited by Keith Michael Baker (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987) p. 240.

84 "Bonaparte's Speech to the Council of Elders, 19 Brumaire, Year VIII (10 November 1799)" reprinted in *Readings in Western Civilization. Vol. 7: The Old Regime and the French Revolution* edited by Keith Michael Baker (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987) pp. 406–407.

85 Eric Hobsbawm, *The Age of Empire. 1875–1914* (New York: Vintage, 1987), p. 85.

86 Peter Burke, "We, the people: popular culture and popular identity in modern Europe" in *Modernity and Identity*. edited by Scott Lash and Jonathan Friedman. Oxford, etc.: Blackwell, 1992) p. 300.

87 See the discussion of popular culture below.

88 David Harvey, *The Limits to Capital* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982) pp. 18–20.

citizens stand equidistant from a loyalty to flag and anthem, and in opposition to any who would challenge by force of arms their collective national sovereignty."

Both capitalism and nationalism rely and depend on an imagined, anonymous group of others — we don't know them, and can never see them all, those millions of producers/consumers or fellow-citizens, but we presumably share a faith with them that we and they would act similarly under shared circumstances.[89] That is, we would act lawfully, honor contracts, pay taxes, fight a defensive war for our country, and so on. Ultimately, the difference is that the market for capitalism is a global market, whereas the participants of a nation can only be a parochial identification. Nevertheless, in the nineteenth century, the stress between rules of the market and rules of state were subordinated to their mutual growth. The market and the national state relied on the creation of a similar anonymous participation of, and cooperation among the masses.

Coercion played no small part in bringing both to fruition. In Britain warfare propelled a consciousness of belonging to a national body. Britain was at war forty years of the fifty nine year period 1756–1815. One out of six and sometimes one of five people participated in the wars.[90] The recruits came principally from the Scottish Highlands' unemployed and those idle young men in seaport towns — the potentially disgruntled and dangerous groups, who, if left to their own devices, were a potential rival state.[91]

In its revolutionary war of 1792–4, the young French Republic

> discovered or invented total war: the total mobilization of a nation's resources through conscription, rationing, and a rigidly controlled war economy, and virtual abolition, at home or abroad, of the distinction between soldiers and civilians."[92]

A people in arms was a new concept. It was not a comfortable proposition for those nurtured on the stuff of monarchical hierarchy and fixed social orders. Hobsbawm reminds us that

> Frederick the Great [King of Prussia, 1740–86] indignantly refused the offer of his loyal Berliners to help him defeat the Russians who were about to occupy his capital, on the ground that wars were the business of soldiers, not

89 Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities* (London: Verso, 1983) pp. 14–16.

90 Linda Colley, "Whose Nation? Class and National Consciousness in Britain, 1750–1830" *Past and Present* No. 113, Nov. 1986) p. 101.

91 William H. McNeil, *The Pursuit of Power* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982) p. 208.

92 Hobsbawm, *The Age of Revolution*, p. 90.

> civilians. [Likewise, consider] the reaction of emperor Francis II [the last Holy Roman Emperor, 1792–1806] to the guerrilla rising of his faithful Tyroleans: 'Today they are patriots for me, tomorrow they may be patriots against me.'[93]

As late as 1890 the high staff of the Prussian Army was obstructed the introduction of non-nobles, the anti-bourgeois, into the officer corps.[94] Nevertheless, the practice of hiring foreign mercenaries was in a seemingly inevitable transition to the employ of national, universal (male) conscription for professionalized armies.[95] State-making required the centralized monopolization over the legitimate use of force within discrete borders, and so, the process of state-making would therefore eventually require bringing the masses into its project.[96]

The timing is significant. The co-evolution of national armies and industrial production has many parallels in the culture of their operation.

> "Both the running of a regiment and that of a factory [are based on] hierarchical lines and each with an often dehumanizing tendency to reduce the human being to one machine among others. Armies set an example which could encourage the transition from scattered 'cottage industry' or 'putting out,' to labour gathered under the factory roof. Popular phrases like 'captains of industry' — attributed to Thomas Carlyle — or 'Napoleon of finance' show how analogies between military and capitalist organization caught men's eyes. Their standard routines, their practice of living by timetables, their need of concerted effort, might qualify an individual to be either a useful officer or a useful manager, a sergeant or a foreman."

With the significant parallels drawn between the evolution of industrial production and the mechanism of state-building, we have fleshed out a significant part of what we might call the transitional infrastructure of modernity. Issues neglected here but which are crucial are, the proliferation of state languages, the introduction of common schools with national curricula, the

---

93 Eric Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism Since 1780* (Cambridge, etc.: Cambridge University Press, 1990) p. 75.

94 Gordon A. Craig, *The Politics of the Prussian Army, 1640–1945* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1964) pp. 232–238.

95 Charles Tilly, *Coercion. Capital, and European States. AD 990–1992* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1992) p. 103.

96 Tilly, *Coercion. Capital and European States*.

communicational infrastructure provided by print-media, the actual infrastructure such as roads and transportation improvements, and the widespread literacy which developed at this time. I mention these only in passing to shore up the idea that a full movement of bringing the masses into the forward march of history was upon them.[97]

ENTERPRENUERSHIP

Urbanization and industrialization were partners in the transition from a rural feudal order to an urban capitalist one. Embedded in the structure of both urban and industrial organization was a new, modern, appreciation of time. The concentration of activity in towns led to a more intense and measured concern for time-keeping:

> Time measurement develops and thrives in urban areas because they cannot do without it. Their density compels them to use time in order to ration space, and the multiplicity and variety of their social interactions require temporal coordination.[98]

So when industrial organization first developed, it was the towns that were pre-disposed towards the acceptance of time-discipline and the coordination of multiple tasks.

Temporal coordination must be distinguished from task-orientation.[99] Task orientation is associated with the rural order, when the appreciation of the passing of time marches with the tasks and not the clock. Until the second half of the eighteenth century, for example, offering higher wages to a worker would not act as an incentive for him to work any harder.[100] On the contrary, more wages meant that a laborer could refrain that much longer from working. Furthermore, under a decentralized putting-out system, the temporal synchronization of tasks was not really feasible.[101] Timed labor, on the other hand,

---

97 Victor Kiernan, "Modern Capitalism and its Shepherds" *New Left Review* (No. 183, Sept.–Oct. 1990) p. 77.

98 David S. Landes, "Debate: The Ordering of the Urban Environment: Time, Work and the Occurrence of Crowds, 1790–1835" *Past and Present*. (No. 116, August 1987) p. 194

99 E. P. Thompson, "Time, Work-Discipline, and Industrial Capitalism" *Past and Present* (No. 38, 1967) p. 60.

100 Thompson, "Time, Work-Discipline...," p. 81.

101 Thompson, "Time, Work-Discipline...," p. 71.

and its social counterpart, temporal coordination, both of which subordinate the primacy of tasks to time, developed later.

Time itself as an abstract force, acting in and of itself, outside a constitutive history, is a contemporary development in the transition towards modernity.[102] The expectation of the imminent arrival of doomsday wore thin at the end of the eighteenth century. This opened a conceptual space in which science and the application of reason could dream of qualitative advances for material life, projected into a vacant, limitless future of endless possibility. And "… resupposed by this formulation of experience is a concept of history which is likewise new: the collective singular form of *Geschichte,* which since around 1780 can be conceived as *history in and for itself in the absence of an associated subject or object*."[103]

The appearance of clocks and time pieces would reinforce and ultimately guarantee the primacy of an abstract, historically distantiated concept of time. Town clocks were introduced in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries.[104] By the end of the sixteenth century, the large majority of English parishes must have possessed church clocks.[105] By 1800, in Britain portable time-pieces were shifting from being a luxury to a convenience.[106]

In the United States, it was the massive, looming bell towers of the eighteenth and nineteenth century mill districts that tolled the ethic of time-discipline.[107] George Pullman's 1883 planned town of Pullman, IL featured prominently *The Pullman Clock Tower,* reflecting majestically in the small pond at its base.[108] Its spire rose above the town like a church steeple, signifying work and time-discipline as an emerging faith. Though Pullman would have liked an ecumenical Protestant church in his town, he effectively restricted religious groups because they couldn't afford to rent space in the town's Greenstone

---

102 Peter Osborne, "Modernity is a Qualitative, Not a Chronological, Category" *New Left Review*. March/April, 1992.

103 Reinhart Koselleck, *Futures Past: On the Semantics of Historical time*, (trans. Keith Tribe, Cambridge, MA, 1985) p. 246, quoted in Peter Osborne, "Modernity is a Qualitative, Not a Chronological, Category" *New Left Review* (March/April, 1992) pp. 70–71. Emphasis added.

104 Lewis Mumford, *The City in History* (New York: Harcourt, Brace Jovanovich, 1961) p. 414.

105 E. P. Thompson, "Time, Work-Discipline, and Industrial Capitalism," *Past and Present*, (38) 1967) p. 63.

106 Thompson, "Time, Work-Discipline...," p. 69.

107 Daniel T. Rodgers, *The Work Ethic in Industrial America, 1850–1920* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1979 [1974]) p. 153.

108 James Gilbert, *Perfect Cities: Chicago's Utopias of 1893* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1991) pp. 134–35.

Church.[109] Pullman's decision was the trajectory of an age, a coin toss between faith in God or faith in profit: the secular faith won out.

When time became the central focus of labor disputes, the character of production had changed for good. E.P. Thompson summarizes the incorporation of time-discipline into workers' self-designations and aspirations:

> The first generation of factory workers were taught by their masters the importance of time; the second generation formed their short-time committees in the ten-hour movement; the third generation struck for overtime or time-and-a-half. They had accepted the categories of their employers and learned to fight back within them.[110]

The term "scientific management" came into use around 1910 as the child of the great depression, but the technique developed by F.W. Taylor (1856–1915) had been germinating in light of the "problem-racked American steel industry in 1880."[111] It caught on in Europe in the 1890s.

But under capitalism, does time-discipline have only a unidirectional constraining effect on people? Sirianni for one accepts the premise that under capitalism time, like machines, gets fetishized to become an abstract standard that measures, controls, defines, and constrains human activity.

But, citing Sorokin, Sirianni argues that commoditization of time has made only partial headway. Discreet time units are *not* figured by a particular mode of production, because, given our pluralistic social web in which we are enmeshed,

> the clock and the schedule are ... not simply disciplinary instruments, but diversifying ones that permit us to synchronize and coordinate a broad range of activities and relationships in dense and pluralistic social networks, and that can expand the possibilities for individual and organizational flexibility within them.[112]

Individuality is made possible and is made communicable through the choices of time allocation. This is freedom, not constraint.

---

109 Gilbert, p. 154.

110 Thompson, "Time, Work-Discipline...," p. 86.

111 Eric Hobsbawm, *The Age of Empire, 1875–1914* (New York: Vintage, 1987) p. 44.

112 Carmen Sirianni, "The Self-Management of Time in Post-Industrial Society" in *Working Time in Transition: The Political Economy of Working Hours in Industrial Nations* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1991) p. 241.

In a similar vein, it has been suggested that the multiple "timings" of cultural traditions, family development, i.e. local, personal narratives, have always been the backdrop "within the constraints of larger social and economic structures."[113] While both pre-modern and modern times share the feature of having a plurality of time frames, the virtually universal *coordination* and prioritizing of multiple time-frames became necessary *and* possible only with the expansion of time and space horizons of industrial society.

Given the historical variability in the organization of the labor process in the evolution of industrial production described above, it seems immediately apparent that the strong argument of domination and subsumption of everyday life by capitalist imperatives is overstated. The arguments about "incomplete commoditization of time," and "multiple timings" are food for thought. A more subtle process however may be going on, one that Antonio Gramsci has described as hegemony. This will be discussed in more detail below.

We can date the crystallization of the drive to coordinate *world* time to 1884 when The Prime Meridian Conference convened in Washington to establish Greenwich as the zero meridian, determined the exact length of the day, divided the earth into twenty-four time zones one hour apart, and fixed a precise beginning of the universal day.[114] It is significant that such coordination was at the impetus of the railroad moguls who had a financial interest in standardizing time across the United States: "in 1570 there were still about 80 different railroad times..."[115] Industrialist Henry Ford, who began his career repairing watches, made a watch with two dials, one showing local time and the other standard railroad time.[116]

The concept of multiple timing attempts to answer the question, "which time-frame gets precedent?" The answer is that human life consists of culture, family, economy and a host of other types of activities with independent timing requirements which need articulation and inter-coordination for a fulfilling life. Nevertheless, a Gramscian notion of hegemony must be invoked here. A hegemonic regime, like capitalism, not only imposes an ideology — if it only

---

113 Tamara K. Hareven, "Synchronizing Individual, Family, and Historical Time" in John Bender and David E. Wellbery (eds.) *Chronotvpes; The Construction of Time* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1991) p. 167.

114 Stephen Kern, *The Culture of Time and Space: 1880–1918* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1983) p. 12.

115 Kern, p. 12.

116 Henry Ford, *My Life and Work* (London, 1923) p. 24, cited in E.P. Thompson, "Time, Work-Discipline, and Industrial Capitalism" *Past and Present* (No. 38, 1967) p. 89, n.113.

did that, it would be easy to recognize and, if need be, overthrow — but also creates an opposition within its own terms. Cultural hegemony not only supplies the "opposition" with its arguments but also the language with which it speaks, and the rules of engagement. True opposition to a system like capitalism is so very difficult to manage because capitalism is a total system, defining not only our appreciation for material goods but the infrastructure for obtaining them and the values governing their use. It is after all "significant that none of the modern secular states have neglected to provide national holidays giving occasions for assemblage."[117]

117 Edward A. Ross, "Social Control VII: Assemblage" *American Journal of Sociology*. II (1896–7) p. 830, cited in Hobsbawm, *Age of Empire*, p. 84.

IMAGES OF PROGRESS

The seventeenth century Quarrel framed human progress as the natural and inevitable progression of knowledge over time.[118] Historical exceptions to progress, e.g. the fall of Rome, were considered unnatural. Such sporadic deviances were considered antithetical to regular, predictable progress and therefore could not be theorized. And so they weren't; they were left unstudied and even untypologised.

It should not surprise us that progress was measured by advances in knowledge rather than material innovation. Prior to the eighteenth century, material advances were extremely gradual in their development and spread. The three major technological innovations before the eighteenth century — artillery, printing and ocean navigation — appeared slowly and had long gestation periods before they caught on.[119] Advances in technology "evolved unhurriedly" and were not really applied to everyday life until the mid-seventeenth century, and were not widespread (in a limited number of countries in Europe and its colonies) until a hundred years later.[120] Material life changed slowly; more significant changes throughout this period were in political, intellectual and spiritual life. Progress, therefore was measured by knowledge.

Progress measured by material advance is a radical departure, one which sets apart the modern from the pre-modern. We can identify the primacy of the material in the nineteenth century Victorian confidence in an evolutionary theory of progress. Progress was posed as a mastery of nature leading toward societal perfection. Progress was measured by advances in material progress as it might be produced and consumed by the masses. In 1864, Human history is described in these terms by Samuel Smiles (1812–1904):

---

118 This discussion is adopted from Kenneth Bock, "Theories of Progress, Development, Evolution" in *A History of Sociological Analysis* edited by Tom Bottomore and Robert Nisbet (London: Heinemann, 1978) pp. 39–79.

119 Fernand Braudel, *Capitalism and Material Life. 1400–1800*. trans. Miriam Kochan (NY, etc.: Harper & Row, 1973 [1967]) p. 285ff.

120 Braudel, *Capitalism...*, p. 321.

> The uncivilized man began with a stone for a hammer, and a splinter of flint for a chisel, each state of his progress being marked by an improvement in his tools. Every machine calculated to save labor or increase production was a substantial addition to his power over the material resources of nature, enabling him to subjugate them more effectually to his wants and uses; and every extension of machinery has served to introduce new classes of the population to the enjoyment of its benefits. In early times the product of skilled industry were for the most part luxuries intended for the few, whereas now the most exquisite tools and engines are employed in producing articles of ordinary consumption for the great mass of the community. Machines with millions of fingers work for millions of purchases — for the poor as well as the rich; and while the machinery thus used enriches its owners, it no less enriches the public with its products.[121]

For Smiles, technological advance is wedded to the democratization of consumption. His classically liberal portrait of gradual evolution whitewashes any sense of radical discontinuity or struggle in the incorporation of the "millions of fingers." Notice also how the liberal version rewrites pre-modern history, circumscribing any progression in metaphysical or spiritual enlightenment, to focus strictly on progress as material and technological innovation.

By the mid-nineteenth century, the speed of change wrought by technology is apparent with every generation.

Smiles writes of the industrialist and mill engineer, William Fairbairn, who confidently opined that

> the mechanical operations of the present day could not have been accomplished at any cost thirty years ago; and what was then considered impossible is now performed with an exactitude that never fails to accomplish the end in view.[122]

Confidence in innovation extended to views on agricultural practice as well. It was believed that "ancient agrarian habits, classed with Gothic buildings as barbarous, must be done away with if they had nothing but antiquity to commend them."[123]

---

121 Samuel Smiles, *Industrial Biography: Iron-Workers and Tool Makers* (1864) reprinted in Jan Goldstein and John W. Boyer (eds.) *Readings in Western Civilization: Nineteenth-Century Europe: Liberalism and its Critics* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1987) p. 91.

122 Quoted in Samuel Smiles, *Industrial Biography: Iron-Workers and Tool Makers* (1864) reprinted in Jan Goldstein and John W. Boyer (eds.) *Readings in Western Civilization: Nineteenth-Century Europe: Liberalism and its Critics* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1987) p. 92.

123 Marc Bloch, *French Rural History: An Essay on Its Basic Characteristics* Trans. Janet Sondheimer (Berkeley and Los Angeles, CA: University of California Press, 1966) p. 218.

The nineteenth century science of man exchanged the middle-ages' static chain of being[124] with the myth of individualistic social mobility. The Judeo-Christian teleological view of history was secularized. The movement of time into the future was seen as human evolution towards perfection, such that history itself was seen as progress.[125]

If God was invoked, it was not as an active agent in human affairs but as a remote inspiration for human ingenuity and human inventions. An American in 1876 articulates this view of the remote God inspiring active humans, conjoining human evolution and technological advance with a virtually secular millenarian edge:

The steam-engine, the spinning-jenny, the power-loom, the power-press, the sewing-machine...all these mechanical devices by which labor is saved and production increased, are provided for in God's design. They are part of his great work of development by which he is carrying the race forward to its perfect destiny.[126]

Apparently, God provided a great "design" which humans were left to carry out. God was released from any active role in human affairs.

A secularized millenarianism contains a schizophrenic lilt. This vision of progress relies on technical means and a rational method. This will be addressed in the next section.

JUDICIOUSNESS AND THE SYSTEMATIC PROCESS

What marks the modernizing mentality is a belief in a rational process leading toward ideal, transhistorical and universal meta-categories of meaning. The process of rationality relies on reducing complex things or events to their most basic component parts. Understanding the disassociated segments imputes to the analyst not only the ability to see through the haze of what always is

124 An image of the Great Chain is reproduced in Penelope J. Corfield's (ed.) *Language. History and Class* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1991) p. ii., with the following description: "The 'Great Chain of Being' was a powerful verbal and visual metaphor for a divinely instituted universal hierarchy. This illustration, from Valades' *Rhetorica Christiana* (1579) , shows the ordained ranking of all forms of higher and lower life – archangels, angels, humans, fowls, fishes, mammals, and plants – interlinked by a great chain held in the right hand of God, who reigns on high with Christ."

125 Edward Hallett Carr, *What is History?* (New York: Vintage Books, 1961) pp. 145–47.

126 Daniel T. Rodgers, *The Work Ethic in Industrial American: 1850–1920* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1979 [1974]) p. 70.

a jumbled, foggy social experience, but the ability to construct and reconstruct reality as he so chooses. Basic to this method is a shared belief in "a common measure of fact, a universal conceptual currency, so to speak, for the general characterization of things; and the *esprit d'analyse,* forcefully preached and characterized already by Descartes. Each of these elements is presupposed by rationality ... as the secret of the modern spirit."[127]

The conceptual weakness to this nineteenth century empiricism is that facts do not exist objectively, so to speak, but rather are social constructions. Therefore the errors in reducing complexities to fundamental facts is that no "fact" can be essentially itself. Paul Ricoeur provides a guide when he stakes off the process of individualization as the inverse of classification. A thing is only understood as intimately related to its conceptual *context*. Something which is individual "is [of] a type that is neither repeatable nor divisible without alteration."[128] Uniqueness is, however, ineffable. If something is truly distinct, then nothing else may denote it, and so it is, by itself, incomprehensible. Meaningful objects and the language which mediate them consist of their individual-ness *and* the concepts which bind them and have led us to see a distinct thing for itself: "We individualize only if we have conceptualized,"[129] and our classifying concepts are the irrevocable entre to knowing the thing. For anything to be understood, it must immediately stand apart but in relation to a world of things which are not it. Further, it cannot help but be mediated by language which immediately preempts unique-ness. Any self must be communicated; anything communicated must be mediated; anything mediated indicates its "others" in the same breath as it asserts its identity.

Thomas Kuhn makes a similar point with an illustration:

> The child who transfers the word 'mama' from all humans to all females and then to his mother is not just learning what 'mama' means or who his mother is. Simultaneously he is learning some of the differences between males and females as well as something about the ways in which all but one female will behave toward him. His reactions, expectations, and beliefs — indeed, much of his perceived world — change accordingly.[130]

---

127 Ernest Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1983) p. 21.

128 Paul Ricoeur, *Oneself as Another*. Trans. Kathleen Blarney (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1992) p. 28.

129 Ricoeur, p. 28.

130 Thomas Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (2nd. ed. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1970) p. 128.

Any designation automatically invokes (and creates) its "Others" in the same breath. It cannot be otherwise.

The evolution of this reasoning can be found in Claude Bernard (1813–1878), one of Comte's successors. Bernard formulates a scientific method for getting at the facts based on the dialectical tension between fact and theory. Experimentation is the key to "[t]he art of getting accurate facts by means of rigorous method [and] the art to working them up by means of experimental reasoning, so as to deduce knowledge of the law of phenomena."[131] The proper method is to observe the changes in a dependent variable in light of constant independent variables, to "compare facts and judge them by other facts used as controls."[132] He insists that piling facts on facts doesn't make a science: the crucial distinction between observation and experimentation is that experimentation requires *theory*.

For Bernard, the scientific goal is to discover constant laws. In his search, the observer always must be flexible enough to alter his theories when factual anomalies are discovered. Immutable, universal laws are still in place: "everything happens according to laws which are absolute, i.e., always normal and determined."[133] But our understanding of the manifestations of these immutable, universal laws is not fixed. Knowledge advances like a moving treadmill. Theories and facts reciprocally explain and refine each other, "and so come nearer and nearer to the truth."[134] The whole process moves forward and upward toward better understanding. While experimenters often artificially reproduce a natural condition so as to maintain control over their experiment, they also learn from "real experiments which are spontaneous, and not produced by" the experimenter.[135] Reality then becomes a subject for observation and manipulation.

Not to confuse the logic of Ricoeur with that of Bernard's nineteenth century positivism, it should be said that for Ricoeur, no immutable truth is necessary. Ricoeur places himself betwixt Descartes's certain positing of the self as the foundational source of knowledge of the other, and Nietzsche's contrary claim that all referents are equivoca and imbricated with each other, and so are ultimately self-referential. Ricoeur depicts the nature of the self and

---

131 Claude Bernard, *An Introduction to the Study of Experimental Medicine*. Trans. Henry Copley Greene (Henry Schuman, Inc., 1949) p. 13.

132 Bernard, p. 16.

133 Bernard, p. 10.

134 Bernard, p. 12.

135 Bernard, p. 10.

self-knowledge as attestation, and puts as primary the action of continual reaffirmation in a context of choice. For example:

> The reference of biblical faith to a culturally contingent symbolic network requires that this faith assume its own insecurity, which makes it a chance happening transformed into a destiny by means of a choice constantly renewed, in the scrupulous respect of different choices.[136]

That is, there is no and need not be any ultimate foundation for truth. And Ricoeur goes further still. Faith is only legitimate in light of inconstancy and insecurity. Faith is meaningless if we know there is an ultimate foundation of truth!

Ricoeur's position shores up the contrast with nineteenth century positivism. Post-modern philosophy no longer needs the surety of immutable truths for its foundation. It in fact thrives in their absence. To the contrary, Claude Bernard, like Smith, Marx and Weber, needed the assurance, and built into theory, the belief that the project of rational method was approaching a certain, definite, immutable truth.

We may summarize the key components of the positivistic method: 1) immutable, unknown laws exist; 2) experimenters manipulate reality to discover laws and, in the process, they harness known laws as constants for the discovery of other laws, and 3) fact and theory reciprocally bind each other in a scientific advance towards immutable truths.

This combination of rationalism and idealism is the paradox of nineteenth century Western visions of progress. It shows up in Social Darwinism, and Marx's theory of the falling rate of profit, the two topics considered next.

EVOLUTIONIONISM AND THE SOCIAL SCIENCES

The mechanism of social mobility and the quest for empire was typically addressed in light of Darwin's theories of natural selection,[137] where competition rewards the strong (good) traits and eliminates the weak (bad) ones. More than 200 years after Hobbes warned of stateless individualism, and eighty years after Adam Smith advocated the benefice of individualistic competition within

136 Ricoeur, p. 25.

137 *The Origin of Species* was first published in 1859.

a benign state, Darwin's ideas of competition were applied, notably by Herbert Spencer (discussed below), to social status within states, and to the differences between advanced v. primitive cultures.

Mid-Victorian philosopher Herbert Spencer, who in 1864 coined the phrase "survival of the fittest," opposed aid to the poor based on the argument that it would unduly preserve the weaker members of the human species.[138] He believed in a visible evolution of human history, which, with Adam Smith, government intervention could only impede. For Spencer, the whole universe obeyed the same laws of evolution.[139] Physical bodies and social organization co-evolved from decentralized, uniform, simple units to more concentrated but differentiated units, integrated into complex systems. In this evolution, the individual gains freedom, personality, and specialization within an increasingly complex society. Between 1860 and 1903, Spencer's books sold more than 360,000 copies in the United States alone.[140]

An ambivalence exists in social darwinism: what is the correct unit of analysis? The social darwinesque struggle might take place at the level of the individual, but it also might take place at the level of nations. It is for the latter reason that John Maynard Keynes wrote that "survival of the fittest" was a generalization of Ricardian economics.[141] Spencer's brand of social darwinism was discredited around 1900, in part because it was realized that rugged competition stood *with* cooperation, not instead of cooperation, as a valid and widespread social survival technique. It was also due to the realization that "natural selection" in general, but especially under capitalism, might select for some rather unsavory characteristics like cunning, ruthlessness, selfishness, etc.

Social darwinism proved a good analogy for economic competition among the burgeoning bourgeois of the nineteenth century. For the winners of economic competition, it reinforced their confidence that those who sat atop the social hierarchy were ipso facto superior to those lower down. For lesser competitors it gave them inspiration to struggle. As Robert Heilbroner argues, this ideology does not "'legitimate' activities that in fact the ruling class knows in

---

138 Raymond Williams, "Social Darwinism" in *Problems in Materialism and Culture* (London: Verso, 1980) p. 87.

139 see Roland N. Stromberg, *European Intellectual History Since 1789* 3rd ed. (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1981) pp. 135–140.

140 Stromberg, p. 135.

141 Stromberg, p. 136.

its heart of hearts to be wrong. It succeeds, rather, in offering definitions of right and wrong that exonerate the activities and results of market activity."[142]

Social darwinism provided a cultural referent as well. Britain's Folklore Society, founded in 1878, found their inspiration in the newly created discipline of anthropology, which in turn drew on social darwinism.[143] The urban middle classes began to find their own past in the rural peasants who seemed to escape the communications and industrial revolutions. It also placed Britain, and Europe in general, above those "primitive" countries at the fringes of its empires. That ethos was also evident in the United States, just coming into its own. The California Constitution of 1879 declared that "[N]o native of China, no idiot, insane person, or person convicted of any infamous crime... shall ever exercise the privileges of an elector of this State."[144] Racist policies naturally followed from social darwinism.

Implicit in nineteenth century social darwinism is how the new concept of time, discussed above in part II, is used in support of notions of the pre-modern as rural and primitive and the modern as urban and complex. This served to justify and legitimate empire.

Johannes Fabian has critiqued how moderns (Westerners) construct a *temporal distantiation* between themselves and the cultural other, when the other is patently coeval and contemporary.[145] This tendency reaches into the twentieth century. In 1920s Britain, "primitive" art from Africa was classified with children's art and the art of the insane. These three groups lack the mediation on sensibilities and expressive abilities that adulthood supposedly brings.[146] "Primitive" culture produced in "primitive" societies was posited by British anthropologists as an earlier stage in the evolution of civilization, despite the contemporaneous coexistence of the primitives with the rest of the world. The move to distance the relation between Europe and other cultures was elaborated as temporal back-dating. This same temporal back-dating occurs in the uneasy co-existence of industrialization, urbanity and rural life in Britain in the nineteenth century.

---

142 Heilbroner, p. 117.

143 David Vincent, "The Decline of the Oral Tradition in Popular Culture" in Robert D. Storch (ed.) *Popular Culture and Custom in Nineteenth-Century England* (London: Croom Helm, 1982) p. 23.

144 cited in Patricia Nelson Limerick, *The Legacy of Conquest: The Unbroken Past of the American West* (New York and London: W.W. Norton, 1987) p. 263.

145 Johannes Fabian, "Of Dogs Alive, Birds Dead, and Time to Tell a Story" in John Bender and David E. Wellbery (eds.) *Chronotypes: The Construction of Time* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1991) pp. 188–190.

146 Julian Stallabrass, "The Idea of the Primitive: British Art and Anthropology 1918–1930," *New Left Review* No. 183, Sept.–Oct., 1990) p. 96.

This temporal back-dating has been used in neo-classical economics to posit a dualism in the economy. "Modern" economies will supposedly update and absorb coeval "pre-modern" economies. The economic parallel to Fabian's critique of anthropological temporal backdating has been made in development theory by Andre Gunder Frank and developed more fully by Immanual Wallerstein. Uneven global development is a structural component of how modern capitalism works. There should be no mistaking an "underdeveloped" country as a "pre-modern" entity awaiting its economic "take-off." Industrial, semi-industrial and agriculturally dominant countries co-exist in the capitalist world-system. While it remains crucial to locate and understand autochthonous change and locally produced meaning, where cultural and economic exchange bridges the West and the non-west, ignoring coevolvness by asserting distinctions of "primitive" or pre-contemporary conditions preempts or elides the possibility of understanding how the pieces fit together as a unified system.

It is in this light that Wallerstein addresses the empiric drive of Europe in the late nineteenth century. His explanation for empire is to find cheaper labor:

> It is historically the case that virtually every new zone incorporated into the world-economy established levels of real remuneration which were at the bottom of the world-system's hierarchy of wage-levels. They had virtually no fully proletarian households and were not at all encouraged to develop them.[147]

Fully proletarian households require wages to provide for all of their needs, whereas semi-proletarian households do not. The latter can consequently work for less pay than the former. In light of labor shortages and urban socialist movements in Europe, capitalists went searching for more tractable workers in the periphery.

This view is contrary to Hobsbawm who suggests colonial expansion was driven instead by the search for markets (even though colonizers were ultimately unsuccessful in that pursuit).[148] Wallerstein's logic however is more convincing. European urbanization combined with a vertical integration and concentration of production created an urban proletariat. The character of

147 Immanuel Wallerstein, *Historical Capitalism* (London: Verso, 1983) p. 39.

148 Hobsbawm, *The Age of Empire*, pp. 66–68.

industrial urbanity means that more social relations are monetized. The commodification of social relations encroaches on norms of social reciprocity and other non-capitalistic means of support.[149] Full proletarianization in urban areas would tend to drive wages up, and so push capitalists to seek new labor markets on the empire's periphery. On the West's periphery, workers employ social relations to take care of what in the West would require filthy lucre, so capitalists benefit by operating on the periphery where they can pay lower wages.

The above discussion of the capitalist periphery provides a crucial insight in understanding how industrial/urban modernity employed a social darwinian construct to identify itself on the forward cusp of world history and how economic links universalized that history to encompass the globe. The doctrine of social darwinism justified unequal economic relations in the cities and in the empire.

149 This marketization of social relations is what Karl Polanyi has called the Great Transformation: "Instead of economy being embedded in social relations, social relations are embedded in the economic system." Polanyi, *The Great Transformation*. p. 57.

POSITIVISM

The mid-Victorian critic, Karl Marx, also employs a mix of scientific rationality and Utopian idealism. What follows is a detailed examination and critique of Marx's theory of the falling rate of profit.

Marx posits that any social formation is dialectically constituted by dominant production relations and their concomitant social relations. Contradictions between the material and the social spawn the seeds of socio-economic crisis and transformation. For example, Marx profiles a dialectic structure in the epochal transition from feudalism to capitalism:

> *Thesis*: Feudal Monopoly, before competition. *Antithesis:* Competition. *Synthesis*: Modern Monopoly, which is the negation of feudal monopoly, in so far as it implies the system of competition, and the negation of competition in so far as it is monopoly.[150]

For Marx, the bourgeoisie undermine feudalism as genuine revolutionaries, but under capitalism become conservative defenders of the status quo. The synthesis that is capitalism is an amalgamation, negation and transcendence of the previous thesis/antithesis. The synthesis constitutes a true evolution in history, a positive, progressive, idealist construct of historical development.

Marx's dialectic method — thesis + antithesis = synthesis — is adapted from Hegel. But Marx, to use his own phrase, has turned Hegel's logic on its head. Marx applies dialectics not as Hegel would to the evolution of ideology and consciousness, but to the material world. In revolutionary manner, Marx applies the dialectic onto his contemporary world. He posits bourgeois relations as the thesis, the proletariat as the antithesis, and projects the future development of a communist society as the negating, transcendent synthesis.[151]

---

150 Karl Marx, *The Poverty of Philosophy* (New York, NY: International Publishers, 1963 (1847, with corrections by Marx and F. Engels through 1892)) p. 151.

151 A nice critique of Marx's dialectics is given by Edmund Wilson, *To the Finland Station* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday Anchor Books, 1940) pp. 179–98.

Dialectics however, provides an a *priori* analytic structure. It employs deductive reasoning, deriving the particular from the general. However materialist Marx emphatically claims to be, his enquiry begins in the abstract realm of method. With theory in mind, Marx examines society knowing that he will find a thesis and its antithesis. The dialectic categories must be filled. When they are not filled, they remain open, waiting to be filled. Is Marx's positivistic method a fatal flaw to his theories? How can we know, for example, if a class as such exists until it demonstrates some sort of collective action? Moreover, if two unlikely groups, like Napoleon Bonaparte and the Parisian proletariat, were to ally themselves in the political sphere, how can we judge this social composition absent from an *a priori* theory of class polarization and false consciousness? We can't. This line of reasoning undercuts Marx's insistence that he derives his conclusion solely from the material world. In the case of social/economic classes, Marx's positivism projects social affinities which otherwise might remain obfuscated, but refuses to accept the legitimacy of alliances which cut across a theoretically imputed divide.[152] Marx's method, therefore, preempts a strict materialism. Moreover, the choice over what dialectical categories need to be filled is not merely an objective activity; Marx's method allows plenty of room for the dialectician to pick and choose the boundaries of his categories and what might go in them. The Marx of the *Communist Manifesto* — all "existing history is the history of class struggles" — is not positing a historically induced fact. West European feudal peasants were divided by language and logistics. Their common condition as a class cannot be derived from their collective behavior, for they had very little; what revolts and rebellions did occur were decentralized (albeit sometimes for similar structural reasons, e.g. land use and tenure).[153] It is Marx's a *priori* dialectic categories which unifies the peasants (and under capitalism, the workers) as a class, juxtaposed in contradiction to the elite aristocratic (or bourgeois) class. Marx deduces his conclusion from theory rather than inducing it from material relations.

---

152 Marx's insistence that the next epochal change must arise from the internal contradictions of production relations makes a class-based revolution the obvious choice for praxis. For a hundred years after *Das Capital*, this has unproductively turned serious Marxian analysis away from alternative social cleavages not necessarily grounded in the concept of class, but who's transformative agenda may very well change the nature of production relations, e.g. race, gender, nationalism, Islam.

153 As discussed above in Part I, later theorists have located the source of the transition from feudalism to capitalism in the city. Medieval cities were sites of relatively autonomous merchant activity, and as such, "represented a negation of the immobile patron-client ties of the feudal countryside." Ira Katznelson, *Marxism and the City* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992) p. 161.

Can we conclude then that Marx is not the ardent materialist he claims to be? Materialism does not consist solely of "objective" laws, but incorporates subjectivity from the idealism of dialectic theories. Marx's social/productive categories are derived from a positivistic method.

Analyzed as such, the dialectic method as Marx uses it is not an objective measure of social analysis, but rather contains an ideal vision for praxis. Marx posits the working class as such because he wishes to see the working class *for* such. Marx was actively engaged in political change. He wrote pamphlets, gave speeches and organized journals explicitly for the propagation of these ideas. After the disappointing initial public reception of *Capital,* Marx's daughter Jenny wrote:

> You can believe me that seldom has a book been written under more difficult circumstances, and I could write a secret history that would uncover an infinite amount of worry, trouble and anxiety. If the workers had an inkling for the sacrifice that was necessary to complete this work, written only for them and in their interest, they would perhaps show a bit more interest.[154]

However endogenous the forces in Marx's theory of historical change are, his own actions attest to his belief that human agents have a role in developing class consciousness and revolutionary change.[155] His method leads toward that end.

THE FALLING RATE OF PROFIT

How is it then that Marx derives a falling rate of profit? Is it simply his positivistic method seeking an antithesis to capitalism's economic growth? or do capitalism's strictly endogenous factors lower the rate of profit, pushing the system towards its inevitable Crisis, making way for a transcendent synthesis?

---

154 Jenny Marx to Kugelmann, *Briefe und Dokumente,* (ed. B. Andreas, Archiv *fur Sozialgeschichte,* 1962) p. 193, cited in David McLellan, *Karl Marx: His Life and Thought* (New York: Harper & Row, 1973) p. 353.

155 A similar and supporting argument regarding nations and nationalism has been developed by Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities* (London: Verso, 1983). Nations could only form *for* such because poets and newspapermen, revolutionaries and monarchs, had a *priori* recognized the possibility and, arguably, the efficacy for the nation as such. The French experience provided a model which could be pirated and adapted to match specific circumstances by would-be "social engineers."

Marx attempts to derive his argument from endogenous factors. I will argue that he fails in this pursuit. It is instead his dialectic method which suggests that the seeds of crisis should lie in precisely that which had marked capitalism's rise: capital accumulation.

Marx's technical argument for the falling rate of profit is derived from his formula for profit:

$$\text{rate of profit} = \frac{\text{surplus value}}{\text{constant capital + variable capital}} \quad \text{or} \quad \frac{s}{c + v}$$

or its equivalent expression: $\dfrac{s/v}{(c/v) + 1}$

S/v represents the exploitation of labor; c/v is the capital/labor ratio, also called the organic composition of capital, or value composition of capital.

From the formula, we can see that an increased rate of exploitation (s/v) would increase the profit rate. On the other hand, an increase in the intensity of constant capital (c) in the capital/labor ratio (c/v) would reduce the rate of profit. Marx argues that in the long run the rate of exploitation (s/v) can only increase at a diminishing rate because it would be stemmed by the social relations of production. You cannot exploit labor beyond the level of physical reproduction (especially when workers cannot be physically coerced to work, and even then it can only be a short term tactic). There is, however, no natural limit to an increasing use of technology (c). Therefore the key to the falling rate of profits must lie in the organic composition of capital (c/v).

Marx must therefore convince us that capitalists will substitute technology for labor almost indefinitely. That process would surely drive the rate of profit down, grinding capitalist growth to a halt, bringing on an economic and social crisis. Furthermore, dialectical reasoning would posit that the causes for crisis must be internal to the logic of capital. The organic rate of capital (c/v) is a predictable target for Marx. It embodies, at the point of production, the polarization of capital and labor. Marx's dialectical method steers him to argue the following irony: the capitalist drive toward economic growth would lead to economic stagnation and collapse. Does his argument succeed?

If we return to the opening pages of *Capital*, volume I, the circulation of the commodity form seems to hold the key to capitalism's growth and its stagnation. Individual firms prosper by circulating, as rapidly as possible, capital into

commodities and back again to capital. So long as the earning ratio (s/v) is greater than their cost ratio (c/v), firms prosper. Why do capitalists maximize capital at the expense of labor? First in Marx's reasoning is that technology increases productivity. Capitalists in competition with one another will wield innovations against the other in order to capture market share. In addition, capitalists hope that by raising their ratio of capital to labor, they will maximize profits by reducing their costs per unit of output. Machinery as "dead labor" (c) can be exploited fully by operating 24 hours a day; living labor (v) cannot. Capital investments do not need to be paid wages which cover the workers' (and their family's) clothing, food, housing, transportation (to which we might add health insurance and workers' paid vacation time), etc., and so capital absorbs less maintenance costs than people. Therefore more surplus value may be garnered from dead labor than from living workers. Furthermore, workers have voice, and the potential to organize and strike; capital investments are far more tractable. For these reasons combined, Marx argues, the more capital investment *vis a vis* competitors, the more relative profit can be accumulated by a firm. And so through his formula for the rate of profit, we can see that as the capital content (c) of the organic composition of capital (c/v) increases, the rate of profit actually decreases.

The crisis of capitalism occurs when the individual maximizing decisions of capitalists to raise the capital/labor ratio within their firms collectively undermines the viability of the demand market. Productive capacity increases at wild rates while no one has any cash to buy the products. Crisis ensues when idle capacity stands beside idle labor, all effective demand sapped by the economizing firms.[156]

Objections to this general argument abound. Aren't various strategies exercised to slow down the rising capital content of production? Marx certainly recognized various strategies to lessen the speed of a rising capital composition of production.[157] A growing reserve army of labor drives wages down, lessening the incentive for capitalists to replace labor with relatively expensive technology. This army may include cheap labor and even slaves in an expanding world-system, especially through colonialism. Planned obsolescence of capital also

156 James O'Connor charts this process historically, arguing that episodic crises are moments of proletarianization, transforming pre-capitalist and semi-capitalist labor (as well as capitalist wage labor strictly defined) into unemployed and underemployed labor reserves, which, it turn, fuel subsequent economic expansions. For O'Connor, these formulative crises should be distinguished from and are preliminary to the big Crisis, the demise of capitalism itself. James O'Connor, *Accumulation Crisis* (Oxford and New York: Basil Blackwell, 1984).

157 The discussion in David Harvey, *Limits to Capital* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982) pp. 166–89, clarifies this debate.

requires more goods to be produced; the capitalists to some extent are their own market (machines producing machines). The expectation of innovation adds to product obsolescence, making old technology relatively cheaper for "second-tier" but still competitive firms. Monopolists needn't limit their use of labor because their monopoly position presumably eliminates altogether the need to lessen costs and increase productivity *vis* a *vis* competitors. Despite all these tactics, Marx maintains, nothing can forever stave off the inevitable decline of profits.

A sober analysis must question the empirical validity of Marx's proposition. Empirically, it seems, Marx's formula relating values to each other is not easily transformed into market prices. Prices are said to gravitate around values but should not be taken as equivalents to value. This "transformation problem" has garnered much attention from Marxist as well as non-Marxian economists. I will sidestep that debate, and focus instead on an argument concerning the organic composition of capital. Specifically, the logic of capital itself suggests that the capital content (c) of the organic composition of capital (c/v) may stabilize and even decline in favor of labor content (v). If this is the case, the rate of profit would not necessarily decline, and an ensuing crisis may not be derived from the supposed falling rate of profit.

David Harvey introduces the concept of "socially necessary turnover time" to parallel Marx's "socially necessary labor time."[158] During the production process, the turnover time for invested capital to return as capital influences a firm's profitability. The faster a firm is able to turnover its capital *vis* a *vis* the social norm, the more total capital it is able to accumulate (in a year, holding all other factors constant). Harvey posits that the interest rate may be used as the turnover norm.

Each firm's ability to turn over its capital is influenced by its own internal division of labor. The more vertically integrated a production process is in a single firm, the longer it takes for any product to actually enter the market and fetch a return. The more divided a production process is among many firms, the faster each firm can get its product out on the open market. (This logic would split Adam Smith's rationalized pin factory into a metal pressing plant, a pinhead fitting plant, a pin packaging plant, etc.) The turnover time among smaller, flexible firms is much faster than large integrated firms. There is therefore a tendency under capitalism towards the division and acceleration of production processes.[159]

---

158 *Ibid.,* pp. 186–88.

159 An objection to Harvey's reasoning may be found in Oliver Williamson's assumptions regarding opportunism and uncertainty ("The economics of organization: The transaction cost approach," *American*

Smaller, flexible firms will tend to eschew expensive, inflexible capital investments. Therefore, their organic composition of capital (c/v) will tend to either stabilize or favor labor, which is more flexible and cheaper than a capital investment which might not even be used long enough to pay for itself. In short, Harvey provides a very Marxian analysis as to why the organic composition of capital will not unduly increase. He appeals to the very logic of capital and concludes, in opposition to Marx, that the rate of profit need not fall, and may indeed favor labor in the long run.

How is it then that Marx is confused on what appears to be a basic tendency of capitalist enterprise to specialize? Marx simply did not play his dialectic far enough into the future. Marx argued that technology under capitalism is a bundle of contradictions. The technology that liberates the worker from toil enslaves the worker to the machine's requirements; the technology which accelerates capitalist profitability later robs the capitalist of his market. What Marx did not foresee was that the speed of production and (effectively deskilling what labor remains). However, if all firms are required to integrate production to a certain extent to reduce their transaction costs, we might derive a "socially necessary integration level" (SNIL) of production processes, scaled perhaps to the average level of value-added per industry. This SNIL might be a lower limit to Harvey's suggestion of radical specialization. We would then have to investigate each industry empirically to know under what conditions the drive to specialization (which favors a concentration of labor) is dominant vis a vis the drive to integration (which would favor a concentration of capital). demand could accelerate so quickly that an individually maximizing capitalist might eschew capital intensity because it might actually impede profitability. Rather, "Marx definitely held massive technological reorganizations could only ever be 'enforced through catastrophes and crises.'[160] That argument satisfied Marx's idealism for epochal change toward the millennium. A decline in the rate of profit would have been a beautiful dialectical pairing to the historic capitalist profitability that had left feudal production in the dust (as it were). Marx's positivistic analysis led him astray, seeking elegancy and neatness in endogenous factors, however misconstrued.

Journal of Sociology 87 (3) : 548–77). Firms may have to integrate production processes for reasons outside the pure logic of capitalist accumulation, namely, to reduce transaction costs imposed by the uncertainty embedded in social relations. This would seem to support Marx's proposition, that firms will invest in labor-saving capital equipment to preempt the uncertainty of labor relations and circumvent the vulnerability of engaging in complex contracts

160 Harvey, L*imits to Capital*, p. 185 quoting Marx, *Capital*. vol. 2, p. 170.

SOCIETY

There is, however, a heuristic divide between economy and society. The material world provides our measure of advance, the ideological or super structural is cast as, alternately, a retardant, or a propellant, to human history but *not* the real thing. As we have seen, various nineteenth century voices can be found to articulate these theories in everyday life.

When such unanimity exists, one feels the temptation to box it, package it as a historical product, call it a done deal, and move on. The false choice between materialism and culture may be superseded by way of Max Weber. The kind of analysis Weber initiated, that in search of the sources of subjective meaning, has over the twentieth century turned into cultural analysis. The premise, as articulated by Raymond Williams, is that [W]e cannot separate literature and art from other kinds of social practice, in such a way as to make them subject to quite special and distinct laws. They may have quite specific features as practices, but they cannot be separated from the general social process.[161] How then, specifically, was culture viewed in nineteenth century analysis, and what would constitute a move beyond that view?

For Marx, culture plays a significant role in social reproduction. Marx maintains that people *daily* remake their own life.[162] There are three axes of everyday life:

1) production of material life (people must eat)

2) creation of new needs (historical propellant)

3) reproduction of men and social organization (family and culture).

The relation between two of the axes, 1) and 3) was, initially, described in positivistic terms as a *reflection,* from the material to the area where culture operated. What inspired the great divide between production and culture?

---

161 Raymond Williams, "Base and Superstructure in Marxist Cultural Theory" in *Problems in Materialism and Culture* (London: Verso, 1980) p. 44.

162 Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *The German Ideology* (International Publishers, 1947 [1846]) p. 17.

Marx was particularly eager to separate material production from social reproduction and emphasize the former because of the tradition he was reacting to. Religious theology and philosophical metaphysics had in Marx's view become a world of their own, without regard to material referents.[163] Why should we postpone addressing manifest injustice, inequality, and exploitation until an imagined afterlife? Marx, though he employed the notion of a dialectic movement between superstructure and base, leaned heavily on the latter to counteract the existing bias towards the former.[164]

Williams would re-shift the dialectic towards the area of culture. As he suggests,

> we are then less tempted to dismiss as super structural, and in that sense as merely secondary, certain vital productive social forces, which are in the broad sense, from the beginning, basic.[165]

Williams' voice is echoed, somewhat surprisingly, by Michael Burawoy, a much more traditional Marxist, who has worked in various factories and investigated African mines so as to study exploitation at the site of production. Burawoy would also like to see a recentering and transformation of Marx's base-superstructure model:

> It is no longer possible to hold that the 'base' is the arena of objectivity, of ineluctable laws, while the 'superstructure' is the arena of subjectivity, of political action that translates inevitability into reality. Base *and* superstructure are both arenas ofoobjectivity *and* subjectivity.[166]

This opens the door to examining the area of production as a sort of cultural stage, and the area of culture as a primary arena for the articulation of

---

163 This is the general tenor of Marx's scathing attack on Proudhon in *The Poverty of Philosophy*.

164 An older Friedrich Engels wrote to Joseph Bloch (September 21–22, 1890) : "Marx and I are ourselves partly to blame for the fact that the younger people sometimes lay more stress on the economic side than is due to it. We had to emphasize [sic] the main principle *vis-a-vis* our adversaries, who denied it, and we had not always the time, the place or the opportunity to allow the other elements involved in the interaction to come into their rights." *The Marx-Enqels Reader*. edited by Robert Tucker (New York: W.W. Norton, 1978) p. 762.

165 Williams, "Base and Superstructure in Marxist Cultural Theory," p. 35.

166 Michael Burawoy, *The Politics of Production* (London: Verso, 1985) p. 111.

power relations (formerly associated only with production relations). Burawoy can then conclude that "… olitics can no longer be reduced to state politics. Instead we find, for example, production politics, gender politics (in the family) and consumption politics (in the community)."[167]

We can combine the perspectives of Williams and Burawoy, though we must first dilute Williams' recommendation to incorporate cultural production into our notion of a material "base." That operation would destroy any heuristic value gained from a marxian historical materialism, which for sake of analysis considers separately the organization of production and other activities like child-rearing or cinema-going. These kinds of cultural activity become both cause and effect, symptom and progenitor of material change, and as an arena infused with politics as much as the social and production areas.

With the incorporation of culture into the analysis of historical change, we have moved beyond the bias of nineteenth century positivism. Now let us look back at the nineteenth century industrial society with new eyes. The advantage of this theoretical move, the one that will occupy the remainder of this paper, is that we can now look seriously at the culture of consumption, and the production of cultural constructions.

Ernest Gellner provides a starting point. He proposes an organizational, anthropological approach to human history that charts the co-evolution of cultural change and material change. He charts the evolution of human organization as a transition from Agraria to Industria.[168]

What happens to culture in this transition? A split develops between "folk" culture, wedded to the features of pre-modern Agraria, and "high" culture, wedded to modern Industria. Because the world is moving from autochthonous Agrarias to interdependent Industrias, various literate high cultures develop.

---

167 Michael Burawoy, p. ill.

168 The chart is based on Ernest Gellner, *Plough. Sword and Book: The Structure of Human History*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988, and Ernest Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1983. The chart should not be interpreted as a complete representation of Gellner's typology. I have chosen those features relevant for this paper. I would like to note incidentally that Gellner's analysis of historical evolution looks like a combination of Comte and Weber.

GELLNER'S TRAJECTORY OF PRODUCTION, SOCIAL ORGANIZATION AND COGNITION IN THE TRANSITION TO MODERNITY	
AGRARIA	INDUSTRIA
Agrarian production	Industrial production
Integrated economic and political spheres Autonomous communities	Differentiated economic and political spheres Interdependent society
Communication is context-bound An irrational cognition is widely held, but locally constituted and locally shared Illiterate	Communication is liberated from context Cognitive rationality is universally shared Literate
People are generalists	People are specialists
A priestly class exists	Every one is his own priest

As Gellner states:

> A modern society is inherently one in which a high culture becomes *the* culture of the entire community: dependence on literacy and formal education, the standardization of procedures and measures (in a broad as well as a literal sense), all require it. A style of production which is simultaneously innovative *and* involves the cooperation of countless, anonymous agents cannot function without shared, standardized measures and norms.[169]

The prospect for a single unifying Industria culture hangs in the air, though Gellner is skeptical that the globe could reach such a cultural consensus. Nevertheless, the various Industries do, in fact because of capitalism they must, interact, and so relatively autochthonous Industries grow toward each other up to the point where they reach irreconcilable differences.[170]

Within each of the various Industrias, claims Gellner, non-literate, agrarian-based folk culture is either lost or transformed into a cellophane-packaged shad-

169 Gellner, *Plough. Sword and Book*, p. 107.

170 Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism*, p. 118.

ow of its former self. Folk culture then, at least in the transition to Industria, gets translated as the repository of what is authentic about a people and a place, but becomes quaint and incompatible with the norm of interdependence and context-free communication of Industria. High culture, objectified from earthly moorings, becomes within distinct Industrias the great homogenizer, social leveler, and the currency that enables people who are buried in the ruts of specialization to ascertain, and incorporate in themselves meta-communal values.

In the essay thus far, we have examined nineteenth century theoretical and ideological formulations of human history and progress. Culture was etched out of their picture, or reduced to a secondary role. With the assistance of Weber, we have investigated a vision of progress that combined rational method with secular millenarianism. The historical analysis of the transition to modernity found that the actual organization of production was not only highly variable in its implementation, but that that differentiation needed to be explained. Gellner provides us with a high-folk typology of culture that accompanies the general transition to modernity and context-less communication and identity. What remains is a historical, empiricist look at some of the actual cultural production in this period. This can both test the trajectory of our (Gellner's) working theory and refine it.

Wendy Griswold employs a diagram to guide an analysis of cultural production and consumption.[171]

This "cultural diamond" is not a theory but rather is useful as an "accounting heuristic." It doesn't suggest the relations among the four points of the diamond, but it does suggest that cultural analysis is incomplete without speaking to all loci and the spokes that connect them. Furthermore, Griswold's own study of the London theatre examines the changing interaction among the four nodes over time, so the shape of the heuristic cultural diamond is actually an elongated diamond (a parallelepiped).The diamond is a conjunctural theory that considers, 1) the internal cohesion or contradictions within the cultural and material spheres taken separately, and 2) the relation between conclusions drawn from 1) to a more encompassing theory (ideology) arising from the milieu under consideration which claims to integrate both the material and culture, e.g. rationality or historical materialism. Both the actual configuration of cultural and material life matter, and the ways that people are thinking about those issues. two nodes on Griswold's diamond, "world" and "audience," have

171 "Wendy Griswold, *Renaissance Revivals: City Comedy and Revenge Tragedy in the London Theatre. 1576–1980* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1986) p. 8.

already been addressed in part, as the general trajectory of industrialization, urbanization, rationality, capitalistic institutions and a centralized state bringing the masses into the project of modernity. These two nodes will be further addressed in light of Gellner's high-folk split in culture. More attention however will be paid to the yet unaddressed areas of the cultural object and the artist. The latter will be investigated as a discussion of the idea and practice of cultural production. Following that will be a discussion of consumption.

CULTURE AND PRODUCTION

During the early stages of the transition to Industria, the "people" began to see folk culture as *their* culture, not just the natural way of living and not as everyone's culture.[172] In Britain, the study of popular culture began in 1777 with the widespread public reception of John Brand's *Observations of Popular Antiquities*.'[173] Brand viewed oral tradition as a polar opposite to the educated and literate polite society. The separation of "folk" from "high" culture[174], in Gellner's formulation, seems to be formalized in Britain at this time.

After 1831–35, class consciousness among the English working class is known and widely-shared.[175] Bellamy described 1887 Boston as segregated by class: "Each class or nation lived by itself, in quarters of its own. A rich man living among the poor, an educated man among the uneducated, was like one living in isolation among a jealous and alien race."[176]

Spatial distance turned to the kind of temporal backdating we discussed above in terms of empire. Peasants were endowed by Europe's intellectuals as 'the nation's most adequate representatives' on the grounds that the peasants were the least contaminated by foreign influences and the most in touch with the nation's distant past."[177] Popular culture, however was seen as wasteful,

---

172 Burke, p. 300.

173 David Vincent, "The Decline of the Oral Tradition in Popular Culture" in Robert D. Storch (ed.) *Popular Culture and Custom in Nineteenth-Century England* (London: Croom Helm, 1982) p. 22.

174 *Ibid*, p. 98.

175 Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class*, p. 87.

176 Edward Bellamy, *Looking Backward. 2000–1887* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1986 [1888]) p. 41.

177 O. J. Falnes, *National Romanticism in Norway* (New York: Faculty of Political Science of Columbia University, 1933) p. 55, cited in Peter Burke, "We, the people: popular culture and popular identity in modern Europe" in *Modernity and Identity*. edited by Scott Lash and Jonathan Friedman (Oxford, etc.:Blackwell, 1992) p. 297.

filthy, immoral and dangerous. This ambivalence towards folk culture appears in many guises. On the one hand, paintings of peasants proliferated. They were primarily nostalgic, realist representations and often the work of middle-class artists intended for a middle-class public.[178] On the other hand, there was the formal attempt at obliterating local culture: "In Breton schools at the end of nineteenth century, for example, the children were punished for speaking their native language at playtime."[179] In the 1840s playing football in Derby's streets was suppressed

> on the grounds that it led to 'moral degradation', 'the assembling of a lawless rabble', 'terror and alarm', and damage to property. The supporters of the 'rational recreation' movement suggested that the game be replaced by athletic sports outside the town or by a free railway excursion: in other words that it be displaced from the centre of the city, as if this was middle-class territory.[180]

This attempted suppression and redirection of cultural expression by a "rational recreation" movement provides some evidence for the characteristic of an objectified, rationally instrumentive cultural sphere. "High" cultural production becomes the domain of a new creature: the "heroic" artist.

In the transition from Agraria to Industria, the high-folk split in culture releases the artist from the weight of tradition. Artists can experiment. They now have the opportunity to consciously create new images. Indeed, culture becomes something more than the natural style in which one lives but becomes a thing objectified. Culture as an object could be manipulated. Experimentation in cultural production (like its analog in science, or in the organization of production) could address the effects of modernity on everyday life, and intervene in how everyday life was perceived by a growing number of urbanites brought directly into the modernist fold. Artists attempted to represent the new conception of time. Authors wrote with a moral mission. Theatre productions catered to a new urban working class. Historians wrote more populist histories. Architects employed rational design, and tried to conceal it with ornament. City planners tried to create rational, moral space. In short, artists could be heroic (or villainous) creators and purveyors of cultural

178 Thompson, p. 96.

179 Burke, p. 301, relying on P.-J. Helias, *Le Cheval d'orgueil.* Paris: Plon, 1976.

180 Burke, p. 303, relying on A. Delves in Yeo and Yeo *Popular Culture and Class Conflict.*

products intervening in modern, everyday life.[181] The following sketches of culture areas will investigate the heroic artist in his propagation of and often unabashed confidence in positivistic, scientific methods, sometimes infested with social darwinism, but always containing a Utopian idealism.

PAINTING/SCULPTURE

Michael Kammen traces the history of images, in sculpture and paintings, of Clio (the muse of history), memory and father time.[182] Kammen finds over the course of the nineteenth century both a dwindling in the production of such works and a transformation in their representation. The classic Greek Clio wears robes and carries standard accoutrements of pen and writing book. First separated from her nine compatriots, over the course of the nineteenth century she was variously disrobed, cast as a drunk[183], or as an American beauty.[184] Finally conflated with memory (Clio's mother) or father time, Clio was even sculpted carrying an hourglass, and in an irreverent twist, father Time has been cast as a woman.

The "faithfulness" to a classic Greek iconography of muses gave way to naturalist or realist renditions of concepts, and the production of new symbols for contemporary purposes. Where classical and medieval art was "the science *{ars sine scientia nihil est)* of constructing objects according to their own [internal, natural, objective] laws,"[185] this new art was both more expressive and experimental. Elihu Vedder's oil painting *Memory* (1870) depicts waves washing upon a shore. A faint silhouette of Clio's face looks down from amidst the clouds. John Sloan's etching of *Memory* (1906) depicts two couples sitting

181 "Artists, writers, architects, composers, poets, thinkers and philosophers had a very special position within this new conception of the modernist project. If the 'eternal and immutable' could no longer be automatically presupposed, then the modern artist had a creative role to play in defining the essence of humanity. If 'creative destruction' was an essential condition of modernity then perhaps the artists as individual had a heroic role to play...." David Harvey, *The Condition of Postmodernitv* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1980) p. 18.

182 Michael Kammen, *Meadows of Memory: Images of Time and Tradition in American Art and Culture*. Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 1992.

183 David Claypoole Johnston's *The Heavenly Nine* (1828) reprinted in Kammen, *Memory* p. 27.

184 Joseph Fagnani's *American Beauty Personified as the Nine Muses: Clio: Mrs. William M. Johnson* (1868–69) reprinted in Kammen *Memory* p. 34.

185 Umber to Eco, *Art and Beauty in the Middle Ages*, trans. Hugh Bredin (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1986 [1959]) p. 93.

at a kitchen table, each member of the party engaged in an act of memory: one is writing, another reading, a third is drawing and the fourth is looking wistfully off into space.[186] The naturalist tries to capture the mood of thoughtful reflection, the realist displays ways of remembering.

Daniel Chester French's beautiful statue of *Memory* (1886–1911) depicts a woman looking at a mirror reflecting behind her into space, behind her into the past. The woman herself is not memory, like Clio *is* history. The woman is engaged in the act of peering into the mists of time. The expressive activity evokes memory, in a way that the invocation of Clio *as* history cannot.

What characterizes the dilution of faith of the classic iconography of history? The notion that history as such must be personified has vanished. Artists instead attempt to capture either an abstract notion of the passage of time, as discussed above, or a realist/historical image of time and space as appeared in a new combination of landscape and historical painting.[187] Migrations westward, the intervention of the railroad, the technological evolution toward steam in water transportation, the escape from slavery — these themes take over history from Clio, and transform the static representation of time into a dynamic movement across space.

Roland Barthes' semiotic system[188] gives us a vocabulary to discuss the shift in imagery. Rather than replicating the iconic sign (Clio) to evoke the signified (a static concept of history) and signifier (woman with quill and book), artists searched for new signifiers to represent the passage of time. The conception of time (the signified) has fundamentally altered. History as an extra-temporal category has been set loose from its moorings. A mere semiotics is not enough however: this shift in imagery has historical content.

Why are old archetypes found wanting? What has happened to cause cultural representations to change so dramatically? The demise of faithful iconography in the nineteenth century United States seems to be a lingering reverberation of the longer trend in the break from archetypes and the ascendancy of a new, narrative time-consciousness and the aestheticization of egalitarian, everyday life.[189] American artist George Inness in 1878 faulted

---

186 Hristić, Lj. Antonijević D. Belgrade Graffiti: Anthropological Insights into Anonymous Public Expressions of "Worldview", Ethnologia Balkanica 10, 2006.

187 Kammen, *Meadows* pp. 55–121.

188 Roland Barthes, *Mythologies* (Trans. Annette Lavers, New York: Hill and Wang, 1972 [1957]) pp. 109ff.

189 Charles Taylor, *Sources of the Self: The Making of the Modern Identity*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1989.

European criteria of historical painting for "the influence upon us of what we have heard or read of things we have not seen."[190] Too much literary reference, not enough real life.

The new amalgam of historical/landscape painting often depicts anonymous figures, who embody more universally experienced conditions. A brilliant example is Frederic Remington's *The Fall of the Cowboy* (1895).[191] The oil painting depicts two cowboys in a winter scene. One is sitting atop his horse while the other has dismounted and is opening a gate. Barbed wire (invented 1874) extends from the gate back into the wintery distance. The image is one of fencing off the once open range, of rationalizing space, trivializing the cowboy's duties and negating his lifestyle. The "fall of the cowboy" is a symbol for the lost age of conquest giving way to the rationalization of space in the American west.

Although some of the most successful European art at this time was historical art, meticulously recapturing details in order to construct national pasts, avant-garde trajectories in European art at this time were, like the Americans, leaving behind archetypal referents in framing a more relevant, contemporary art.

French painter Jean-Francois Millet (1814–1875) left Paris after 1848 to the peasant village of Barbizon. There he painted many scenes depicting the everyday life of the peasant. Millet's was not a patronizing nostalgia of the rural past but a somewhat romantic, realist first hand look at peasant life. (His parallel in literature would probably be Emile Zola.)

The early modernist Edouard Manet (1832–1883) scandalized the Salon with his very nude *Olympia* (1863–5).[192] Manet based his painting on the sixteenth century artist Titian's *The Venus d'Urbino,* a reclining nude woman in classical adornment, but his too nude, obviously contemporary figure, was shocking in its deliberate intervention in classic convention.[193] Apparently eroticism was fine but only represented in classical garb. A similar but starker contrast held sway at the Chicago World's Fair. Full and half-covered classic nude sculptures respectfully adorned the White City grounds, but on the Midway where the exotic, unofficial art and populist stalls were located, actual semi-nude dancers created quite a scandal.[194]

---

190 cited in Kammen, *Meadows* p. 61.

191 Reprinted in Kammen, *Meadows* p. 97.

192 *Thames and Hudson Dictionary of Art and Artists* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1985) p. 209.

193 Harvey, *The Condition of Postmodernitv*. pp. 54–56.

194 Gilbert, p. 118.

A lesser known French painter, Gustave Caillebotte (1848–1894), was both a patron of impressionists and a painter of everyday life. His "best work was ... directly related to the modernization of Paris and ... among the Impressionists he (ironically the wealthiest) was the only one to produce major paintings whose subject matter was urban workers working.[195]

Later art explored beyond referents to the "real." Emile Bernard (1868–1941) , who heavily influenced Gauguin, advocated painting not things but the idea of things as it would imprint itself in one's memory.[196] Forget the insignificant details, retain the elemental form and the geometry of color. This shift away from a realist modernism, however, threatens the project of modernity, because images of ideas of things quickly lose relation to archetypal or even publicly accessible signifier systems. The danger of subjective solipsism brooded in French art, though it shared with American art the retreat from familiar (and as such outdated) symbols, relegating to such works the labels of nostalgia, romanticism or farce. The general trend away from familiar icons and towards a new realism and a new contemporary symbolism characterizes this period.

FICTION

In Britain, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, through his popular detective Sherlock Holmes, displays a full incorporation of a positivistic method linked to the Victorian prejudices of social darwinism.[197] Holmes relies on a logical process of abduction, reasoning backward from an effect to the cause.[198] Guiding his judgment is a conviction in regular laws which conform to social class (as well as gender or ethnicity). He leaps on clues that others ignore as irrelevant "because he has already formed a hypothesis that predicts the relevant evidence."[199] For example, in *Yellow Face*. Holmes can tell from a hat "not just the age and hair color but [a man's] foresight, his impoverishment, his moral decline, and his estrangement from his wife."[200] For Holmes, a man's calling is "plainly

195 Paul Overy, "The New Art History and Art Criticism" in A.L. Rees and Frances Borzello (eds.) *The New Art History* (Atlantic Highlands, NJ: Humanities Press International, 1988) p. 138.

196 Eugen Weber, *France. Fin de Siecle* (Cambridge, MA and London: Harvard University Press, 1986) p. 147.

197 Rosemary Jann, "Sherlock Holmes Codes the Social Body" *ELH* 57, 1990.

198 Jann, p. 685.

199 Jann, p. 688.

200 Jann, p. 691.

revealed" by his body — the shape of fingernails, clothing, etc. Of course this is less so for the higher classes who are "marked from the inside out, not by what they have done but by what they 'are.'"[201] External physiological clues for the upper classes are revealed in their features — suspicious eyes or a rat-face. Of course, these traits are heritable, theorizing that

> the individual represents in his development the whole procession of his ancestors, and that such a sudden turn to good or evil stands for some strong influence which came into the line of his pedigree.[202]

Laws of social class and biological inheritance are coded in the body, and they provide the linear logical leaps that Holmes is so famous for. Holmes is always correct in his informed guessing because, of course, Doyle writes it that way. Doyle provided a Victorian apologia and reinforcement for the belief that a person's moral character can be read from his physiology, and that physiology is tied to social class i.e. that hierarchical social orders are products of nature. H.J. Dyos tells us that "[w]hat the Victorian novel tried to do in fact was to redeem the city, to domesticate the unruly scene, to personalise the dreadful anonymity, to make a family of the crowd."[203] What Doyle does is make sense of the depersonalized crowd by subjecting them to a *priori* laws, so Sherlock Holmes knows who he's dealing with before he ever meets them, and the readers of detective novels feels they are in the know on the city streets.

Utopian (science) fiction is another nineteenth century literary genre expressive of the cultural traits we have identified in the transition from Agraria to Industria. Between 1890 and 1915, over one hundred Utopian novels were published in America.[204] Typically Utopian novels portray a technologically enhanced Darwinian evolution which propels human history toward a future ideal world where social relations have escaped the ills of urban industrialism.[205] Electricity, lighting, instant long-distance communication, fast travel — all in

---

201 Jann, p. 691.

202 *Empty House*, p. 494, quoted in Jann, p. 692.

203 H. J. Dyos, "The Victorian city in historical perspective," in *Exploring the Urban Past. Essays in urban history by H.J. Dvos*. Edited by David Cannadine and David Reeder (Cambridge, etc.: Cambridge University Press, 1982) p.

204 Neil Harris, "Utopian Fiction and its Discontents" in *Cultural Excursions: Marketing Appetites and Cultural Tastes in Modern America* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990) p. 150.

205 Raymond Williams, "Utopia and Science Fiction" *Problems in Materialism and Culture*. London: Verso, 1980.

their infancy at this period were projected into the future as an almost religious deliverance, though dangers existed too.

Edward Bellamy's best seller of 1888 is set in Boston in the year 2000, where technology has advanced so far that social inequalities have been eliminated; every citizen is guaranteed cradle to grave education and security. H.G. Wells' *War of the Worlds* (1898) projected a dystopia of technology with the invasion of Earth by Martians. In a "Darwinian twist," the Martians are defeated by microscopic germs, to which humans are immune because "by virtue of this natural selection of our kind we have developed resisting-power.[206] In Utopian novels scientific truth and technological achievement were often the cure, though sometimes a catalyst of social ills. We can read in these projections of Utopia (or dystopia) the strange modern mix of rationalism and idealism. They projected a secular millenarianism enmeshed in scientific method and discovery to fill a spiritual void created as science eclipsed religion in explanatory power over the future.[207]

THEATRE

Theatre was an area of where the democratization of cultural consumption by a new mass urban audience transformed the type of shows being produced.

In nineteenth century Britain, the middle-class abandoned the theatre to the working class. Managers of commercial theatres catered to the tastes of their new audience. Urban working-class theatre-goers "wanted such entertainments as "Lions! Tigers! Panthers! and Other Wild Animals in a State of Native Ferocity!" Like that of the courtly Restoration audiences of two centuries earlier, this audience's tasted may have been deplorable according to middle-class standards, but it got what it wanted.[208]

One voice unimpressed with the state of cultural production was that of Charles Pearson, formerly Minister of Education in the State of Victoria in Australia. In 1894, he wrote of Britain:

> Amusements in towns are not more intellectual than they were, but less so. The lecture has been killed by the book or newspaper. It is only an apparent

206 Edward Bellamy, *Looking Backward. 2000–1887*. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1982 [1888].

207 quoted in Asa Briggs, "Looking Forwards" in *The Collected Essays of Asa Briggs, Vol. II* (Brighton: The Harvester Press, 1985) p. 301.

208 Wendy Griswold, *Renaissance Revivals: City Comedy and Revenge Tragedy in the London Theatre. 1576–1980* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1986) p. 131.

> exception that the drama maintains itself in Paris, and that Ibsen [Pearson read Norwegian] has had a measure of esteem. The city music hall is not appreciably superior to the city tavern.[209]

A similar debasement of standards was happening in France. In Paris 1862, the Goncourt brothers described, apparently in a more positive tone, the libertinism at the Opera as "like a Stock Exchange dealing in women's nights."[210] In the planned company town of Pullman, Illinois, stage plays at the Arcade Theater were carefully scrutinized for moral content.[211] Admission prices were even subsidized to encourage attendance by the laborer-residents of the town, and to win them away from cheap theatres, as well as saloons and brothels, in the nearby city of Roseland.

HISTORY

The historian too could play a heroic role as an artist reconfiguring the past for the democratization of history. Writing in 1897, the first Professor of American History, Moses Coit Tyler, challenged the historiography based solely on the actions of "statesmen and generals...armies and armies." He wished instead to elevate writers, those unsung heroes, to the high places in history. "[M]ere writers" wrote Tyler,

> nourished the springs of great historic events by creating and shaping and directing public opinion during all that robust time; who ... wielded only spiritual weapons; who still illustrate.. .the majestic operation of ideas, the creative and decisive play of spiritual forces in the development of history, in the rise and fall of nations.[212]

Tyler was re-searching history to trace the effects literature had on "public opinion" during the American Revolution. The issue here is not whether newspapers did or did not effect the American Revolution — clearly they did — but

---

209 quoted in Asa Briggs, "Towards 1900: The Nineteenth Century Faces the Future" in *The Collected Essays of Asa Briggs. Volume II* (Brighton: Harvester Press, 1985) p. 295

210 Robert Baldick *Pages from the Goncourt Journals* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1984) p. 68, cited in Elizabeth Wilson *The Sphinx in the City: Urban Life, the Control of Disorder, and Women* (Berkeley, CA, etc.: University of California Press, 1991) p. 57.

211 James Gilbert, *Perfect Cities: Chicago's Utopias of 1893* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1991) p. 153.

212 Michael Kammen, *Selvages and Biases: The Fabric of History in American Culture* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1987) p. 238.

that a new historiography should arise at this time that emphasizes the gathering of mass support.[213] Tyler's project is to bring the masses into the making of history itself. Tyler believed that "'intellectual regeneration' was inseparable from moral regeneration." He was speaking about literature at the time of the revolution as much as he was about his own time.

CITY PLANNING

An exaggerated implementation of the principles of social darwinism tied with industrial organization and the control over social reproduction is evident in the planned company town of Pullman, Illinois. George Pullman had an artists' penchant for design.[214] His luxurious sleeper railway cars catered to every need of the middle class traveler. His Chicago office building had a restaurant and supposedly the facilities to house his 70 employees. He led some of the renovation and charity work after the Great Chicago Fire of Ill 1871.[215] His entrepreneurial spirit, his planning skills, and his moral vision finally coalesced in his own town, Pullman, IL, completed in 1884.

Grounded in a belief that architecture can be used to affect behavior, the town was designed (by Solon Beman) to instill discipline and to reform the slovenly habits of the industrial workers who built his luxury train cars:

> to prove to them [the worker-residents] that decency, propriety and good manners are not unattainable luxuries for them; that it is not necessary to be loosely or carelessly dressed in order to do good work, to save money, and to raise themselves in the social scale.[216]

Pullman was not just reforming behavior, but thought too:

> [Pullman] is a town ... where all that is ugly, and discordant and demoralizing, is eliminated, and all that inspires to self-respect, to thrift and to *cleanliness of thought* is generously provided.[217]

---

213 Michael Kammen, *Selvages and Biases*, p. 240.

214 George Pullman and his wife Harriet took French classes and painting classes. Gilbert, p. 156.

215 Guidebooks presented a trip to Chicago as a voyage into the future. The physical destruction of Chicago's history in the apocalyptic fire of 1871 and the quick rebuilding leant credence to this claim. Gilbert, pp. 57ff.

216 George Pullman to Paul de Rousiers quoted in Gilbert, p. 149.

217 This text is from a pamphlet distributed by the Pullman Company at the Fair, quoted in Trachtenberg, p. 225 (emphasis added).

Pullman had in mind nothing less than a mind and body purge for the industrial worker.

Architectural ornament — "French roofs, square roofs, dormer-windows, turrets, sharp points, blunt points," etc. — were used to disguise the planned uniformity of the industrial town.[218] One glance at the town's layout verifies the rational organization of housing, in its strict rows and rectangles.[219] A hierarchy in quality of housing matched the hierarchy on the shop floor, with the larger, more elaborate houses closest to the town center reserved for engineers and foremen.[220]

Provided in the town were arcades for shopping (paralleling the growth of the department store[221] in downtown Chicago — Pullman played cards with Marshall Field), 30,000 trees and shrubs, a model sewer system, a bank, a (morally scrutinized) theatre, a library etc. The town was marked by the conspicuous absence of bars, prostitution houses, dance halls, cheap theatres, orphanages, etc.

The extrusion of the latter social spaces, activities suitable for comparison to Foucault's or Bataille's investigations of societal marginal's and taboos, should suggest the inherent failure in such a Utopian trajectory. "Vice" cannot be surgically removed nor repressed indefinitely. An outlet will be found if one is not provided for. In 1897, Bishop Henry C. Potter "told a New York City church group that the saloon and the strike were understandable reactions to the "mechanicalization" of the workingman that was turning him "into a simple idiot."[222] Pullman's Utopian attempt to design the organization of production and social reproduction failed in part because his plan ignored human needs that could not be legislated away.

This point was not entirely lost on Pullman. It surfaced in a hypocritical policy towards alcohol. Alcohol was strictly prohibited except in the swank

---

218 Richard T. Ely (an economist inspecting the planned industrial town of Pullman) cited in Trachtenberg, p. 224.

219 A bird's eye perspective drawing of the town in 1881 is reproduced in Gilbert, pp. 132–133.

220 Gilbert, p. 151.

221 Alan Trachtenberg states that "the department store stood as a prime urban artifact of the age, a place of learning as well as buying: a pedagogy of modernity. From meager beginnings before the Civil War — when only a few city merchants included more than one line of goods in the same establishment — the true department store, with its variety of factory-made goods offered for sale under the same roof, arose in the 1870's and 1880's, pushing aside the small specialty shop as the major form of downtown retailing." Alan Trachtenberg, *The Incorporation of America: Culture & Society in the Gilded Age* (New York: Hill & Wang, 1982) p. 131.

222 Daniel T. Rodgers, *The Work Ethic in Industrial America. 1850–1920* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1979 [1974]) p. 68.

Florence Hotel located in the center of town where Pullman often entertained his guests. Laborer-residents were prohibited from entering the hotel, and further, laborers caught with alcohol were banished from the community (like Adam and Eve from the garden?). The implication is that wealthy visitors may partake of the fruits of labor. Laborers must sweat it out until they rise above their station. This double standard lies at the core of Pullman's Utopian vision, and much of nineteenth century thought: success on the Darwinian ladder must be earned by the (Protestant) practice of self-denial and aesthetic austerity. Only then have you earned the right to enjoy a full life. Pullman failed to understand that an imposed abdication of luxury preempts the individual's autonomous decision to lead a moral life. Having a moral framework in which to orient one's future behavior is different from obeying rules that prescribe and proscribe one's behavior.

Pullman's plan smacks of social darwinism turned social engineering: if the architecture was just so, and the city was arranged just so, then the people (re) produced in these controlled conditions would be just so. Not trusting even his own program at moral reform, Pullman refused to sell any of the lots fearing "the introduction of the baneful elements."[223] Central planning meant that inhabitants did not and could not provide for themselves. They were provided for, and consequently, "Nobody regard[ed] Pullman as a real home."[224] Add the element of spectacle — in 1893 alone Pullman had 10,000 *foreign* visitors[225] — and this experimental fishbowl becomes the modern archetype: an ideally motivated form stripped of content, embodying the strained mix of rationality and idealism, the (vain) hope that a mechanistic application of reason to city form will subtend moral behavior. Pullman's project ultimately failed with his own death in 1894, after labor agitation and strikes had disappointed his secular idealism. His effort epitomizes what Michel de Certeau has called the Concept-city, which "is simultaneously the machinery and the hero of modernity."[226] Modernity posits the city planner as heroic (villainous) artist.

City space as a contested terrain of modernity also presented itself in nineteenth century Paris. Architect Georges-Eugene Haussmann (1809–1891) combined the authority of empire and the productive capabilities of industry.

---

223 Hristić, Lj. Antonijević D. Belgrade Graffiti: Anthropological Insights into Anonymous Public Expressions of "Worldview", Ethnologia Balkanica 10, 2006.

224 Ely quoted by Trachtenberg, p. 224.

225 Gilbert, p. 135.

226 Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*. Trans, by Steven F. Rendall (Berkeley, Los Angeles and London: University of California Press, 1984) p. 95.

Beginning around 1840–42, but accelerating after Napoleon Ill's coup d'etat of December 2, 1851, Haussmann's architectural interventions gave Paris the look of linear order and coherence: "The newer streets ... are like monumental valleys cutting through the undifferentiated fabric of the old neighborhoods."[227] 350,000 people were displaced in the effort, "deliberately designed to destroy the old popular culture of riots and barricades."[228]

One of the key structural features of Haussmann's Paris is in the contrasting urban and anti-urban styles.[229] The rustic, exotic suburban architectural style outside of Paris contrasted sharply with the uniformity and monumentality of apartment style within Paris. The monumentality of city living spaces rivaled even monuments, reducing the latter's stature by removing any contrast they might have posed to unimposing city spaces.

Popular dissatisfaction crystallized in the failed Paris Commune of 1871. Among other things, the Commune had instituted a moratorium on rental payments. This target is significant because rent is the source of commodified urban space which was gradually ousting the working classes from the city center.[230] The subsequent large scale massacre of between 20,000 and 30,000 Parisians reveals the victor in this struggle over the control of city space. All the Haussmann buildings destroyed in the confrontation were later rebuilt in identical fashion.[231]

CULTURE AND CONSUMPTION

As we have seen, changes in cultural production are tied to modernizing movements which both propel and are encouraged by the general phenomena of bringing the masses in. But what of the practice of consumption?

Implied in a discussion of the trajectory of material organization is that structures *impose* culture- Consumption typically is described as the tail end of the accumulation cycle of production, distribution, exchange and consumption.

---

227 Francois Louer, *Paris Nineteenth Century: Architecture and Urbanism* (Trans. Charles Lynn Clark, New York: Abbeville Press, 1988) p. 351.

228 Peter Burke, "We, the people: popular culture and popular identity in modern Europe" in *Modernity and Identity*, edited by Scott Lash and Jonathan Friedman (Oxford: Blackwell, 1992) p. 304.

229 Louer, p. 340.

230 David Harvey, "The Urban Face of Capitalism" in John Fraser Hart (ed.) *Our Changing Cities* (Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1991) p. 58.

231 Louer, p. 373.

And yet, for Marx consumption is in an inescapable, dialectical pair with production.[232] Anything "produced" — that is, nature transformed by humans — which is unconsumed is unfulfilled as a commodity in the circulation of capital. An object unconsumed is, in essence, not produced at all:

> Consumption produces production in a double way, (1) because a product becomes a real product only by being consumed... [e.g.] a house where no one lives is in fact not a real house ... [and] (2) because consumption creates the need for *new* production.[233]

But in this dialectic, as in the dialectic of material/social, Marx leans toward attributing primacy to the area of production. Production no longer satisfies so-called "natural" needs but creates *new* needs to justify further production.[234] Production is the historical propellant of new needs, because under capitalism production, not consumption, requires the incessant circulation of capital.[235] In a Marxist formulation, consumption is secondary and so consumers are typically characterized as passive recipients.

Like Marx, Gellner too implies a passive kind of consumption. The high-folk divide in culture would suggest that adopting any of the modern forms of communication or representation would fall into the "high" category. "High" denotes an irreducible connection to the modern features of Industria. Widespread dissemination of print-media implies a modern rationality.

But what if formally folk traditions employ the advances of Industria to sustain them, but without the ambition to become high cultures themselves? Is not "local," oral (folk) culture a permanent form, always coexisting with more encompassing traditions — not in spite of them, but positively, to address the local questions and needs that only local culture can? And, a deeper question, if 100,000,000 people "consume" the same cultural object, have they experienced the same experience? The answer must be "no" because people bring their own histories to bear. Production does not simply impose singular lessons on consumers in an instrumental way. If that is true, then does a "centralized," "homogenized" industrial culture really conjoin all comers into the

---

232 Karl Marx, *Grundrisse* in *The Marx-Enqels Reader* 2nd ed. edited by Robert C. Tucker, New York: W.W. Norton, 1978, p. 228.

233 Marx, *Grundrisse*. p. 229.

234 Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *The German Ideology* (International Publishers, 1947 (1846)) p. 17.

235 Karl Marx, *Capital* Vol. I (New York: International Publishers, 1967) Chs. 2–4.

same project of modernity? In short, the practice of cultural consumption is a puzzle that needs to be investigated.

Opposing Gellner's formulation of Industria's homogenizing trend of high culture, Patrick Joyce maintains that local and regional dialects have proven staying power.[236] Local identities make themselves felt through the language which villagers speak among themselves, and, once print-media is introduced, by constituting the market for broadsheets written in local dialects.

Language as a loci of identity is complex. It is not strictly a mark of class separation (e.g. the upper classes speak French amongst each other) because dialects may also constitute an inter-class bond, coagulating around localities and regions. Joyce finds that "the contexts out of which dialect literature emerged were never exclusively proletarian,"[237] and this "local, provincial press [in the North of England] from around the 1850's also represented a *distancing from* the centers of privilege and metropolitan cultural domination."[238] Cultural consumption does not imply a capitulation to modernity nor a dissolution of dialect that Gellner would suggest. Instead, the market for consumption is regional, that is, spatial, based on shared history and a pre-industrial oral culture which has adopted and adapted to literacy and print-media.

The presumption of "high" culture is that speaking in dialect implies ill-bred, uneducated, or under cultivated rabble. This view was certainly present among those in London, but, argues Joyce, social scientists should not confuse this view with a general trend toward the homogenization of high culture. While it is true that the political economy of the British empire centered on the City of London, cultural production in the British North counties remained self-consciously local. The producers of almanacs and holiday circulars written in dialect were hugely successful: "by 1877 there were forty dialect almanacs currently published... The most famous of these, John Harley's *Halifax Illuminated Clock Almanac,* was selling 80,000 annually by 1877, and continued its unbroken run until after World War II."[239] The circulation of ideas carried in the Almanac must be much greater than 80,000 because such almanacs and broadsheets were often shared or passed on, and many were read to the illiterate in pubs and other meeting places.

---

236 Patrick Joyce, "The People's English: Language and Class in England c. 1840–1920" in Peter Burke and Roy Porter (eds.) *Language. Self, and Society; A Social History of Language.* Cambridge, England: Polity Press, 1991.

237 Joyce, p. 162.

238 Joyce, pp. 187–68, emphasis added.

239 Joyce, p. 163.

Successful authors were constrained to take on the mantle of the dialect in order to speak to the people. In this way pre-literate, oral forms guided the development of successive literate culture; it constrained authors by conferring authenticity on the use of dialect. Language could also be manipulated to confer legitimacy: "When the [labor] unions wished to mount a mobilization of popular opinion around a particular issue it was to dialect, and the cartoon form, that they turned."[240] The print-media heralded as the great homogenizer could be subverted to protect and extend the longevity of diversity; likewise the emerging consumer market for the printed word, itself a product of industrialization, favored those products that would preserve their (folk) self-identity in print.

Okay, so old country dogs could learn new tricks. What of cultural consumption in capitalistic cities, themselves a product of modernization? Eric Hobsbawm shows the resiliency and persistence of local identification in "great" cities in later-industrial Britain.[241] Neighborhood identities arose where neighbors shared similar work and living spaces. They articulated their identity in their fervent support for local football teams (which remains strong to this day.) Further, large cities could contain many "regional" accents. In George Bernard Shaw's *Pygmalion,* Professor Higgins "claimed that he could tell which part of London a speaker came from by their accent."[242] True or not, it must have been conceivable to residents.

Local identification within much larger cities are also evident in nineteenth century parades, themselves a product of modernization.[243] Parades as cultural rites typically allow the ordinary person to deck himself out in ribbons or sashes signifying group affiliation. So adorned, a multiplicity of groups would march through their city's principal streets on display before the anonymous masses. Parades would allay tension, especially ethnic tension, by allowing everyone to participate. As Ryan notes, "[t]he genius of the parade was that it allowed the many contending constituencies of the city to line up and move through the streets without ever encountering one another face to face..."[244] Parades are a cultural rite that serve as a double bridge, among

240 Joyce, p. 165.

241 Eric Hobsbawm, "Labour in the Great City," *New Left Review*. 166: Nov.–Dec. 1987.

242 Hobsbawm, "Labour in the Great City," p. 44.

243 Mary Ryan, "The American Parade: Representations of the Nineteenth-Century Social Order" in Lynn Hunt (ed.) *The New Cultural History*. Berkeley, Los Angeles and London: University of California Press, 1989.

244 Ryan, p. 137.

the sometimes antagonistic local (ethnic) identifications and between each group and the anonymity of the large city.

A third contrasting caricature of modern culture holds that the characteristic of truly modern cities is not of collective culture but a collective dislocation. Cities are full of strangers: "we observe bits of the 'stories' men and women carry with them, but never learn their conclusions; life ceases to form itself into epic or narrative, becoming instead a short story, dreamlike, insubstantial or ambiguous...."[245]

Austrian novelist Robert Musil (1890–1942), through his narrator, tells us to ignore the specificity of 1913 Vienna because all big cities are alike in their cacophony of perceptions:

> Like all big cities, it consisted of irregularity, change, sliding forward, not keeping in step, collisions of things and affairs, and fathomless points of silence in between, of paved ways and wilderness, of one great rhythmic throb and the perpetual discord and dislocation of all opposing rhythms, and as a whole resembled a seething, bubbling fluid in a vessel consisting of the solid material of buildings, laws, regulations, and historical traditions.[246]

Where many standard (bourgeois) novels (like Conan Doyle's, discussed above) provided an antidote to feelings of dislocation caused by the disease or alienation borne of fragmented relations for the urban mass, Musil's story, and others — James Joyce's Ulysses is usually taken as the archetype — represents, explores, and even celebrates the multiple, often discordant and nonsensical strands of modern life. Chicago novelist Henry Blake Fuller wrote in the 1890s of the city as a jumble of incongruities and contradictions. It is at once smart and shabby, trim and slovenly. The permanent and the temporary stand face to face; the massive and the flimsy exist side by side; the grandiloquent future elbows the discredited past; the high and the low are met together in a union aggressively, vociferously, repellently picturesque.[247]

This jumble of images did not sit well with everyone. Mental disorder in cities was not uncommon. One study by Paris and Dunham, *Mental Disorders in Urban Areas*, found that "paranoid schizophrenia was concentrated in the

---

245 Elizabeth Wilson, "The Invisible Flaneur," *New Left Review* No. 191, Jan./Feb. 1991) p. 107.

246 Robert Musil, *The Man Without Qualities*. Trans, by Eithne Wilkins & Ernst Kaiser. London: Seeker & Warburg, 1953 [1930].

247 Hristić, Lj. Granice kao kulturni konstrukt. Mitološki arhetip Američkog Zapada, Filozofski fakultet – Odeljenje za etnologiju i antropologiju, Belgrade, 2012.

rooming-house districts of the city," hypothesizing that the "social isolation of the rooming-house district is conducive to schizophrenic withdrawal."[248] They also studied the hyperbolic juxtaposition of hotel-life, where the closest physical proximity is paired with the largest social distance in order to maintain privacy.[249] Faris and Dunham's conclusions echo uncomfortably of instrumental rationality: the city is chaotic, so of course the brains' of city-dwellers will be chaotic. Nevertheless, dislocation seems a common experience of everyday modern city life.

We have just sketched three readings of modern cultural consumption: rural regional cultural persistence, neighborhood culture within cities, and the cultural chaos of cities. It is the strength of Gellner's formulation that he can capture these three reactions to modernity as a linear trajectory toward modern life. It is a weakness that Gellner presupposes the trajectory of modernity, and thus cannot account for the persistence of legitimate "folk" forms in "modern" clothing, except to say that they are phony and will eventually die off.

PASSIVE CONSUMPTION AND THE CULTURE INDUSTRY

A similar reading of top-down transformation has been developed by theorists of the Frankfurt school, Max Horkheimer and Theodor Adorno. Horkheimer and Adorno reflect on the culture industry as an attempt to create a "hegemonic mass consumption". Theirs is a derisive attack on popular, mass culture, condemning the practice of turning cultural production into an industry.[250]

In a bleak reading of modernity, Horkheimer and Adorno describe the powerlessness with which men encounter the cultural artifices in their world. For them, the modern state strips people of all creativity. Culture becomes an industry, subject to the laws of capitalist growth. Like other industries, the hierarchically organized culture industry concentrates power among the few at the top, and disseminates a watered-down, main-streamed product to the masses.

---

248 Maurice Robert Stein, *The Eclipse of Community. An Interpretation of American Studies* (Princeton, New Jersey. Princeton University Press, 1960) p. 41.

249 Hristić, Lj. Granice kao kulturni konstrukt. Mitološki arhetip Američkog Zapada, Filozofski fakultet – Odeljenje za etnologiju i antropologiju, Belgrade, 2012.

250 Max Horkheimer and Theodor W. Adorno, *Dialectic of En1iqhtenment*. Translated by John Cumming. New York: Herder and Herder, 1972 [1944].

The commodification of culture poses an obvious risk: culture holds a special place as a repository of history, ethics, aspirations and shared identity. When cultural artifices flow as commodities, the logic of profit supersedes ethics. Indeed, planned obsolescence is a plus for profiteering, so cultural products are designed with a short half-life, or else they are constantly reinvented and repackaged for future sale. A further danger lies in the fact that the lack of profit potential for many cultural expressions will mean their demise. If something is not for sale, it is not legitimate. Cultural idiom becomes subject to the streamlined, sanitized and vapid productions of the culture industry. Horkheimer and Adorno's portrait of the culture industry relies on the assumption of cultural consumption as a passive activity:

> The man with leisure has to accept what the culture manufacturers offer him. Kant's formalism still expected a contribution from the individual, who was thought to relate the varied experiences of the senses to fundamental concepts; but industry robs the individual of his function.[251]

Are Gellner and Horkheimer and Adorno accurate? Surely they are correct in underlining a top-down approach for the delivery of culture. But as the argument based on Joyce's study of dialect shows, top-down culture is but one half of the story. Analysis of culture must take utilization as a distinct but related sphere of social and production relations.

ACTIVE CONSUMPTION

Mass consumption could be viewed as "an Achilles' heel of capitalism."[252] The actual consumption of commodities occurs outside of direct relations of production. This field of social reproduction, though controlled by capitalists in intense situations like company towns or under some versions of fascism, by and large provide a space for resistance. Workers can curtail their consumption, or prioritize their utilization by criteria other than lowest price (e.g. steer clear of buying from business with bad labor practices, or "Buy American"). Consumption can be an act of self-affirmation and self-identity. Such a cultural use of consumption need not be "resistance" per se, but can also be seen as

---

251 Horkheimer and Adorno, p. 124.

252 James O'Connor, *Accumulation Crisis* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1984) p. 152.

having political aspects.[253] Undeniably, it has been theorized that the enormously rapid pace of changing tastes for commodities has forced industry to choose strategies of "flexible accumulation," such as versatile machinery and small batch lots, to keep pace.[254]

It is overstated to cast the modern individual as stripped of access to the realm of creative identification and representation, punctured under the heel of capitalist imperatives. This is only one facet of the modern dialectic, where the social process of production destroys the autonomy of the self. Adorno himself seems to have recanted a bit from such a one-sided view:

> the culture industry undeniably *speculates* on the conscious and unconscious state of the millions towards which it is directed... the culture industry itself could scarcely exist without *adapting to the masses.*[255]

And further still, there are certain technologies which by their character require self-affirmation. The telephone, mark Horkheimer and Adorno, "allowed the [user] to play the role of the subject."[256]

Utopian socialist Ivan Illich has formulated a concept which embodies Horkheimer and Adorno's critique of an enfeebling industrial society but also allows that a field of inspiration exists under capitalism in the use of "tools of conviviality":

> An individual relates himself in action to his society through the use of tools that he actively masters, or by which he is passively acted upon. To the degree that he masters his tools, he can invest the world with his meaning; to the degree that he is mastered by his tools, the shape of the tool determines his own self-image. Convivial tools are those which give each person who uses them the greatest opportunity to enrich the environment with the fruits of his or her vision. Industrial tools deny this possibility to those who use them and they allow their designers to determine the meaning and authority.

---

253 Hristić, Lj. Ričard Merser Dorson – Institucionalizacija i internacionalizacija američke nauke, Etnoantropološki problemi, Beograd, No.2, 2006.

254 David Harvey, *The Condition of Postmodernitv*, Part II, esp. ch. 11.

255 Theodor Adorno, "Culture Industry Reconsidered," *New German Critique*. 6, Fall 1975, 17 (italics added) quoted in James O'Connor, *Accumulation Crisis* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1984) pp. 159–60, n. 19.

256 Hristić, Lj. Ričard Merser Dorson – Institucionalizacija i internacionalizacija američke nauke, Etnoantropološki problemi, Beograd, No.2, 2006.

expectations of others.[257] Though Illich denounces the standards of industrial society — the faith that growth is good, more is better, technology cures all ills, specialization and rationalization of production makes life better, increased velocity of transportation and communication facilitate human relations — he sees in the contemporary condition the possibility for creativity, and the measured reassessment of the benefice of industrial institutions as the springboard toward convivial living.

Michel de Certeau advocates an even more far-reaching approach to remedy top-down views of the passive consumer. De Certeau considers the socialscape of daily life as the locus of power relations where consumption is *active*, and autonomous to the intentions of producers.[258] Consumers utilize "tactics of consumption, the ingenious ways in which the weak make use of the strong [which] lend a political dimension to everyday practices."[259]

De Certeau examines the practice of reading as a typically misunderstood act.[260] Reading is not inert acceptance of an author's intention. A text permits for an indefinite plurality of meanings. Readers inscribe connotation to texts, which after all, are only repositories for verbal sign systems existing outside of the text (and independent of the author). Additionaly, readers interpret multiple texts, inscribing meaning as they go, and employing those texts in an active way as a part of their everyday life:

> readers are travelers; they move across lands belonging to someone else, like nomads poaching their way across fields they did not write, despoiling the wealth of Egypt to enjoy it themselves.[261]

In the practice of active consumption, meaning is inscribed on objects alienated from their productive origins. A context-free "market" of meaning is reachable to the active consumer. This parallels our former analysis of the active producer, our heroic artist, who imposes meaning through the act of creation. Production, as an act of emancipation from tradition, destroys any instrumental links to tradition. Consumption, as a process of inscribing meaning, liberates itself from the intent of producers.

---

257 Ivan Illich, *Tools for Conviviality* (Berkeley, CA: Heyday Books, 1973) p. 21.

258 De Certeau, pp. xii–xxiv.

259 De Certeau, p. xvii.

260 De Certeau, pp. 165–176.

261 De Certeau, p. 174.

On the side of subjectively constructed meaning, people internalize locally-produced awareness arising from immersion in an environment they had no hand in creating.[262] It is beyond false consciousness because, though the tools one possesses have been provided, what one does with such apparatus is not predetermined.

On the side of objectively constructed meaning, the instrumental, cogent functioning of structures imposes its reasoning on receptive individuals. This was the examination outlined for in Part II as the positivism of the nineteenth century, and this sort of instrumental reasoning justifies the discussion of historical capitalism in Part I. There should be no uncertainty that structures are important, but a cultural analysis must be included for a sufficient understanding of the modern life-world.

262 Pierre Bourdieu and Terry Eagleton, "Doxa and Common Life" *New Left Review* No. 191, Jan.–Feb. 1992.

MODERNITY AND A POST-MODERNISM

The indeterminacy of subjective, cultural consumption and objective, material manufacture goes to the heart of questions of modernity. Modernity is contradictory. Modernity encompasses notions of static and flux. It is ahistorical and historical. It is a mixture of knowledge and (romantic) idealism. Sociologist Georg Simmel accepts the perceptible opposition of relativism and absolutism in the following formula:

> admit that our knowledge may have somewhere an absolute norm, a supreme authority that is self-justifying, but that its content remains in constant flux because knowledge progresses and every content attained suggests another which would be more profound and more appropriate for the task....[263]

The condition of modernity is that "amazing diversity of visions and ideas that aim to make men and women the subjects as well as the objects of modernisation."[264] We gain uniqueness through (subjective) self-narration *and* our existence unfolds through the (objective) causally-connected unfolding of events.[265] The new time-consciousness of capitalism allows us to summon archetypes as referents, and juxtapose atemporal models with a present in constant flux.

Of the culture of modernity, Marshall Berman writes that

> [a]lthough it has embraced the world horizons of modern capital, it ends up subverting capitalism not necessarily because it sets out to (though it frequently does), but simply because, as an array of 'spiritual creations', it cannot

---

263 Georg Simmel, *The Philosophy of Money* (edited by David Frisby, Translated by Tom Bottomore and David Frisby, 2nd edition, London: Routledge, 1990 [1900, 1907]) p. 104.

264 Peter Osborne, "Modernity is a Qualitative, Not a Chronological, Category" *New Left Review* (No. 192, March/April, 1992) p. 68, citing Marshall Berman's *All that is.*

265 Taylor, pp. 287–89.

help expressing values radically opposed to the profit-and-loss calculus of the bourgeois bottom line.[266]

The simplified juxtaposition amid culture and the material is a false avenue of conjecture. The case that "spiritual creations" will challenge capitalistic rationality is overstated because it underestimates how closely enmeshed the rationality of capitalism is with a spiritual idealism. Historical capitalism is not simply the disenchantment of Agraria, but a re-enchantment of everyday life in the context-free, lingua franca of modernity. For Gellner, the transition to modernity transforms production from the act of moving Solid Melts into Air. things to the practice of manipulating meaning.[267] This may be so, but the exploitation of meaning is ultimately a local, folk act. If as Serif Mardin has said, "terms are like coins," they are not spent on any metaphysical plane of social structure but in one's everyday life.

What I have treated as a modern dialectic of objectivity/subjectivity, Sakai underlines as a dialectic of universalism and particularism.[268] Sakai notes that the two sides of the twosome require each other because they expose each other's weaknesses in an effort to conceal their own.[269] What makes Sakai's comment significant is that his critique is leveled at the putative unity of metaphors – the "West" and "Japan" – that in fact mask complex internal dynamism. The concepts "culture" and "material" as they have been examined in this paper may also be considered in a class of masking metaphors, and so we may adapt Sakai's analysis of modernity to the material-culture dialectic. Both the "West" and "Japan," according to Sakai, are particularisms in search of subjugation of all other particularities in their own universal terms.[270] The unitary, active "self" here transcends borders of states, consequently evading the limitations that might be imposed if the subject was figured merely as a self-contained, reified nation-state. The "West" is perceptibly an empiric term. But the concept of Japan too is greater than any physical borders because it still contains echoes of the Great East Asian Coprosperity Sphere, signifying the pursuit for an overarching Asian culture of food, dress, language, demeanor, etc. Also, in

---

266 Hristić, Lj. Antropologija folklora u delu Ričarda M. Dorsona, Belgrade, Srpski genealoški centar, 2009.

267 Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism*, pp. 32–33.

268 Naoki Sakai, "Modernity and Its Critique: The Problem of Universalism and Particularism" in Masao Miyoshi and H. D. Harootunian (eds.) *Postmodernism and Japan*. Durham, NC and London: Duke University Press, 1989.

269 Hristić, Lj. Antropologija folklora u delu Ričarda M. Dorsona, Belgrade, Srpski genealoški centar, 2009.

270 Sakai, p. 113.

the same way metaphors like the "West" or "Islam" subsume distinction — Japan's universalism works as a myth motor, mobilizing the otherwise differentiated multitudes in large-scale opposition to empiric others.

Sakai's critique invokes reified metaphors to bash the concept of a reified "West." One might think that a strategy more appropriate to unravel the reified straw-man would be to get at its constituent parts and substitute a differentiated mosaic for the image of a unified West. That, however, would be the mission of rational reformists (or apologists) articulating the language of cultural hegemony in the guise of a critique. Sakai has something more drastic in mind.

What Sakai advocates instead is an orthogonal opposition. He posits that the act of resisting is an vital partner to domination,[271] because it acknowledges one's pairing with one's oppressor, thus implicating one in one's own supremacy. In support of this idea, Sakai favorably cites Takeuchi describing the doctrine of Lu Xun:

> Resistance comes from a deeply rooted fear of the will to represent everything, the will essential for modern subjectivity. Lu Xun exemplifies a desperate effort to resist subjectivity, to resist subjection to subjectivity, and finally to resist subjection to the subject. ... The slave must refuse his slave identity, but at the same time, he must refuse the dream of liberation as well.[272]

True resistance must discard expectation, because hope requires a subject. To transcend the avenues of resistance constructed by one's oppressor, one must not only be deeply aware of one's situation, but one must be prepared to live without a dream and without a plan.

Sakai's resistance without resistance, therefore, places the determined denial of subjectivity (an oxymoron?) as the negation and transcendence of modernity's subject/object cage. The making of the identity is *not* in terms of one's other, nor in spite of one's other, but indifferent to one's other's subjectivity. Sakai's projected transcendence of the modern dialectic of universalism/particularism (or object/subject) rests on prioritizing a consciousness arising from locally identified truths and experience which are indifferent to

---

271 This sentiment echoes Foucault's observation that a general condemnation of censorship is a consequence and a prisoner of the already existing coercive discursive structure to publicly confess/privately conceal what otherwise might not be politicized. (Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality. Volume I; An Introduction*, trans. Robert Hurley (New York: Vintage Books, 1978 [1976]) *passim*.)

272 Sakai, pp. 119 and 120.

claims of transhistorical, universal truths, because subjectivity is, not denied, but merely absent.

What are the inferences of Sakai's postmodern reading of resistance? Sakai suggests that overcoming the dialectic of slavery/liberation (read: Universalism/particularism) necessitates a cancellation and transcendence of both terms, i.e. a change in consciousness about one's everyday life.

Is a transformation in consciousness a sufficient signal for the end of oppression? If we subsist the life of a slave, but we resist thinking about slavery or liberation, are we any less a slave? Recoiling into itself, ceasing to mark the oppressive social/economic regime as a source for anxiety, a postmodern critique claims to effectively reconstruct the objective (material) status quo by changing what one thinks concerning the (subjective) status quo. Not quite able to escape my own immersion in the trappings of subject/object modernity, I do not find any objective difference linking what Sakai calls "transcendence of the terms of one's oppression" and resignation to one's situation.

Sakai's search for a post-modernism as a change in consciousness might be better viewed as truly false consciousness.[273] While I agree that subjective survival strategies are significant in elucidating the meaning of daily life, the willful transformation of subjective meaning as a coping instrument and as a latent form of rebellion is a false consciousness to the extent that it purposefully de-politicizes its form of activity while claiming to circumvent the coercion of the (objective) socio-economic structure. We must not lose sight of the objective, structural conditions of material organization, and the oppression that can arise from it. A change in consciousness is absolutely essential for dealing with the afflictions of modern life, but an alteration in consciousness is an element of the modern project, not its negation. Post-modernism remains entrenched in the modern vision of the "progress" of the culture of social and economic relations.

273 See Georg Lukacs *History and Class Consciousness; Studies in Marxist Dialectics* (Trans. Rodney Livingstone, Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1968 [1922]) pp. 50–51.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Abercrombie, Nicholas, Scott Lash and Brian Longhurst, "Popular representation: recasting realism," Scott Lash and Jonathan Friedman (eds.), *Modernity and Identity*. Oxford: Blackwell, 1992.

Anderson, Benedict. *Imagined Communities*. London: Verso, 1983.

Anderson, Perry. *Lineages of the Absolutist State*. London: Verso, 1974.

Barthes, Roland. *Mythologies*. Trans. Annette Layers, New York: Hill and Wang, 1972 [1957].

Bellamy, Edward. *Looking Backward, 2000–1887*. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1986 [1888].

Bendix, Reinhard. *Kings or People. Power and the Mandate to Rule*. Berkeley, etc.: University of California Press, 1978.

Berman, Marshall. "Why Modernism Still Matters," Scott Lash and Jonathan Friedman (eds.) *Modernity and Identity*. Oxford and Cambridge, MA: Blackwell, 1992.

Bernard, Claude. *An Introduction to the Study of Experimental Medicine*. Trans. Henry Copley Greene. Henry Schuman, Inc., 1949.

Bloch, Marc. *French Rural History: An Essay on Its Basic Characteristics*. Trans. Janet Sondheimer. Berkeley and Los Angeles, CA: University of California Press, 1966.

Bock, Kenneth. "Theories of Progress, Development, Evolution," *A History of Sociological Analysis*. Edited by Tom Bottomore and Robert Nisbet. London: Heinemann, 1978.

Bourdieu, Pierre, and Terry Eagleton, "Doxa and Common Life," *New Left Review*. No. 191, Jan.–Feb. 1992.

Braudel, Fernand. *Capitalism and Material Life. 1400–1800*. Trans. Miriam Kochan. New York, etc.: Harper & Row, 1973 [1967].

Braudel, Fernand. *The Identity of France. Volume II: People and Production*. Trans. Sian Reynolds. New York: Harper Collins, 1990 [1986].

Briggs, Asa. "Looking Forwards" in *The Collected Essays of Asa Briggs. Vol. II*. Brighton: The Harvester Press, 1985.

Briggs, Asa. "Towards 1900: The Nineteenth Century Faces the Future" in *The Collected Essays of Asa Briggs. Vol. II*. Brighton: Harvester Press, 1985.

Burawoy, Michael. *The Politics of Production*. London: Verso, 1985.

Burke, Peter. "We, the people: popular culture and popular identity in modern Europe" in *Modernity and Identity*. Edited by Scott Lash and Jonathan Friedman. Oxford: Blackwell, 1992.

Carr, Edward Hallett. *What is History?* New York: Vintage Books, 1961.

Cohen, Jean L. and Andrew Arato. *Civil Society and Political Theory*. Cambridge, MA and London: MIT Press, 1992.

Colley, Linda. "Whose Nation? Class and National Consciousness in Britain, 1750–1830," *Past and Present*. No. 113, Nov. 1986.

Corfield, Penelope J. (ed.). *Language. History and Class*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1991.

Craig, Gordon A. *The Politics of the Prussian Army. 1640–1945*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1964.

Crossick, Geoffrey. "From gentlemen to the residuum: languages of social description in Victorian Britain" in Penelope J. Corfield (ed.). *Language. History and Class*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1991.

De Certeau, Michel. *The Practice of Everyday Life*. Trans, by Steven F. Rendall. Berkeley, Los Angeles and London: University of California Press, 1984.

Duby, Georges. *The Three Orders: Feudal Society Imagined*. Trans. Arthur Goldhammer. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980 [1978].

Dyos, H.J. "Railways and housing in Victorian London," *Exploring the Urban Past: Essays in Urban History by H.J. Dyos*. Edited by David Cannadine and David Reeder. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982.

Dyos, H.J. "The Victorian city in historical perspective," *Exploring the Urban Past. Essays in urban history by H.J.* Dyos. Edited by David Cannadine and David Reeder. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1982.

Eco, Umberto. *Art and Beauty in the Middle Ages*. Trans. Hugh Bredin (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1986 [1959].

Fabian, Johannes. "Of Dogs Alive, Birds Dead, and Time to Tell a Story" in (eds.) John Bender and David E. Wellbery, *Chronotypes: The Construction of Time*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1991.

Foucault, Michel. *The History of Sexuality, Volume I: An Introduction*. Trans. Robert Hurley. New York: Vintage Books, 1978 [1976],

Geertz, Clifford. *The Interpretation of Cultures*. Basic Books, 1973.

Gellner, Ernest. *Nations and Nationalism*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1983.

Gellner, Ernest. *Plough. Sword and Book: The Structure of Human History*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988.

Geras, Norman. "Bringing Marx to Justice," *New Left Review* No. 195, Sept./Oct. 1992.

Gilbert, James. *Perfect Cities: Chicago's Utopias of 1893*. Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1991.

Gramsci, Antonio. *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*. Edited and translated by Quintin Hoare and Geoffrey Nowell Smith. New York: International Publishers, 1971.

Griswold, Wendy. *Renaissance Revivals: City Comedy and Revenge Tragedy in the London Theatre. 1576–1980*. Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1986.

Hareven, Tamara K. "Synchronizing Individual, Family, and Historical Time" in John Bender and David E. Wellbery (eds.) *Chronotypes; The Construction of Time*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1991.

Harris, Neil. "Great American Fairs and American Cities: The Role of Chicago's Columbian Exposition," *Cultural Excursions; Marketing Appetites and Cultural Tastes in Modern America*. Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1990.

Harris, Neil. "Utopian Fiction and its Discontents," in *Cultural Excursions: Marketing Appetites and Cultural Tastes in Modern America*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990.

Harvey, David. "The Urban Face of Capitalism" in John Fraser Hart (eds.). *Our Changing Cities*. Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1991.

Harvey, David. *The Condition of Postmodernity*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1980.

Harvey, David. *The Limits to Capital*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982.

Heilbroner, Robert L. *The Nature and Logic of Capitalism*. New York and London: W.W. Norton, 1985.

Hobsbawm, Eric. "Labour in the Great City," *New Left Review*. No. 166, Nov.–Dec. 1987.

Hobsbawm, Eric. *Nations and Nationalism Since 1780*. Cambridge, etc.: Cambridge University Press, 1990.

Hobsbawm, Eric. *The Age of Empire. 1875–1914*. New York: Vintage, 1987.

Hobsbawm, Eric. *The Age of Revolution. 1789–1848*. New York: Mentor, 1962.

Holton, R. J. *Cities. Capitalism and Civilization*. London: Allen & Unwin, 1986.

Horkheimer, Max and Theodor W. Adorno. *Dialectic of En1ightenment*. Translated by John Cumming. New York: Herder and Herder, 1972 [1944].

Hristić, Lj. Antropologija folklora u delu Ričarda M. Dorsona, Belgrade, Srpski genealoški centar, 2009.
Hristić, Lj. Antonijević D. Belgrade Graffiti: Anthropological Insights into Anonymous Public Expressions of "Worldview", Ethnologia Balkanica 10, 2006.
Hristić, Lj. Granice kao kulturni konstrukt. Mitološki arhetip Američkog Zapada, Filozofski fakultet – Odeljenje za etnologiju i antropologiju, Belgrade, 2012.
Hristić, Lj. Ričard Merser Dorson – Institucionalizacija i internacionalizacija američke nauke, Etnoantropološki problemi, Beograd, No.2, 2006.
Illich, Ivan. *Tools for Conviviality*. Berkeley, CA: Heyday Books, 1973.
Jann, Rosemary. "Sherlock Holmes Codes the Social Body" *ELH* 57, 1990.
Joyce, Patrick. "The People's English: Language and Class in England c. 1840–1920" in Peter Burke and Roy Porter (eds.) *Language. Self, and Society; A Social History of Language*. Cambridge, England: Polity Press, 1991.
Kammen, Michael. *Meadows of Memory: Images of Time and Tradition in American Art and Culture*. Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 1992.
Kammen, Michael. *Selvages and Biases: The Fabric of History in American Culture*. Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1987.
Katznelson, Ira. *Marxism and the City*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992.
Kern, Stephen. *The Culture of Time and Space: 1880–1918*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1983.
Kiernan, Victor. "Modern Capitalism and its Shepherds," *New Left Review*. No. 183, Sept.–Oct. 1990.
Kuhn, Thomas S. *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*. (2nd. ed.) Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1970.
Landes, David S. "Debate: The Ordering of the Urban Environment: Time, Work and the Occurrence of Crowds, 1790–1835," *Past and Present*. No. 116, August 1987.
Limerick, Patricia Nelson. *The Legacy of Conguest: The Unbroken Past of the American West*. New York and London: W.W. Norton, 1987.
Louer, Francois. *Paris Nineteenth Century: Architecture and Urbanism*. Trans. Charles Lynn Clark. New York: Abbeville Press, 1988.
Lukacs, Georg. "Reification and the Consciousness of the Proletariat" in *History and Class Consciousness*. Trans. Rodney Livingstone. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1971.
Marglin, Stephen A. "What Do the Bosses Do? The Origins and Functions of Hierarchy in Capitalist Production" in Anthony Giddens and David Held (eds.) *Classes. Power, and Conflict: Classical and Contemporary Debates*. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1982.

Marx, Karl and Friedrich Engels. *The German Ideology*. New York: International Publishers, 1947 [1846].

Marx, Karl. "The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Napoleon" in *The Karl Marx Library. Volume I: On Revolution*. Edited and translated by Saul K. Padover. New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1971.

Marx, Karl. *capital* Vol. I. New York: International Publishers, 1967.

Marx, Karl. *Grundrisse*. in *The Marx-Engels Reader*. (2nd ed.) Edited by Robert C. Tucker. New York: W.W. Norton, 1978.

Marx, Karl. *The Poverty of Philosophy*. New York: International Publishers, 1963 [1847].

McLellan, David. *Karl Marx: His Life and Thought*. New York: Harper & Row, 1973.

McNeil, William H. *The Pursuit of Power*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982.

Moore, Jr., Barrington. *Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy: Lord and Peasant in the Making of the Modern World*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1966.

Morgan, Edmund S. *Inventing the People: The Rise of Popular Sovereignty in England and America*. New York and London? W.W. Norton, 1988.

Mumford, Lewis. *The City in History*. New York: Harcourt, Brace Jovanovich, 1961.

Musil, Robert. *The Man Without Qualities*. Trans, by Eithne Wilkins & Ernst Kaiser. London: Seeker & Warburg, 1953 [1930].

O'Connor, James. *Accumulation Crisis*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1984.

Osborne, Peter. "Modernity is a Qualitative, Not a Chronological, Category," *New Left Review*. March/April, 1992.

Overy, Paul. "The New Art History and Art Criticism" in A.L. Rees and Frances Borzello (eds.). *The New Art History*. Atlantic Highlands, NJ: Humanities Press International, 1988.

Pirenne, Henri. *Medieval Cities: Their Origins and the Revival of Trade*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1969 [1925].

Polanyi, Karl. *The Great Transformation: The Political and Economic Origins of Our Time*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1957 [1944].

Polanyi, Karl., et al. *Trade and Market in the Early Empires: Economies in History and Theory*. Chicago: Henry Regnery Company, 1971 [1957].

Quaini, Massimo. *Geography and Marxism*. Trans. Alan Braley. Totowa, NJ: Barnes & Noble Books, 1982.

Ricoeur, Paul. *Oneself as Another*. Trans. Kathleen Blarney. Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1992.

Rodgers, Daniel T. *The Work Ethic in Industrial America. 1850–1920*. Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1979 [1974].

Ryan, Mary. "The American Parade: Representations of the Nineteenth-Century Social Order" in Lynn Hunt (ed.) *The New Cultural History*. Berkeley, Los Angeles and London: University of California Press, 1989.

Sabel, Charles and Jonathan Zeitlin, "Historical Alternatives to Mass Production: Politics, Markets and Technology in Nineteenth-Century Industrialization", *Past & Present* No. 108, August 1985.

Sakai, Naoki. "Modernity and Its Critique: The Problem of Universalism and Particularism" in Masao Miyoshi and H.D. Harootunian (eds.) *Postmodernism and Japan*. Durham, NC and London: Duke University Press, 1989.

Schuyler, David. *The New Urban Landscape: The Redefinition of City Form in Nineteenth-Century America*. Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986.

Sewell, William H. Jr., *Work and Revolution in France: The Language of Labor from the Old Regime to 1848*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980.

Simmel, Georg. *The Philosophy of Money*. London and New York: Routledge, 1990 [1907].

Sirianni, Carmen. "The Self-Management of Time in Post-Industrial Society" in *Working Time in Transition: The Political Economy of Working Hours in Industrial Nations*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1991.

Smiles, Samuel. *Industrial Biography: Iron-Workers and Tool Makers* (1864) reprinted in Jan Goldstein and John W. Boyer (eds.) *Readings in Western Civilization: Nineteenth-Century Europe: Liberalism and its Critics*. Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1987.

Smith, Adam. *The Wealth of Nations.* Edited by E. Cannan. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1976 (1904).

Stallabrass, Julian. "The Idea of the Primitive: British Art and Anthropology 1918–1930," *New Left Review*. No. 183, Sept.–Oct., 1990.

Stein, Maurice Robert. *The Eclipse of Community: An Interpretation of American Studies*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1960.

Storch, Robert D. "Introduction: Persistence and Change in Nineteenth-Century Popular Culture," Robert D. Storch (ed.) *Popular Culture and Custom in Nineteenth-Century England*. London: Croom Helm, 1982.

Stromberg, Roland N. *European Intellectual History Since 1789*. (3rd ed.) Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1981.

Taylor, Charles. *Sources of the Self: The Making of the Modern Identity*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1989.

Thames and Hudson Dictionary of Art and Artists. London: Thames and Hudson, 1985.

Thompson, E.P. "Time, Work-Discipline, and Industrial Capitalism," *Past and Present*. No. 38, 1967.

Thompson, E.P. *The Making of the English Working Class*. New York: Vintage Books, 1966 [1963].

Tilly, Charles. *Coercion. Capital, and European States. AD 990–1992*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1992.

Trachtenberg, Alan. *The Incorporation of America: Culture & Society in the Gilded Age*. New York: Hill & Wang, 1982.

Vance, Jr., James E. "Human Mobility and the Shaping of Cities" in *Our Changing Cities* edited by John Fraser Hart. Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1991.

Vincent, David. "The Decline of the Oral Tradition in Popular Culture" in Robert D. Storch (ed.) *Popular Culture and Custom in Nineteenth–Century England*. London: Croom Helm, 1982.

Wallerstein, Immanuel. *Historical Capitalism*. London: Verso, 1983.

Weber, Eugen. *France. Fin de Siecle*. Cambridge, MA and London: Harvard University Press, 1986.

Weber, Max. *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* Trans. Talcott Parsons. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1958 [1904–5].

Williams, Raymond. "Base and Superstructure in Marxist Cultural Theory" in *Problems in Materialism and Culture*. London: Verso, 1980.

Williams, Raymond. "Social Darwinism," in *Problems in Materialism and Culture*. London: Verso, 1980.

Williams, Raymond. "Utopia and Science Fiction," in *Problems in Materialism and Culture*. London: Verso, 1980.

Williamson, Oliver E. "The Modern Corporation: Origins, Evolution, Attributes," *Journal of Economic Literature*. Vol. XIX, December 1981.

Williamson, Oliver. "The economics of organization: The transaction cost approach," *American Journal of Sociology* 87 (3): 548–77.

Wilson, Edmund. *To the Finland Station*. Garden City, NY: Doubleday Anchor Books, 1940.

Wilson, Elizabeth. "The Invisible Flaneur," *New Left Review*. No. 191, Jan./Feb. 1991.

Wilson, Elizabeth. *The Sphinx in the City: Urban Life, the Control of Disorder, and Women*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1991.

Wood, Gordon S. *The Creation of the American Republic 1776–1787*. New York and London: W.W. Norton & Company, 1991

CIP – Каталогизација у публикацији
Народна библиотека Србије, Београд

316.7

HRISTIĆ, Ljubomir, 1976–

Politics of Culture and the Modernity : society and change / Ljubomir Hristić. – Beograd : Institut društvenih nauka, 2014 (Beograd : Službeni glasnik). – 91 str. ; 24 cm

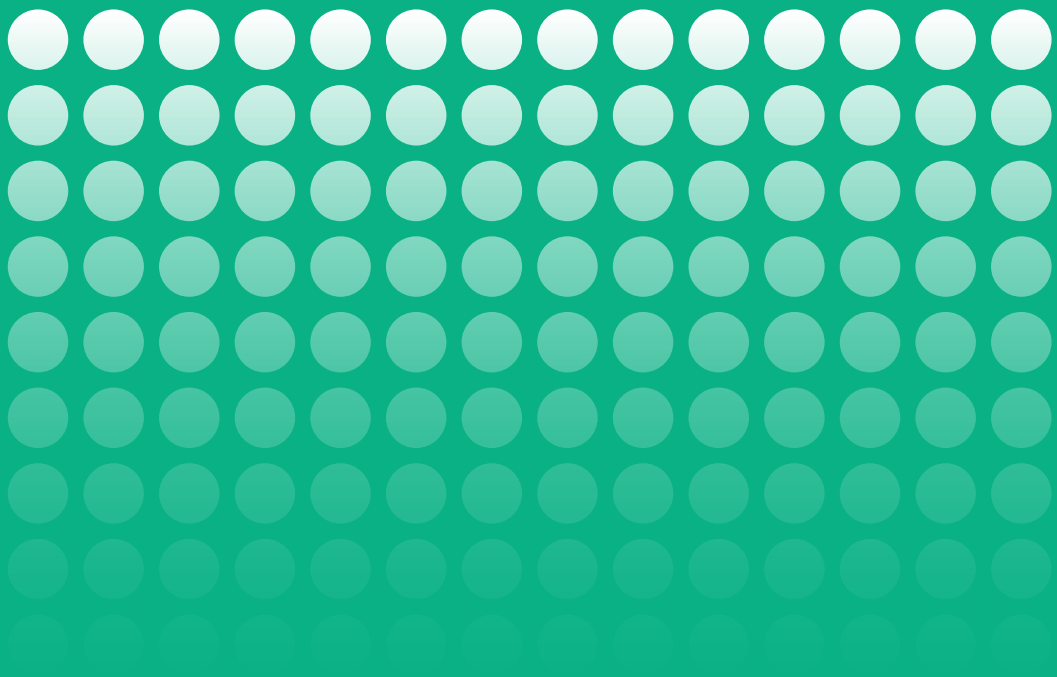
Tiraž 400. – Napomene i bibliografske reference uz tekst. – Bibliografija: str. 85–91.

ISBN 978-86-7093-154-1

a) Политичка култура b) Друштвене промене
316.334.2/.3
316.42

COBISS.SR-ID 211967244

ГЛАСНИК
ШТАМПАРИЈА



ISBN 978-86-7093-154-1